

Eligibility and Allocation Policy

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1. Introduction

Building Communities (Vic) Ltd (BCVL) practise clear and transparent processes when allocating properties to renters. This policy is to establish BCVL's criteria for a person to be considered eligible at the time of allocation and ongoing eligibility defined within BCVL or program guidelines.

2. Aim

BCVL has a selection process that is accountable, meets all legislative requirements, industry standards and guidelines and appropriately matches individual housing needs with available properties. Within this, BCVL conforms to agreed federal and state allocation policies as part of maintaining its registration to provide community or social housing in each jurisdiction.

3. Principles of BCVL Eligibility and Allocation Policy

3.1. Information to renters

Prospective renters are provided with clear and detailed information about the eligibility requirements (including income and assets is applicable), potential location and features of the accommodations available.

An offer letter is provided to each renter with acceptance timelines for accepting the offer, acknowledging that in the instance the offer is not accepted it will be offered to the next eligible renter. Language support is also provided when advertising a vacancy if required.

3.2 Allocation and eligibility principles

- All eligibility assessments (of prospective and current BCVL renters) and at the time of allocating housing, BCVL will comply with National and State laws regarding equal opportunity and anti-discrimination legislation
- BCVL will adhere to any contractual arrangements that apply to program specific, funding or government stated eligibility criteria as stated in any such agreement. BCVL will allocate from waitlists and central registers in appropriate locations and adhere to the agreements surrounding their use for allocation purposes
- BCVL will apply systematic instructions and tools to ensure operational staff carry out their duties using fairness, transparency and in line with required Acts, Regulations and Standards
- BCVL allocates its social housing portfolio to specific groups within communities who are at greater financial, cultural and/ or social disadvantage, including people with disabilities, mental health issues, single parents, aged and indigenous people. Where programs allow, BCVL seeks to allocate a set proportion of all available housing to such groups
- Household composition plays a key role in determining the eligibility for and allocation of dwellings in social and community housing portfolios. BCVL aims to ensure appropriate use of properties to meet the housing needs of communities and may re-assess the eligibility for housing type throughout a tenancy if the household composition experiences significant changes.

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- Consistent with the Affordable Housing Rental Scheme, BCVL Affordable Housing Dwellings will be targeted at low to moderate-income households as determined in accordance with the Specification of Income Ranges for the Greater Capital City Statistical Area of Melbourne published in the Order in Council made under section 3AB of the Planning and Environment Act 1987 (Vic).
- Where there is no relevant Order in Council under section 3AB of the Planning and Environment Act 1987 (Vic), very low, low and moderate income households are to be determined in accordance with the last gazetted Specification of Income Ranges published in the Order in Council made under section 3AB of the Planning and Environment Act 1987 (Vic), Indexed on 1 January each year.

3.3 Assessing income

Where applicable for eligibility for certain housing portfolios, BCVL will assess gross household income of applicants and renters. Assessment of gross household income is based on the evidence supplied by the renter. This evidence includes:

- Centrelink payment information
- Payslips and Notice of Assessment from the Australian Tax Office (ATO)
- Statements from other income sources (e.g. workers compensation, shares)

BCVL must be satisfied that the information provided is a true reflection of the household income including a minimum of:

- 13 weeks of pay slips
- 4 weeks of Centrelink benefits
- Previous year Payment Summary (formerly group certificate) or;
- 3 month Notice of Assessment from ATO or Certified Practicing Accountant

3.4 Other eligibility criteria

The following renters are not eligible to be housed with BCVL:

- Previous renters of BCVL with unattended debts
- Primary renter not an Australian citizen or permanent resident
- For social and affordable portfolios, customers who own realisable residential real estate will not be eligible to be housed

3.5 Matching

BCVL will endeavour to achieve sustainable housing outcomes via consideration of the individual needs of the renter, the community and the available dwelling, including its location, amenity and composition

3.6 Decision making

BCVL believes that a sustainable tenancy starts with a quality allocation of housing for a suitable renter. Documented operational processes and guidelines are designed to ensure housing services staff are able to effectively assess eligibility and allocate suitably matched properties to renters, while adhering to policy principles and adopting a leading practice approach.

