

## Intent

Tablelands Regional Council (TRC) is committed to contributing to an improved quality of life for seniors by ensuring equitable access to affordable accommodation in the local government area. TRC provides a long-term community housing service for seniors in the towns of Atherton, Malanda, Yungaburra and Ravenshoe.

As a registered provider of long-term community housing under the Queensland State Regulatory System for Community Housing (QSRSC), TRC is required to implement community housing policies and procedures. This Policy establishes a formal process to ensure there is a consistent approach to managing the senior housing facilities of the TRC.

## Scope

This Policy applies to the operation of TRC's long term community housing service, including the management of property assets. The Policy applies to organisations contracted to deliver the community housing service on behalf of TRC.

TRC provides a long-term community housing service with 62 units across four towns in the local government area. TRC has funding agreements with the Department of Housing and Public Works (the Department) for a number of properties and is obliged to adhere to the relevant Departmental regulations and policies for funded properties. For the properties that do not have a funding agreement, TRC aims to apply social housing principles and manages these in a manner consistent with the funded properties.

## Policy Statement

### 1. Eligibility

TRC's community housing service is specifically for seniors. To be eligible to apply for TRC housing, the applicant must receive the Age Pension or other approved pension (including Department of Veterans' Affairs), or be over the age of 55 years and receiving a Disability Support Pension, unless otherwise approved by TRC. Discretion may be applied to the eligibility criteria in specific circumstances to maintain high occupancy rates.

This Policy adopts the eligibility process currently used by the Queensland Government which involves a needs-based assessment for community housing assistance. Implementation of these criteria is a requirement of the *Housing Regulation 2015* and stipulated in the Queensland Government's *Social Housing Program Specifications*. All applicants for community housing are assessed against the common intake eligibility criteria as identified in the Queensland Government's *Social Housing Eligibility Criteria*.

### Allocation

Allocation of new tenants to vacant, funded properties adheres to the Queensland Government's *Allocations Policy for Funded Social Housing Providers* and aims to match the needs of the tenants to the most suitable, available property. The same principles apply to allocating new tenants to unfunded properties.

TRC's properties include 60 single bedroom units and two 2-bedroom units. Allocations and ongoing eligibility are managed to ensure that the properties meet the ongoing and changing needs of the household and to ensure that the community benefit from these properties is maximised.

## 2. Ongoing Eligibility

The circumstances of all tenants are reviewed on an annual basis, as is required by the Queensland Government's *Social Housing Eligibility Criteria*. Consideration is given to any mitigating factors and discretion may be exercised in relation to the ongoing eligibility criteria.

Social housing is available for the duration of the need, however, if a tenant is no longer eligible, or social housing is no longer the most appropriate form of housing for a tenant, limited assistance in the form of referrals to appropriate support services and other agencies may be provided.

## 3. Community Housing Rent Policy

TRC as a registered Community Housing Provider adheres to the principles outlined in the Community Housing Rent Policy. The Community Housing Rent Policy provides for:

- Calculation of rental
- Maximum rent
- Rental arrears
- Rent reviews
- Rent payment methods (cash, cheque, money order, Centrepay deduction, EFT).

## 4. Asset Management

The housing assets are managed in accordance with TRC's current asset management principles to ensure the houses are maintained to the appropriate standard, as required by the Queensland Government.

### Maintenance

TRC expects its tenants to look after the designated property and keep their units in a clean and satisfactory condition. Should maintenance be required, TRC as the lessor, will directly (or through an organisation contracted to deliver the community housing service on behalf of TRC) provide a maintenance service and make arrangements for any necessary repairs in accordance with TRC maintenance policies. This maintenance service operates during standard office hours, although an emergency out-of-hours service is also available.

When a tenant leaves, the tenant is expected to have maintained their home in the same condition as on commencement of the tenancy. Should the dwelling require cleaning to remove mould, repair damage or other modifications not approved by TRC, the costs of this work will be charged to the tenant and TRC will take action to recover its costs.

### Capital Works and Improvements

The purpose of capital works and improvements is to ensure the units and cottages are maintained to high standard so as to improve the living conditions of the tenants.

Capital works are carried out on existing units to improve the assets where required on an annual basis in accordance with TRC's budget review and best asset management practices. All capital works require formal TRC approval.

### Tenant Requests for Improvements or Modifications

All requests for improvements or modifications to a housing asset must be made to and require formal approval from TRC prior to a tenant organising the work.

Requests for items such as new floor coverings, a new sink, or internal painting etc. will be assessed on an annual basis. Where units are vacant, they will be assessed and renovated by TRC as its maintenance

program deems appropriate. The housing assets are regularly improved and equipped with various enhancements involving handrails and accessibility devices.

Improvements such as garden sheds, built-in cupboards, carports, air-conditioning may be added by the tenant subject to TRC approval and obtaining the relevant plans, permits and compliance with regulatory requirements. All costs of such are to be borne by the tenant. TRC will not reimburse tenants for costs expended on improvements and modifications to their units when they vacate.

Tenants may be required to remove any fixtures or modifications if they were not approved or are not to the standard required by TRC, and the property must be returned to its original condition at the tenant's cost. At the end of the tenancy, the improvements will become the property of TRC, unless otherwise specified in the approval.

Additionally, there are certain modifications or improvements which must be approved by the Queensland Government. Tenants will be advised of this where required.

