

## ALLOCATIONS - VHR Policy and Procedure

<b>QA REFERENCE</b>	P&T P&P No 06
<b>INTRODUCED</b>	28 <sup>th</sup> March 2019
<b>LAST REVIEWED</b>	28 <sup>th</sup> March 2019
<b>NEXT REVIEWED</b>	28 <sup>th</sup> March 2022
<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b>	Property and Tenancy Management is responsible for the review and currency of this policy and associated procedures
<b>APPROVED</b>	Approved by the Chief Executive Officer on 28 <sup>th</sup> March 2019 <i>This policy and procedure is valid from the date of introduction and remains in force, as amended from time to time, until such time as formally revoked by resolution at a meeting of the Operational Leadership Group.</i>
<b>ENDORSED</b>	Endorsed by the Operational Leadership Group on
<b>REFERENCES –</b>	
<b>Related Legislative Acts and other sources of Authority</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing Act 1983 (Vic) Part VIIIA – Social Housing</li> <li>• Residential Tenancies Act 1997</li> </ul>
<b>Related Standards, Guidelines and other References</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performance Standards for Registered Housing Agencies</li> <li>• DHHS Victorian Housing Register Operational Guidelines</li> <li>• Guidelines for Registered Housing Agencies published by DHHS</li> <li>• Legal agreements between MASP and the Director of Housing relating to the VHR</li> </ul>
<b>Related MASP Policy and Procedure Documents</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessibility Modifications – P&amp;T P&amp;P No 04</li> <li>• Allocations – Internal – P&amp;T P&amp;P No 07</li> <li>• Bonds Management – P&amp;T P&amp;P No 11</li> <li>• Code of Conduct – HRM P&amp;P No 12</li> <li>• Conflict of Interest – HRM P&amp;P No 28</li> <li>• Complaints &amp; Appeals Tenants &amp; Prospective Tenants – P&amp;T P&amp;P No 03</li> <li>• Eligibility – P&amp;T P&amp;P No 10</li> <li>• Inspections – P&amp;T P&amp;P No 12</li> <li>• Maintenance and Repairs – P&amp;T P&amp;P No 08</li> <li>• Privacy and Information Security – P&amp;T P&amp;P No 01</li> <li>• Property Damage by Tenant – P&amp;T P&amp;P No 02</li> <li>• Rent Arrears Management and Evictions – P&amp;T P&amp;P No 09</li> <li>• Rent Setting and Collection – P&amp;T P&amp;P No 05</li> </ul>
<b>Related MASP Instructions and Guidelines</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being a Good Neighbour – P&amp;T B&amp;P No 05</li> <li>• COVID 19 Maintenance P&amp;T I&amp;G No 01</li> <li>• Urgent After-Hours Repairs – P&amp;T I&amp;G No 02</li> </ul>
<b>Related MASP Forms and Templates</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Condition Report – Entry – P&amp;T ED</li> <li>• Condition Report – Exit – P&amp;T ED</li> <li>• Residential Rental Agreement – P&amp;T ED</li> <li>• COVID 19 Health Declaration Contractor Maintenance Worker – P&amp;T F&amp;T No 06</li> <li>• COVID 19 Health Declaration MASP tenant – P&amp;T F&amp;T No 03</li> <li>• COVID 19 Letter to contractor or tradesman – P&amp;T F&amp;T No 05</li> </ul>
<b>ACRONYMS/DEFINITIONS</b>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applicant</li> </ul>	A person who has applied for housing via the VHR or, where permitted by this policy, directly to MASP
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DHHS</li> </ul>	Victorian Department of Health and Human Services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Director of Housing</li> </ul>	Victorian government statutory authority that owns all public housing land in Victoria and which is the principal funding body for community housing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nomination rights</li> </ul>	Arrangements between MASP and third-party support providers where the support provider nominates applicants for certain vacant properties
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Priority Access</li> </ul>	<p>Applicants on the VHR who have been assessed as having a priority housing need. The Priority Access Categories are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emergency Management Housing</li> <li>• Priority Transfers</li> <li>• Homeless with Support</li> <li>• Supported Housing</li> <li>• Temporary Absence</li> <li>• Special Housing Needs</li> <li>• Special Housing Needs (Aged 55 years and over)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public housing</li> </ul>	Housing owned and managed by DHHS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Targeted Social Housing</li> </ul>	The properties that are considered Targeted Social Housing under agreements between MASP and the Director of Housing.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transitional Housing</li> </ul>	Victorian Government program to provide housing on a short-term basis to people at risk of homelessness seeking housing options
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• VHR</li> </ul>	The Victorian Housing Register, the statewide common application for people seeking public housing and community housing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MASP</li> </ul>	Mallee Accommodation and Support Program
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tenant</li> </ul>	The person who signed the Residential Tenancy Agreement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Household Members</li> </ul>	Other people who have been authorised by MASP to reside at the property

## PURPOSE

This policy establishes the approach of MASP to:

- eligibility for its rental housing programs;
- the prioritisation and allocation of vacant properties in its rental housing portfolio; and
- successful and sustainable tenancies and communities through the matching applicants to properties.

## SCOPE

This policy applies to all rental properties owned or managed by MASP.

## **POLICY**

### **Guiding Principles**

#### **Eligibility for housing**

MASP establishes eligibility criteria for housing allocation to fulfill its social mission and to ensure that its housing is made available to relieve households from housing stress.

