

# ALLOCATION OF LONG-TERM HOUSING

## Statement of Policy

### Purpose

This policy establishes the approach of Eastcoast Housing to:

- the prioritisation and allocation of vacant properties in its long-term rental housing portfolio; and
- successful and sustainable residencies and communities through the matching applicants to properties.

### Scope

This policy applies to all long-term rental properties owned or managed by Eastcoast Housing. The Allocations Schedule attached to this policy provides more detail on these long-term rental housing programs.

### Approach to allocation – guiding principles

Eastcoast Housing will allocate long-term housing in a manner which:

- is fair, transparent and equitable;
- relieves households from housing stress;
- is in accordance with its contractual, legal and regulatory obligations; and
- supports the financial viability of Eastcoast Housing's long term housing programs.

Eastcoast Housing is committed to promoting a successful and sustainable residency when matching applicants to its properties. This means that Eastcoast Housing will allocate housing in a way that:

- gives appropriate priority to households in need of housing assistance;
- considers the health, safety and support needs of applicants;
- matches individual housing needs with available properties; and
- supports sustainable and harmonious communities.

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## 1. Victorian Housing Register

Eastcoast Housing participates in the Victorian Housing Register (VHR). The VHR is a common register for all applicants seeking public and community housing in Victoria. Under the VHR's allocations framework, Eastcoast Housing is required to target 75% of allocations of true vacancies of social housing to Priority Access applicants.

## 2. Allocations Schedule

Eastcoast Housing has established an Allocations Schedule that establishes the following for each of its housing programs:

<b>Program</b>	A description of the housing program, including how properties have been funded
<b>Approach to allocation for Program</b>	A description of the approach that Eastcoast Housing will apply in allocating housing in that program, including any allocations targets
<b>Source of applicants</b>	A description of where Eastcoast Housing will source suitable applicants for the program
<b>Eligibility</b>	A description of any eligibility rules that apply to the program
<b>No of properties in the program</b>	A description of the number of properties in the program

The Allocations Schedule for Eastcoast Housing is attached to this policy. This Allocations Schedule should be read in conjunction with the following:

## 3. Sourcing applications from the VHR

Where the source of applicants in a program is specified in the Allocations Schedule as "VHR only", then Eastcoast Housing will seek all applicants from the VHR unless no suitable applicants are available.

For such programs, if an allocation is made from an applicant not on the VHR, then Eastcoast Housing will ensure that all applicants complete a VHR application before or shortly after being offered housing for the purposes of reporting against the VHR allocations target.

Sources of applications outside the VHR include:

- referrals from support providers
- real estate listings
- self-referrals

## 4. Nomination rights

Where nomination rights apply, Eastcoast Housing will:

- establish appropriate arrangements in protocol agreements with referral agencies who have responsibility for nominating applicants for vacancies, to ensure timely and appropriate referrals; and
- require that referral agencies nominate applicants who have a current VHR Priority Access application.

## 5. Dynamic portfolio management

Eastcoast Housing will apply dynamic portfolio management so that properties are not tied to a particular allocation category. Rather, Eastcoast Housing will take a whole-of-portfolio approach to allocation which seeks to maximise its utilisation.

## 6. Eligibility

Eastcoast Housing will ensure in making any allocation that it complies with legal requirements concerning eligibility for housing. The eligibility rules that apply to programs are specified in the Allocations Schedule.

VHR Eligibility is determined by DFFH. See the policy 10.3 2018 Eligibility for further details.

## 7. Promoting successful and sustainable residencies

Eastcoast Housing is committed to treating all applicants fairly and will not unlawfully discriminate against any potential applicant or applicant.

Eastcoast Housing will assess all applicants before making an offer of housing to determine suitability for a particular vacancy (and eligibility if the applicant is not from the VHR). If Eastcoast Housing declines to offer an applicant housing, it will inform the applicant accordingly.

## 8. Matching households to the right house

In allocating housing, Eastcoast Housing will also have regard to the VHR operational guideline, *Matching Clients with Housing and Special Accommodation Requirements*.

***Note: Eastcoast Housing are not required to adopt this policy. However, Eastcoast Housing may consider this to be a useful guideline to adopt when making decisions about whether to allocate a property to a VHR applicant.***

Eastcoast Housing will match applicants to properties so that an allocation:

- is the right size for the applicant's household
- is in an area consistent with the applicant's needs
- assists the applicant to access employment or any support services that they need
- makes the best use of housing stock owned or managed by Eastcoast Housing
- encourages a sustainable residency, and
- meets any particular expressed needs of the applicant so far as they are known, such as modifications for people with a physical disability or mobility impairment, availability of car parking or room for carers

Eastcoast Housing aims to make sure that properties with specific features that are in high demand and short supply are only allocated to those applicants who need them, including:

- properties that are suitable for older people
- properties that have been built or modified to meet the needs of people with a disability
- properties on the ground floor
- properties with level access, or
- properties with a yard/garden

Eastcoast Housing will ask applicants to provide reasonable evidence to substantiate any particular requirements, if this is not contained in a VHR application.

