

Rent setting policy

1. Policy

This policy explains how Uniting VicTas (Uniting) sets and calculates rent.

Uniting will:

- set rent in accordance with affordability benchmarks.
- clearly explain how rent is set.
- respond to changes in household circumstances to prevent undue hardship.
- support renters to rectify issues as early as possible when a tenancy is at risk.
- have consistent, fair, and accountable processes, and give renters information about processes that affect their tenancy.
- review this policy from time to time, and tell renters in writing of relevant changes, and apply any changes to tenancies on and from the date of the change.
- mitigate as far as possible negative effects of changes of rent policy on renters and households.
- meet legal, regulatory, and contractual obligations.

Depending on the jurisdiction, in this policy:

In this document		Victoria	Tasmania
Renter	shall mean	Renter	Tenant
Rental agreement	shall mean	Rental agreement	Tenancy agreement
Relevant tribunal	shall mean	Victorian Civil Administration Tribunal (VCAT)	Residential Tenancy Commission (RTC)

2. Scope

This policy applies to Uniting’s community housing tenancies.

3. Procedure

3.1. Elements of rent

3.1.1. Market Rent

‘Market rent’ is what a similar property in the same suburb would rent for in the private market.

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The market-based rent can change without changing the income-based rent.

The Uniting representative will:

- write the starting market-based rent of the property in the rental agreement
- review the market-based rent at least every three years
- send the renter a notice of rent increase if the market-based rent for the property changes because of a review.

3.1.2. Income-based rent

The Uniting representative will:

- calculate income-based rent based on the income of household members over 18 years old
- calculate the rent payable based on a percentage of that income

Some income doesn't contribute to calculating income-based rent, like an AusStudy loan or the Large Family Supplement. See [here](#) for a full list of the types of income that can be included in your rent calculations or ask us for more information.

Rent will not be more than the market-based rent.

3.1.3. Additional service charges

For some properties, service charges cover facilities and utilities, like water, central heating, laundry, or utility services that are not separately metred.

The amount payable covers these costs. This amount will not change until the rent is reviewed.

For other properties, the renter is responsible for your utility bills and other charges.

Uniting will tell the renter what costs are included in the amount payable.

3.2. How Uniting calculates rent

Uniting calculates rent based on:

- the market-based rent for the property
- the assessable income of household members over 18 years of age, if applicable
- the rules that apply for charging rent in the housing program
- additional service charges, if applicable

Uniting representatives will:

- ascertain market rent
- work out the rent payable before the tenancy starts according to the property type or program

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- work out any service charge, if payable, at the property. The service charge is the renter’s share of the actual cost of the service
- review service charges from time to time against the actual costs of services
- ask for evidence of household income before starting the tenancy
- assess the gross assessable income of all renters in the household 18 years of age and over
- re-assess household income during the tenancy, and with the renter’s consent, confirm this information through Centrelink
- may increase the rent to the market rate, if the income-based rent cannot be determined from the information provided
- show how the rent is calculated, and the market rent for the property and the rent payable (if subsidised) in the rental agreement.

3.2.1. Rent in Uniting Affordable Housing

Uniting will:

- calculate 74.9% of the market rate
- add the share of the service charge, if payable

3.2.2. Rent in other properties

Uniting will:

- calculate 25% or 30%, depending on the program, of the assessable income of members of household members who are over 18 years old
- add 15% of the Family Tax Benefit
- add 100% of the Commonwealth Rent Assistance
- add the share of the service charge, if payable

3.3. Income reviews

Uniting may review household income at any time.

Uniting representatives will:

- review household income at least every year
- look at the market rate during a rent review
- let the renter know in writing before the next review happens
- tell the renter about any change to the rent

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3.4. When changes of circumstances affect rent

The table below explains when the new weekly rent payment will start.

Outcome of rent review		New weekly rent payment start date
Rent increases*	The renter told Uniting about the change within 21 days	From the billing date after the rent review is completed
	The renter did not tell Uniting about the change within 21 days	From the billing date 21 days after the change occurred up until the effective date of the most recent rent review.
Rent decreases	The renter told Uniting about the change within 21 days	From the billing date after the change in circumstances.
	The renter did not tell Uniting about the change within 21 days	

*There may be exceptions to rent increases for specific time limited programs. Where this occurs, renters will be advised accordingly.

3.5. Changes to the Household

Changes to a household include:

- An increase or decrease in the income of any member of the household
- A household member turns 18 years of age
- A person joins or leaves the household.

Renters must:

- tell Uniting if the household income or family circumstances change
- supply evidence of the change within 21 days of the change occurring.

Uniting representatives will:

- use the information provided to reassess the household's rent payment.

3.6. Changes in household income

If a renter tells Uniting about an increase in household income due to changes in employment outside of the annual income review, Uniting will delay reassessment and calculation of that household's income rent by at least 3 months.

If employment income is variable, Uniting will assess the average income earned over 13-weeks.

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If a renter tells Uniting that household income has reduced, Uniting will immediately reassess household income to calculate a reduction in rent.

3.7. A renter may ask for a review

A renter may ask for a review of rent.

Uniting representatives will:

- Respond in writing within 28 days to a request for review of rent.
- Re-assess rent payable based on the appropriate method.
- tell the of any changes in rent payable in writing.

3.8. How to pay rent

Rent is payable by electronic bank transfer to the nominated Uniting account. Details are in the renter pack.

3.9. Renter obligations

A renter must:

- pay rent and any service charges in full and on time according to the rental agreement.
- advise Uniting of changes in household circumstances

If a renter does not pay rent according to the rental agreement, Uniting representatives will:

- work with the renter and support services to sustain the tenancy
- may enter a repayment agreement for the unpaid rent
- consider taking action under the Act
- refer to the [Breach of tenancy policy](#)
- refer to the [Sustaining tenancies policy](#)

4. Legislation/Regulations

National

Age Discrimination Act 2004 (Cth)

Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)

Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)

National Rental Affordability Scheme Act 2008 (Cth)

National Rental Affordability Scheme Regulations 2020 (Cth)

Tasmania

Community Housing Providers National Law (Tasmania) Act 2013 (Tas)

[Family Violence Act 2004 \(Tas\)](#)

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Victoria

Housing Act 1983 (Vic)

Residential Tenancies Act 1997 (Vic)

Residential Tenancies Regulations 2021 (Vic)

Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)

Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 (Vic)

Public Health and Wellbeing (Prescribed Accommodation) Regulations 2020 (Vic)

Noise (Residential) Accommodation Services

Environment Protection (Residential Noise) Regulations 2018 (Vic)

Environment Protection Act 2017 (Vic)

Environment Protection Regulations 2021 (Vic)

Guidelines for Registered Housing Agencies published by DFFH (where applicable)

Performance Standards for Registered Housing Agencies

Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework (MARAM)

Charter of Human rights

5. Related documents

Breach of tenancy policy

Changing Needs Policy

Eligibility and Allocations Policy

Relief due to Hardship Policy

Rent Arrears Policy

Sustaining tenancies policy

[Rent setting and rebate operational guideline assessable income - DFFH Service Providers](#)

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