Accordingly, MASP will:

- only allocate housing to eligible applicants;
- communicate clearly to applicants and the community as to who is eligible for housing with MASP; and
- comply with its contractual, legal and regulatory obligations relating to eligibility for housing.

#### **Approach to allocation**

MASP will allocate housing to eligible applicants and in a manner which:

- is fair, transparent and equitable;
- relieves households from housing stress;
- is in accordance with its contractual, legal and regulatory obligations; and
- supports the financial viability of MASP's housing programs.

MASP is committed to promoting a successful and sustainable tenancy when matching applicants to its properties. This means that MASP will allocate housing in a way that:

- gives appropriate priority to households in need of housing assistance;
- considers the health, safety and support needs of applicants;
- matches individual housing needs with available properties; and
- supports sustainable and harmonious communities.

#### **Eligibility for housing**

MASP participates in the Victorian Housing Register (VHR). The VHR is a common register for all applicants seeking public and community housing in Victoria.

DHHS has established common eligibility criteria for the VHR that are set out in the Eligibility Criteria Operational Guidelines. The VHR's eligibility criteria apply to all housing owned, managed or controlled by MASP in Victoria.

All applicants with a current VHR application are taken by MASP to meet the VHR eligibility criteria.

Applicants without a current VHR application can provide evidence to MASP that establishes they meet the VHR eligibility criteria. MASP will then assist such applicants to make a VHR application either through referral to a suitable service or by assisting the applicant to lodge a VHR application.

#### **Additional requirements for eligibility for housing**

In addition to meeting the VHR eligibility criteria, to be eligible for housing with MASP, an applicant must:

- have no previous debt with MASP, the Director of Housing or another registered housing agency that remains unpaid; and
- be a case managed client of MASP.

#### **Specific requirements for particular long-term housing programs**

MASP has some particular long-term rental housing programs where additional eligibility criteria to the general eligibility criteria apply. This can include, for example [list examples relevant to the CHO, such as particular programs targeted at people with a disability or women and families who are impacted by family violence.]

MASP will communicate clearly with applicants and stakeholders as to the particular eligibility criteria that apply to that program.

## **Approach to allocation**

### **Allocations Target - Victorian Housing Register**

Under the VHR's allocations framework, MASP is required to meet an annual Priority Allocations Target. This requires MASP to allocate 75% of vacancies in Targeted Social Housing to Priority Access applicants in each financial year. As not all of MASP's properties are Targeted Social Housing, this Target is adjusted so that MASP can make allocations across its portfolio in order to meet the Target.

MASP will implement procedures to monitor its performance against the Priority Allocations Target regularly to ensure that MASP complies with its obligations.

### **Sourcing applicants**

MASP will at first instance seek suitable applicants from the VHR. Where a suitable applicant being considered for a vacancy does not have a current VHR application but is eligible for social housing under the VHR and suitable for that vacancy, then MASP will ensure that such applicants complete a VHR application at the time of making an offer of housing.

### **Nomination rights**

Where nomination rights apply, MASP will:

- establish appropriate arrangements in protocol agreements with referral agencies who have responsibility for nominating applicants for vacancies, to ensure timely and appropriate referrals; and
- require that referral agencies nominate applicants who have a current VHR Priority Access application.

### **Other legal requirements**

MASP will ensure in making any allocation that it complies any other legal requirements concerning eligibility for housing or allocation of housing.

### **Promoting successful and sustainable tenancies**

MASP is committed to treating all applicants fairly and will not unlawfully discriminate against any potential applicant or applicant.

MASP will assess all applicants before making an offer of housing to determine suitability for a particular vacancy (and eligibility if the applicant does not currently have a VHR application). If MASP declines to offer an applicant housing, it will inform the applicant accordingly.

### **Matching households to the right house**

In allocating housing, MASP will also have regard to the VHR operational guidelines, *Clients with Special Accommodation Requirements*.

MASP will match applicants to properties so that an allocation:

- is the right size for the applicant's household;
- is in an area consistent with the applicant's needs;
- assists the applicant to access employment or any support services that they need;
- makes the best use of housing stock owned or managed by MASP;
- encourages a sustainable tenancy; and
- meets any particular expressed needs of the applicant so far as they are known, such as modifications for people with a physical disability or mobility impairment, availability of car parking or room for carers.

MASP aims to make sure that properties with specific features that are in high demand and short supply are only allocated to those applicants who need them, including:

- properties that are suitable for older people
- properties that have been built or modified to meet the needs of people with a disability;

- properties on the ground floor,
- properties with level access; or
- properties with a yard/garden.

MASP will ask applicants to provide reasonable evidence to substantiate any particular requirements, if this is not contained in a VHR application.

### **Supporting sustainable and harmonious communities**

MASP may, to the extent necessary, adopt different strategies in allocation in response to:

- a high concentration of public and community housing stock in a particular area;
- a high concentration of tenants with multiple health, social or economic issues in a particular area or building;
- existing tenancy management issues (or a potential for them to develop);
- existing neighborhood tensions or disputes which may be exacerbated if allocations are not sensitively handled; and
- a mismatch of supply and demand making the property hard to let.

### **Transparency and accessibility**

This policy will be available on the MASP website [www.masp.org.au](http://www.masp.org.au)