

Policy Manual Policy 3.21

Establishing and Maintaining Tenancies Affordable Housing Policy

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1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide information on Wentworth's approach to managing and acquiring Affordable Housing within their property portfolio. The policy is based on the five service delivery goals of the NSW Affordable Housing guidelines (2014) integrated with the aims of the WCH strategic plan.

2. Policy

2.1 Eligibility, Allocation and Access

Wentworth operates affordable housing that may be owned and/or managed in the outer Western Sydney region. Each may have differing criteria for eligibility, allocation and tenure, subject to applicable guidelines and or management agreements.

The Main forms of funded affordable housing covered by this policy are¹:

- National Rental Affordability Scheme
- Social Housing Growth Fund¹ and 2
- Affordable Housing Innovation Fund
- Affordable Housing Developments: St Marys (Ropes Crossing and Jordon Springs) and Rouse Hill

Wentworth will provide an open and transparent application process, ensure equitable access to all eligible people seeking affordable housing and ensure that an individual's right will not be discriminated against, as per the Antidiscrimination Act 1977.

Residents in affordable housing provided by Wentworth will reflect the diversity of the communities in which they live, with a mix of ages and life stages.

Affordable housing provided by Wentworth will be allocated across the three income bands (as defined by the NSW Affordable Housing Guidelines and/or National Rental Affordability Scheme), with a focus on low and moderate income households.

In principle and within eligibility guidelines the affordable housing model is designed to decrease housing stress for eligible households in the outer western Sydney region. Wentworth will provide affordable housing units across all bedroom categories to suit a range of household sizes and needs. As such, a

¹Refer attachment 1 for detailed overview of each program

primary purpose of the affordable housing portfolio is not only to increase housing affordability for eligible persons but also to prevent further financial stress that could lead to an elevated risk of homelessness.

In this way, the delivery of affordable housing services within the Wentworth portfolio aims to reduce risk of homelessness to eligible households through a range of affordable housing tenures and types.

2.2 Tenure and Transition

Whilst eligibility and tenure may to some extent be governed by an external funding agreement, Wentworth will work with households for security of tenure where appropriate, or transition into the private rental market where applicable. If complex needs or other issues arise throughout the tenancy, WCH will work with the household to broker support, and explore other housing options including access to the Housing Register where necessary. In this way Wentworth will work to prevent exits to homelessness where possible from the affordable housing portfolio.

2.3 Access to support and community services

Tenants will be encouraged to access services located within their community and to participate and engage in their community to a level that is suited to their household needs.

This may include and services that may increase access to employment, education and community development, referral to childcare and family support services, sporting associations or other as required or requested.

2.4 Design Principles and Portfolio location

Affordable Housing dwellings managed by Wentworth will be well designed and functional, economically and environmentally sustainable, enhancing the financial viability of the project and reducing the living costs of our tenants.

Wentworth will provide affordable housing dwellings that are integrated into the streetscape, not distinguishable from any other dwelling in the area. Affordable housing provided by Wentworth will be located close to transport services and other essential community infrastructure.

2.5 Maintenance

Affordable housing properties are to be kept to the highest possible standard through planned and responsive maintenance. All maintenance issues are to be quickly auctioned through Wentworth Community Housing Maintenance Policy.

Wentworth will maximize the long term financial sustainability of affordable housing projects by implementing a rigorous life cycle maintenance process. (See Asset Management Policy and Asset Management Plan)

2.6 Property Development and Partnerships

Wentworth will actively maximise and strengthen partnerships with all levels of government to increase affordable housing opportunities. Wentworth will continue to work collaboratively with developers to explore new opportunities to increase the affordable housing portfolio.

Responsibility

- 1.6.4 Customer Service Officers: to effectively assess eligibility and priority of applications for housing
- 2.6.4 Client Service Officers: to provide tenancy management services
- 3.6.4 Housing Services Manager and Client Service Manager: to monitor consistent and fair policy application in the assessment of applications, allocation and management of affordable housing
- 4.6.4 Chief Executive Officer: to monitor demand for affordable housing and provide ad hoc reports to the Board.

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Definitions and References

RTA: Residential Tenancy Agreement

NCAT: NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal Residential Tenancy Act 2010

NSW Affordable Housing Guidelines 2011

National Rental Affordability Scheme Policy Guidelines, July 2008 - 2013

Relevant Affordable Housing Management Agreements

Related policy: policy manual section 3 - Establishing and Maintaining Tenancies.

Policy manual section 5 - Tenant Participation

NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NCAT)