## 9. Supporting sustainable and harmonious communities

Eastcoast Housing may, to the extent necessary, adopt different strategies in allocation in response to:

- a high concentration of public and community housing stock in a particular area
- a high concentration of renters with multiple health, social or economic issues in a particular area or building
- existing residency management issues (or a potential for them to develop)
- existing neighborhood tensions or disputes which may be exacerbated if allocations are not sensitively handled, and
- a mismatch of supply and demand making the property hard to let

## 10. Definitions

In this policy:

<b>Applicant</b>	means a person who has applied for housing via the VHR or, where permitted by this policy, directly to Eastcoast Housing
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<b>Eastcoast Housing</b>	The housing program of Eastcoast Housing described in further detail in the Allocations Schedule
<b>DFFH</b>	means the Department of Families Fairness and Housing.
<b>Director of Housing</b>	means the Victorian government statutory authority that owns all public housing land in Victoria and which is the principal funding body for community housing
<b>Nomination rights</b>	means arrangements between Eastcoast Housing and third party support providers where the support provider nominates applicants for certain vacant properties
<b>Priority Access</b>	<p>Applicants on the VHR who have been assessed as having a priority housing need. The Priority Access Categories are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Emergency Management Housing</li><li>• Priority Transfers</li><li>• Homeless with Support</li><li>• Supported Housing</li><li>• Temporary Absence</li><li>• Special Housing Needs</li><li>• Aged (55 years and over)</li></ul>
<b>Public housing</b>	Housing owned and managed by DFFH
<b>Social housing</b>	The housing program of Eastcoast Housing described in further detail in the Allocations Schedule.
<b>Transitional Housing</b>	means the Victorian Government program to provide housing on a short-term basis to people at risk of homelessness seeking long term housing options
<b>True vacancy</b>	<p>means all vacancies excluding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• renter to renter transfers (but not Priority Transfers via the VHR), and</li><li>• residencies started by relocated renters that are returning.</li></ul>
<b>VHR</b>	The Victorian Housing Register, the state-wide common application for people seeking public housing and community housing

## 11. Related policies

12. 10. 2018 Residency Management; 10.1 2018 Renter Information – Privacy; 10.2 Assessable Income; 10.3 2018 Eligibility; 10.5 2018 Rent Policy; 10.6 2018 VHR and Complaints

### 13. Legislation and standards

This policy implements Eastcoast Housing obligations under:

- Housing Act 1983 (Vic)
- Performance Standards for Registered Housing Agencies
- DFFH Victorian Housing Register Operational Guidelines

### 14. Transparency and accessibility

This policy will be available on the Eastcoast Housing website [www.eha.org.au](http://www.eha.org.au)

## Allocations Schedule

Program	Approach to allocation for Program	Source of applicants <sup>1</sup>	Eligibility <sup>2</sup>	No. units
<b>Social Housing (General Lease)</b> <i>Long-term housing owned by the Director of Housing and leased to Eastcoast Housing.</i>	Eastcoast Housing targets 75% of allocations of true vacancies of Social Housing to applicants from the Priority Access category under the VHR. <i>[provide detail on any other approaches taken to allocation as specified in the General Lease]</i>	VHR only	VHR	153
<b>Social Housing (Nomination Rights)</b> <i>Long-term housing owned by Eastcoast Housing designated for renters receiving support to live independently under particular support programs</i>	Eastcoast Housing has various agreements which provide that a specified support provider will have nomination rights.  Eastcoast Housing targets 75% of allocations of true vacancies of Social Housing to applicants from the Priority Access category under the VHR.	Via referral from nominated support provider (must have current VHR Priority Access application)	VHR	6

<sup>1</sup> Under the Allocations Policy, where a property is specified as “VHR only”, Eastcoast Housing may seek all applicants from other sources if no suitable VHR applicants are available. In these circumstances Eastcoast Housing will ensure that all applicants complete a VHR application before or shortly after being offered housing for the purposes of compliance and reporting.

<sup>2</sup> See Eligibility Policy for further details. ***[Note: This is to enable Eastcoast Housing to apply eligibility criteria in addition to the VHR’s criteria, e.g. for past bad debts, or because of particular target group.]***



Program	Approach to allocation for Program		Source of applicants <sup>1</sup>	Eligibility <sup>2</sup>	No. units
	See nomination rights protocols with the following support providers/partnerships:				
	Support provider/partnership	No. of properties			
	Mental Health Services	6			
				Totals	159