

## Allocation of Long-Term Housing Policy

### Policy Description

This policy establishes the approach of SouthEast Housing Co-operative to:

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

The Allocations Schedule forms part of this policy document and provides detail on these long-term rental housing programs.

### Scope

All long-term rental properties owned or managed by SouthEast Housing Co-operative, and all housing programs run by SouthEast Housing Co-operative.

### Definitions

<b>Applicant</b>	A person who has applied for housing via the Victorian Housing Register (VHR) or, where permitted by this policy, directly to SouthEast Housing Co-operative.
<b>Community housing affordable housing program</b>	The housing program of SouthEast Housing Co-operative described in further detail in the Allocations Schedule.
<b>DFFH</b>	The Victorian Department of Families, Fairness and Housing.
<b>Director of Housing</b>	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>	Arrangements between SouthEast Housing Co-operative and third-party support providers where the support provider nominates applicants for certain vacant properties.
<b>NRAS</b>	National Rental Affordability Scheme
<b>Priority Access</b>	Applicants on the VHR who have been assessed as having a priority housing need. The Priority Access Categories are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emergency Management Housing</li> <li>• Priority Transfers</li> <li>• Homeless with Support</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <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 SouthEast Housing Co-operative described in further detail in the Allocations Schedule.
<b>Transitional housing</b>	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>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>• tenancies started by relocated renters that are returning.</li> </ul>
<b>VHR</b>	The Victorian Housing Register, the Statewide common application for people seeking public and / or community housing.

## Relevant policy statements and/or principles

### Approach to allocation – guiding principles

SouthEast Housing Co-operative 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 SouthEast Housing Co-operative’s long-term housing programs.

SouthEast Housing Co-operative is committed to promoting a successful and sustainable tenancy when matching applicants to its properties. This means that SouthEast Housing Co-operative 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.

## Procedures

### Victorian Housing Register

SouthEast Housing Co-operative participates in the VHR. The VHR is a common register for all applicants seeking public and / or community housing in Victoria. Under the VHR’s allocations framework, SouthEast Housing Co-operative is required to target 75% of allocations of true vacancies of social housing to Priority Access applicants.

## Allocations Schedule

SouthEast Housing Co-operative has established an Allocations Schedule that establishes the following for each of its housing programs:

<b>Program Description and Funding</b>	<b>Social Housing (General Lease) SouthEast Housing Co-operative managed DFFH properties.</b>
<b>Approach to allocation including any allocation Targets</b>	Refer to the General Lease
<b>Source of applicants</b>	The primary sources are the VHR Priority Access List and Expression of Interest List. Other sources may include Common Equity Housing Ltd, other housing providers and Homelessness Support Agencies.
<b>Eligibility Rules Description</b>	Refer to the DFFH Policy and Operational Guidelines
<b>No of properties in the program</b>	190
<b>Program Description and Funding</b>	<b>Social Housing (Owned). These properties were jointly funded by SouthEast Housing Co-operative and the DFFH. Although SouthEast Housing Co-operative owns the properties, the Director of Housing retains an interest in each of the properties and this interest is noted on each certificate of title.</b>
<b>Approach to allocation including any allocation Targets</b>	SouthEast Housing Co-operative maintains the same approach and targeting as under the General Lease.
<b>Source of applicants</b>	The primary sources are the VHR Priority Access List and Expression of Interest List. Other sources may include Common Equity Housing Ltd, other housing providers and Homelessness Support Agencies.
<b>Eligibility Rules Description</b>	Refer to the DFFH policy and Operational Guidelines
<b>No of properties in the program</b>	12
<b>Program Description and Funding</b>	<b>Social Housing (Domestic/Family Violence), Rapid Housing Assistance Program. Social Housing (Owned). These properties were jointly funded by SouthEast Housing Co-operative and the DFFH. Although SouthEast Housing Co-operative owns the properties, the Director of Housing retains an interest in each of</b>

	<b>the properties and this interest is noted on each certificate of title.</b>
<b>Approach to allocation including any allocation Targets</b>	These properties primarily target victims of domestic violence and comply with DFFH and NRAS allocation policies and targets.
<b>Source of applicants</b>	The primary sources are the VHR Priority Access List and Expression of Interest List. Other sources may include Common Equity Housing Ltd, other housing providers and Homelessness Support Agencies.
<b>Eligibility Rules Description</b>	Refer to the DFFH Policy and Operational Guidelines and NRAS guidelines.
<b>No of properties in the program</b>	4

The Allocations Schedule should be read in conjunction with the following:

### **Sourcing applications from the VHR**

Where the source of applicants in a program is specified in the Allocations Schedule as “VHR only”, then SouthEast Housing Co-operative 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 SouthEast Housing Co-operative 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;
- Registered Housing Associations and Providers.

### **Nomination Rights**

Where nomination rights apply, SouthEast Housing Co-operative 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.

### **Dynamic Portfolio Management**

SouthEast Housing Co-operative will apply dynamic portfolio management so that properties are not tied to one allocation category. Rather, SouthEast Housing Co-operative will take a whole-of-portfolio approach to allocation which seeks to maximise its utilisation e.g. via downsizing.

### **Eligibility**

SouthEast Housing Co-operative 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 Eligibility Policy for further details.