Decisions are made with care and diligence and with consideration of the program and/or contractual requirements under which the property may be managed. This includes under

and over utilisation considerations and ensuring that household compositions are matched to appropriate dwellings.

Decisions that consider both the eligibility and the suitability of a renter and a property are necessary to ensure not only future renters are housed successfully in BCVL's housing programs, but also to ensure the future capacity for BCVL to sustain tenancies in them.

Housing Services staff undertake in-depth program induction, supervision and ongoing training.

3.7 Creating Sustainable Tenancies

Working within program guidelines and legislative requirements, BCVL will use allocation strategies to facilitate sustainable tenancies. During application, eligibility assessment and allocation processes, BCVL will work proactively with renters to identify any barriers to sustaining tenancies, and will take renters' needs, preferences and tenancy skills into account in making allocations. Where applicable, BCVL will also take into account the needs and preferences of other household members.

At the establishment of a new tenancy, BCVL will work proactively with renters to ensure that they understand their rights and responsibilities, the features of their property, how rent is calculated, how to contact BCVL and what they can expect of BCVL during their tenancy. BCVL will maintain engagement with new renters throughout the tenancy establishment phase to help them settle into their property and community and if/where required engage with support providers.

3.8 Clarity of the information provided

All materials and formats used ensure information is easy to read, alternative formats are available and indicated in information.

Forms, information documents and advertising materials are reviewed on a regular basis; this includes feedback surveys to our new renters and annual feedback from surveying our current renters. Improvement strategies are developed and implemented as needed.

3.9 Diversity

BCVL is committed to a balanced social mix of households in the community. BCVL has a commitment to helping build connected, thriving communities and seeks to empower its renters through its approach of creating an equitable and sustainable social mix within its portfolios, in line with the company's Vision and Mission.

BCVL always works towards any contract or agreed specified allocation objectives.

3.10 Targeting demographic groups and using allocation processes

BCVL applies target group ratios to properties it owns in its general social and affordable property stock, that are not subject to existing requirements with government and/or other stakeholders, to ensure people with social and financial disadvantage will have appropriate consideration and priority.

Nomination rights are also applied under various programs to some BCVL stock for exclusive use to partner and/or support agencies. Partnership Agreements are reviewed on an ongoing basis

Housing Services staff follow BCVL operational guidelines in undertaking allocation processes.

Allocations are made in accordance with State Legislation and contractual requirements. Allocations are overseen by Coordinators/Managers to ensure that renters who meet the eligibility criteria are suitably housed.

3.11 Customer Feedback and Appeal of Decisions

BCVL welcomes its renters to query any decisions it makes and/or ask questions about our work practices. If a renter wishes to provide feedback to BCVL and/or believes a decision made by BCVL is incorrect, they can lodge customer feedback and/or an appeal using the BCVL Customer Feedback Policy or the BCVL Appeals Policy.

4. Related legislation, industry frameworks and standards, BCVL policies and procedures

4.1 Legislation

Housing Assistance Act 1996 (COM)
Housing Act 1983 (VIC)
Residential Tenancies Act. 1997 (VIC)
Residential Tenancies Amendment Regulations 2021 (Vic)
Planning and Environment Act 1987 (Vic)
Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (VIC)
National Disability Insurance Scheme

4.2 Codes, frameworks and agreements

The National Affordable Housing Agreement
OOH, Homelessness Assistance Program Guidelines and Conditions Funding 2006-2009 (VIC)
Consumer Charter for Community Managed Housing and Homelessness Services
Victorian Community Housing Regulatory Framework
National Community Housing Standards
Department of Human Services Standards
NDIS Practice Standards and Quality Indicators
NDIS Code of Conduct

4.3 BCVL related policies and processes

BCVL Housing and Homelessness Policies and Procedures
BCVL Customer Feedback and Appeals Policy and Procedures
BCVL Privacy Policies and Procedures

5. Monitoring and review

This document should be periodically reviewed and revised. Revisions should be made as and when required. The period between reviews must not exceed two years. The date for review of this document is on or before April 2025. Training will be provided to each staff member and the Board as a component of their induction.

Review history

Date and version	Reason for review	Review frequency	Owner	Approver
Version 1.0, April 2023	New	Every two years	Company Secretary	Chief Executive Officer

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