## 5. Criteria for Pets

TRC recognises pets can provide companionship, security, and contribute to the health and well-being of tenants. Tenants, subject to completing the necessary application forms, and subject to reasonable approval conditions, may be permitted to keep one dog or one cat where the pet and property complies with the *Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008*, *Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act 2008*, TRC Local Laws, and other Commonwealth and State legislation.

TRC (or an organisation contracted to deliver the community housing service on behalf of TRC) will assess all applications for pets.

### Nuisance and complaints

The tenant is responsible for all nuisance, such as noise or damage caused by a pet kept at the property. Damage caused by a pet or other animal are not considered fair wear and tear under the *Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008*.

If an approved pet causes a nuisance and if complaints are received that the pet is interfering with the reasonable peace, comfort and privacy of neighbours, TRC (or an organisation contracted to deliver the community housing service on behalf of TRC) will investigate the matter. If the pet is found to have caused nuisance or a breach of the Rental Tenancy Agreement or TRC Local Laws, TRC (or an organisation contracted to deliver the community housing service on behalf of TRC) may withdraw approval to keep a pet. The tenant (owner of the pet) will be required to remove the pet permanently from the unit within a timeframe set by TRC.

## 6. Complaints and Appeals

TRC is committed to providing a high level of service to social housing tenants by resolving complaints and appeals quickly and effectively. If a tenant or applicant is dissatisfied with the service or actions of TRC, its staff, the tenant or applicant can lodge a complaint or an appeal against that decision in accordance with TRC's Complaints Management Policy.

If a tenant or applicant is dissatisfied with the service or actions of an organisation contracted to deliver the community housing service on behalf of TRC, the tenant or applicant can lodge a complaint or an appeal against that decision in accordance with that organisation's complaints policy.

If the affected person is not satisfied that a complaint has been satisfactorily resolved, they will be informed of any further review mechanisms that are available and given the details of any statutory right of review. This may include a review by the Department of Housing and Public Works, Queensland Human Rights Commission or the Queensland Ombudsman.

## 7. Reporting

The following reporting is required by the Queensland Government to monitor the delivery of the community housing service:

- Quarterly Performance Report (funded properties only) – including performance data regarding tenancy management with a biannual asset management component
- Community Housing Annual Financial Return (funded properties only)
- Annual financial performance – annual report regarding tenant circumstances for all properties.

Where delivery of the community housing service is contracted out, responsibility for reporting will be defined in the relevant service deed.

## Context

### Definitions

**Funded property** – a unit which is subject to a funding agreement with the Queensland Government.

**Household** – means everyone listed on the tenancy agreement regardless of age or relationship status.

**Rent** – rent is paid where a household is covered under the *Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008* (Qld).

**Social Housing** – public and community housing that is available to provide housing stability to vulnerable people who are not able to access and sustain housing in the private market.

**Unfunded property** – a unit which is not subject to a funding agreement with the Queensland Government.

### Alignment to Risk Register

This policy mitigates the following corporate risks:

- COR4 – Poor operational management
- COR5 – Poor governance
- COR7 – Inability to effectively engage with the community -poor communication and engagement
- COR8 – Legislative non-compliance
- COR10 – Poor relationships with other Councils, State and/or Federal governments
- COR15 – Infrastructure planning and delivery fail to meet community and service standards

### Relevant Legislation

- *Local Government Act 2009*
- *Local Government Regulation 2012*
- *Housing Act 2003*
- *Housing Regulation 2015*
- *Human Rights Act 2019*
- *Information Privacy Act 2009*
- *Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008*

### Related Documents

- Allocations Policy for Funded Social Housing Providers (Department of Communities, Housing and Digital Economy)
- Allowable Expenditure Policy for Funded Community Housing and Crisis Accommodation Program Providers (Department of Communities, Housing and Digital Economy)
- Community Housing Rent Policy (Department of Housing and Public Works)
- Community Housing Rent Policy Guideline (Department of Housing, Local Government, Planning and Public Works)
- Community Housing Rent Procedure (TCHA)

- Community Housing for Seniors Tenant Information Guide (TCHA)
- Community Housing Tenancy Management Policy (Department of Communities, Housing and Digital Economy)
- Social Housing Eligibility Criteria (Department of Housing and Public Works)
- Social Housing Program Specifications (Department of Housing, Local Government, Planning and Public Works)
- TRC Age Friendly Strategy
- TRC Code of Conduct
- TRC Complaints Management Policy

### Corporate Plan Links

This policy aligns with the following Corporate Plan 2025-20 strategic themes:

- Contemporary infrastructure and spaces for community need are planned and delivered
- Obligations of our Asset Management Policy, Strategic Asset Management Plan and asset management plans are met
- Delivery of services to the community is improved through increased partnerships
- Service provision is financially sustainable through the Service Management Framework with services meeting agreed and affordable levels of service
- Funding agreed critical renewals in the annual budget
- Good governance is modelled

### Human Rights Commitment

Tablelands Regional Council has considered the human rights protected under the *Human Rights Act 2019* (Qld) when adopting and/or amending this policy. When applying this policy, TRC will act and make decisions in a way that is compatible with human rights.

## Responsibility

Council is responsible for the adoption, amendment and repeal of this policy and the Chief Executive Officer is responsible for the development and amendment of any associated procedures and guidelines relevant to the policy.

This policy is to remain in force until otherwise amended or repealed by resolution of Council.

Adopted By	Council	Responsible Officer	Coordinator Legal & Governance
Adopted Date	24 April 2025	Review Date	24 April 2025
Version	2.0	This policy repeals any previous versions.	