### **Promoting successful and sustainable tenancies**

SouthEast Housing Co-operative is committed to treating all applicants fairly and will not unlawfully discriminate against any potential applicant or applicant.

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

### **Matching households to the right house**

In allocating housing, SouthEast Housing Co-operative will also have regard to the VHR operational guideline, Matching Clients with Housing and Special Accommodation Requirements.

SouthEast Housing Co-operative 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 SouthEast Housing Co-operative;
- encourages a sustainable tenancy; and
- meets any expressed needs of the applicant as 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.

SouthEast Housing Co-operative 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.

SouthEast Housing Co-operative will ask applicants to provide reasonable evidence to substantiate requirements, if this is not contained in a VHR application.

### **Supporting sustainable and harmonious communities**

SouthEast Housing Co-operative may, to the extent necessary, adopt different strategies in allocation in response to:

- a high concentration of public and community housing stock in an area;
- a high concentration of renters with multiple health, social or economic issues in an area or building;
- existing tenancy 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.

## Related Legislation, SEHC Documents and Other Documents

Legislation / Standards:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing Act 1983 (Vic)</li> <li>• Performance Standards for Registered Housing Agencies</li> <li>• DFFH Victorian Housing Register Operational Guidelines</li> </ul>
Organisational Documents:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transfers ex Governance Manual</li> </ul>
VHR Documents / Guidelines:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• VHR and DFFH eligibility guidelines</li> <li>• Community Housing Industry Association Vic - Definitions</li> </ul>

## Policy Management

Policy owner (role title):	Board
Role responsible for implementing:	Board and CEO
Review arrangements:	Every 3 years via internal review
Next Review Date:	25 June 2027

## Document History

Date	Controlled Version Number	Author	Approved by	Comment
24 June 2022	1.	S. Morrissey (CEO)	Board	Board approved version migrated for display on SEHC website.
25 June 2024	2.	S. Morrissey (CEO)	Board	

## Allocations Schedule

Program	Approach to allocation for Program	Source of applicants	Eligibility	No. units
<p><b>Social Housing (Owned)</b></p> <p><i>Long term housing owned by SouthEast Housing Co-operative with assistance from the Director of Housing under capital grant, stock transfer programs and which is designated as “social housing”.</i></p> <p><i>Social housing is appropriate to the needs of people who are unable to access suitable accommodation in the private rental market.</i></p>	<p>SouthEast Housing Co-operative targets 75% of allocations of true vacancies of Social Housing to applicants from the Priority Access category under the VHR.</p> <p>(See also the Affordable Housing Program note below)</p>	VHR only	VHR and SouthEast Housing Co-operative	12
<p><b>Social Housing (General Lease)</b></p> <p><i>Long-term housing owned by the Director of Housing and leased to SouthEast Housing Co-operative.</i></p>	<p>SouthEast Housing Co-operative targets 75% of allocations of true vacancies of Social Housing to applicants from the Priority Access category under the VHR.</p>	VHR only	VHR/DFFH	190
<p><b>Community Housing</b></p> <p><b>Affordable Housing Program</b></p>	<p>NA</p> <p>Note</p>	VHR and other sources	VHR	0

Program	Approach to allocation for Program	Source of applicants	Eligibility	No. units
<p><i>Long term housing owned by SouthEast Housing Co-operative</i></p> <p>This housing is appropriate for the needs of a range of low to moderate income households. These households might not be able to access social housing but nonetheless would live in housing stress if in the private rental market</p>	<p>Current DFFH policy does not cover this type of program in which case the Social Housing (Owned) program properties do not qualify. If the Director of Housing maintains an interest in a property, then owned or leased the property is governed by existing VHR/DFFH policy. Currently only properties purchased 100% with SouthEast Housing Co-operative funds would qualify.</p>			
<p><b>Specialist program: Rapid Housing Assistance Fund – Domestic/Family Violence</b></p> <p><b>National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS)</b></p> <p><i>Funded in part by Commonwealth NRAS funding for affordable housing (no DFFH funding)</i></p>	<p>As per the Affordable Housing Program - all vacancies to be allocated to applicants from the VHR unless no suitable applicants are available. In this case, SouthEast Housing Co-operative may seek referrals from non-VHR sources. These properties are most likely to be suited to applicants from the Register of Interest category of the VHR.</p> <p>SouthEast Housing Co-operative will allocate these properties in line with a target tenancy profile and rental budget for the program, ensuring that allocations are to applicants for whom the set rent is affordable.</p> <p>NRAS - SouthEast Housing Co-operative has agreed to ensure that NRAS properties are allocated to households eligible for housing under the NRAS rules.</p>	<p>VHR and other sources</p>	<p>Applicants must be formally classified as domestic/family violence victims and supported by an approved agency.</p>	<p>04</p>



Program	Approach to allocation for Program	Source of applicants	Eligibility	No. units
				Total 206

Notes:

1. Under the SouthEast Housing Co-operative Allocations Policy, where a property is specified as “VHR only”, SouthEast Housing Co-operative may seek all applicants from other sources if no suitable VHR applicants are available. In these circumstances, SouthEast Housing Co-operative will ensure that all applicants complete a VHR application before or shortly after being offered housing for the purposes of compliance and reporting.
2. See Eligibility Policy for further details.