



# MAREEBA COMMUNITY HOUSING COMPANY LTD

## TENANT AND HOUSING SERVICES

POLICY TITLE: RENT MANAGEMENT

### References

Policy number	1004
Version Number	1b
Date ratified	17/03/2016
Date of review	04/03/2020
Date of next review	04/03/2023
Reference to evidence guidelines	NRSCH 1b
Responsibility	Manager /Housing Managers
Links / cross reference to other policies	Housing Queensland Regulation 2015 Management systems Financial viability

### Policy statement, direction and intended result

**Mareeba Community Housing Company upholds the principles of fairness, consistency, and legal compliance in all aspects of our rent management system.**

**MCHC is committed to ensuring that the rent management system is sensitive to the needs and circumstances of the tenants and will not negatively impact on the financial viability of the company.**

The rent management system is compliant with the requirements of the RTRAA. Processes are also compliant with the appropriate DHPW rent policies for the programs under which MCHC is funded and holds assistance agreements.

MCHC manages rent payments and rent arrears in a manner which is fair to the tenant while ensuring that rent is paid as required and manages rent arrears to both ensure full payment and sustain tenancies wherever possible.

### Procedures

#### **Rent Management Policy – assistance agreement funded programs**

Rents are managed in accordance with Queensland Housing Rent Policy and updated accordingly for social housing programs – Long Term and Transitional Housing.

Rents charged will comply with the rent policy of Housing Queensland and the Company's assistance agreement. Rents will be calculated on the tenant's household income and comply with Department of Housing policies and Community Housing Rent Calculator.



# MAREEBA COMMUNITY HOUSING COMPANY LTD

## TENANT AND HOUSING SERVICES

Rents are calculated consistently for all tenants and an explanation of what income is considered for rental purposes is explained at interview time. Tenants are provided with a copy of their rental assessment and a hard copy is placed on the tenancy file.

The rent calculator tool is used to calculate the rent, deductions, rent assistance and bond payments for the tenants.

Updates of the calculator are conducted in line with updates of income with Centerlink and notification from the software provider to ensure accurate reports and data.

### **Payment Options**

The Company encourages tenants to use direct deduction services either through Centerpay or their nominated bank. The Company pays the fee for deduction services of Centerpay and tenants are informed use of this service is at no charge to them.

Choices for payment of rent are by way of:

- ❖ Direct Debit bank account – internet banking
- ❖ Direct debit Centerpay
- ❖ Cash (this is discouraged due to security and rent arrears)

Rent receipts are issued immediately for payments of cash. Receipts for direct bank payments, veteran's affairs or centerpay will be made available by postage on request.

Tenants are notified immediately when arrears are over seven days. Notification is managed first by a phone call if phone details are provided to the office, a Notice to Remedy Breach and covering letter are posted out to follow up within one day.

Tenants experiencing financial difficulties with payment of rents are contacted by the staff to assist make appointment to discuss payment options.

Assistance may be in the form of referrals for budgeting, referral to external agencies to assist with budgeting and brokerage funds.

Rental payment agreements assist in the management of rental arrears and are offered where the tenant and staff recognise this is the best option to manage rent arrears and sustain the tenancy.

The housing manager checks the arrears report weekly and liaises with the General Manager and finance officer on rental arrears. Monthly board reports contain overview of the rent arrears status of the Company.

Tenants with history of rent arrears are encouraged to contact their local Centerlink office or Community support agency specialising in financial management.

Tenants may dispute a notice to remedy breach by giving a written notice to the Company within the allowed remedy period.



# MAREEBA COMMUNITY HOUSING COMPANY LTD

## TENANT AND HOUSING SERVICES

Written disputes are managed in accordance with the Grievance and Appeals policy given to tenants at the start of tenancy.

If no payment has been received or contact made with the Company within time frames as per the Notice to Remedy Breach a following letter will be issued with a Notice to leave for un-remedied breach as per the RTA.

### **Rent Reviews**

Rent reviews are conducted every twelve months to ensure the tenants eligibility as per the "One Social" housing and program specifications. Tenants are notified at the start of tenancy they will be required to provide proof of household income every twelve months to the Company to ensure ongoing eligibility.

Rent reviews are conducted using the Community Housing rent calculator and when completed copies are made available to tenants by mail or email. Assistance or enquires with rents assessment is available to all tenants and attached in written form with reviews.

Decreases in household income will see the rent decrease immediately from the date of the assessment. Increases in household income will start eight weeks from the date of the assessment and in line with Social housing policy as legislated from time to time.

Tenants are given copies of the assessment and written notification that clearly sets out the outcome of the assessment.

### **Evidence sources**

- ❖ Qld Housing rent policy
- ❖ Rent reviews
- ❖ RPM rental records
- ❖ Rental arrears reports
- ❖ Tenancy Correspondence
- ❖ Monthly and quarterly reports
- ❖ Board reports
- ❖ Notice to remedy breach
- ❖ Repayment agreements
- ❖ Monthly financial reports