

Eligibility for Long-Term Housing Policy

Policy Description

This policy establishes the approach of SouthEast Housing Co-operative to eligibility for its long-term rental housing programs.

Scope

This policy applies to all long-term rental properties owned or managed by SouthEast Housing Co-operative.

This policy does not apply to the following housing programs run by SouthEast Housing Co-operative:

- properties managed by SouthEast Housing Co-operative under the Transitional Housing program (there are currently no such properties);
- properties managed by SouthEast Housing Co-operative on behalf of other property owners where the owner retains responsibility for determining eligibility for the housing program; and
- temporary or crisis accommodation.

Definitions

Applicant	A person who has applied for housing via the VHR or, where permitted by policy, directly to SouthEast Housing Co-operative.
Community Housing	Housing owned or managed by a Community Housing organisation.
DFFH	The Victorian Department of Families, Fairness and Housing
General eligibility criteria	The eligibility criteria established by SouthEast Housing Co-operative under the section of this policy entitled “General requirements for eligibility for long-term housing”.
Public housing	Housing owned and managed by DFFH.
Transitional Housing	means the Victorian Government program to provide housing on a short-term basis to people at risk of homelessness seeking long term housing options.
VHR	The Victorian Housing Register, the Statewide common application for people seeking Public Housing and Community Housing, which can be accessed via SouthEast Housing Co-operative, DFFH, the myGov portal or designated support providers.

VHR eligibility criteria	<p>The VHR establishes who is eligible for social housing. The VHR Eligibility Criteria relates to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • income eligibility; • asset eligibility; • Australian Citizenship or permanent residency; and • Victorian residency.
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Relevant policy statements and/or principles

Approach to eligibility

SouthEast Housing Co-operative establishes eligibility criteria for long-term housing to fulfill its social mission and to ensure that its housing is made available to relieve households from housing stress.

Accordingly, SouthEast Housing Co-operative will:

- only allocate long-term housing to eligible applicants;
- communicate clearly to applicants and the community as to who is eligible for long-term housing with SouthEast Housing Co-operative; and
- comply with its contractual, legal and regulatory obligations relating to eligibility for long-term housing.

Procedure

Victorian Housing Register

SouthEast Housing Co-operative participates in the VHR. The VHR is a common register for all applicants for Public Housing and Community Housing in Victoria.

DFFH has established common eligibility criteria for the VHR that is set out in their eligibility guidelines. The VHR eligibility criteria apply to all properties owned or managed by SouthEast Housing Co-operative in Victoria, other than those properties which SouthEast Housing Co-operative and DFFH may agree are outside the scope of the VHR.

All applicants with a current VHR application are taken by SouthEast Housing Co-operative to have established that they meet the VHR eligibility criteria.

Applicants without a current VHR application can provide evidence to SouthEast Housing Co-operative that establishes they meet the VHR eligibility criteria. SouthEast Housing Co-operative will assist such applicants to make a VHR application either through referral to a suitable service or by assisting the applicant to lodge a VHR application.

General requirements for eligibility for long-term housing

To be eligible for VHR-related long-term housing with SouthEast Housing Co-operative an applicant must:

- meet the VHR eligibility criteria, and;
- have no previous debt with SouthEast Housing Co-operative, the Director of Housing or another registered housing agency that remains unpaid.

Specific requirements for long-term housing programs

SouthEast Housing Co-operative has some long-term rental housing programs where additional eligibility criteria to the general eligibility criteria apply. The Allocations Schedule in the Allocations Policy provides more detail on these programs and their specific eligibility requirements.

Eligibility for long-term housing programs outside the scope of the VHR

Where SouthEast Housing Co-operative owns or manages housing under programs that are outside the scope of the VHR, then:

- SouthEast Housing Co-operative will comply with any other legal or contractual obligations that apply to eligibility housing in that program; and
- SouthEast Housing Co-operative may within the scope of such legal or contractual obligations:
 - elect to apply the general eligibility criteria as a generally accepted benchmark to establish that the applicant needs affordable housing; or
 - apply some other reasonable eligibility criteria that is consistent with SouthEast Housing Co-operative's objects and purposes.

SouthEast Housing Co-operative will communicate clearly with applicants and stakeholders as to the eligibility criteria that applies to that program.

Procedures established by SouthEast Housing Co-operative will include processes to ensure compliance with this policy, including to:

- assist people to apply for housing with SouthEast Housing Co-operative; and
- identify the program and eligibility criteria that apply to a vacancy.

Related Legislation, SEHC Documents and Other Documents

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

Policy Management

Policy owner (role title):	Board
Role responsible for implementing:	Board and CEO
Review arrangements:	Every 3 years via internal review
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Document History

Date	Controlled Version Number	Author	Approved by	Comment
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25 June 2024	2.	S. Morrissey (CEO)	Board	