

# Renter Transfer Policy

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# 1. Application

This policy applies to tenancies and customers housed by BCVL in social housing property portfolios only.

# 2. Introduction

Building Communities (Vic) Limited (BCVL) seeks to ensure that its renters are appropriately housed, while maintaining appropriate utilisation of its housing portfolios throughout Australia. BCVL recognises that renters' needs can change over time and is committed to ensuring renters are housed in suitable accommodation settings. BCVL may approve requests from renters to transfer to an alternative property within its portfolio, subject to eligibility criteria, stock availability and program requirements.

# 3. Aim and scope

This policy applies to Building Communities (Vic) Limited (BCVL).

The aim of this policy is to:

- enable BCVL to assist existing renters with housing mobility
- provide clarity on when BCVL can facilitate transfers
- ensure BCVL maintains quality utilisation of its housing portfolios

# 4. Principles

To ensure housing stock within Victoria is appropriately utilised and meets the changing needs of renters, BCVL may approve a request from a renter to transfer to an alternative property. Renters seeking to transfer must meet the eligibility criteria outlined in this document.

## 3.1 Transfer eligibility

BCVL cannot support all renters to transfer between properties given the increased pressure placed on resources and the limited availability of housing stock to facilitate this process.

Where a renter has genuine need for a transfer, BCVL will ensure they are supported to complete the transfer application. BCVL will ensure renters understand the obligations and responsibilities that they may be expected to undertake for this process to occur (such as removalist costs, vacate cleaning requirements for the property they are leaving, requirements to ensure regular reviews of transfer applications are conducted, and that renter is contactable.)

## 3.2 Transfer eligibility criteria

It is important that BCVL maintain clear transfer eligibility criteria, which is readily communicated to renters wishing to transfer, so that decisions regarding approvals of transfer applications are transparent to all parties involved.

Renters will be deemed eligible for transfer in the following circumstances:

- Renter's circumstances and/or needs have changed and as a result they are either under or over occupying their current property, or

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- Renter's circumstances and/or needs have changed and as a result their current property is no longer suitable i.e. for medical reasons, or
- The renter is in a domestic or family violence situation whereby an order is in place and the renter is required to move.

In order to qualify for a transfer, a renter must have had no substantial breaches of tenancy for at least one year. A substantial breach of tenancy includes the following:

- The renter must be the primary renter of a BCVL owned or managed property.
- Rental arrears debt in excess of 14 days whereby no payment plan is in place.
- Non-tenancy related debt in excess of \$200.00 (being for expenses other than rental debt i.e. water usage owing) whereby no payment plan is in place.
- The renter has been subject to complaints of antisocial or disruptive behaviour that has been validated.
- The renter has been breached for unacceptable property standards or property damages that have not been rectified in accordance with the Residential Tenancy Act and where the renter has been appropriately informed of the concern and provided with an opportunity to remedy the issue.

### 3.3 Transfer categories

When a renter has been approved for transfer by BCVL, they will be assessed based on their circumstances and will be categorised based on the urgency of their need for transfer. This is undertaken by a review of the approved application using the BCVL needs matrix form. The date that the application is received by BCVL will be the listing date, being the date that the application is listed on the internal transfer waitlist. BCVL qualifies applications into three different categories of urgency.

#### Category 1

Category 1 is urgent need. Renters placed in Category 1 will be deemed in need of an urgent transfer. This category may include renters leaving a domestic or family violence situation.

#### Category 2

Category 2 is high need. Renters placed in Category 2 will be deemed in need of requiring a transfer in the near future – with moderate urgency. This category may include renters whose current property is no longer suitable for their needs as their personal circumstances and/or capacity has changed.

#### Category 3

Category 3 is moderate need. Renters placed in Category 3 will be deemed eligible for transfer with low urgency. This category may include renters whose household structure has changed significantly.

### 3.4 Transfer costs

All renters are required to pay all costs associated with transferring their tenancy to a new dwelling. These costs will include (but are not limited to):

- Two weeks assessed rent for the new accommodation being for rent in advance
- Any established renter liability cost or non-tenancy related debt charge incurred from the previous property from which they have transferred (i.e. any costs associated with cleaning the vacated property)

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- Payment of any outstanding and final water consumption costs
- Removal and relocation of furniture and personal belongings
- Service connection fees from previous to new property
- Payment of bond for new accommodation where no bond has previously been held

If the renter has a bond held for the current property that they reside in, this may be transferred to the new property dependent on the total bond chargeable on the new property. There may be surplus or amounts owing. Surplus amounts will need to be refined through the normal bond disposal procedures. Any additional amounts owing must be paid in full and/or arrangements to pay in place before the new tenancy can take effect.

The renter must be aware that no deductions can be made from the bond held on the previous property for any cleaning or maintenance required to bring the property back to the required standard for vacating a property if the bond is to be transferred to the new property.

### 3.5 Vacating a property before transfer is received

If a renter who has been approved a transfer vacates their property prior to receiving a transfer, the transfer application will be deemed withdrawn and the transfer applicant will be notified accordingly. If the renter approaches BCVL for assistance to source housing in the future, they will be required to undertake and adhere to normal registration procedures for people seeking housing assistance, as determined by government and BCVL policies, as their transfer application cannot be reinstated.

## 5. Putting these principles into practice

BCVL will require renters to complete an application for transfer and submit it with the required information including:

- Proof of ID
- Proof of household income or BC Group consent form to verify income with Centrelink online for all adult householders in receipt of a Centrelink payment
- Documents to support their reason for the transfer application

Applications will be processed in line with BCVL policy and procedure. Notification of approval or decline will be made to the renter in writing, with specified details for the decision made by BCVL. This will also include details of the next steps a renter can or will be required to make in relation to their application.

Related processes in the BCVL Tenancy Manual support BCVL staff in their implementation of this policy.

## 6. Appeals

Renters may appeal any decision that has been made by BCVL regarding their application for transfer through BCVL's Appeals process.

## 7. Related legislation, frameworks, policies and procedures

### 6.1 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

### 6.2 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

### 6.3 BCVL related policies and processes

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

## 8. 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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