Policy name	**Rent Management Policy and Procedure**
Policy number	THF PL03
Policy group	Tenancy Management
Version	3.1
Status	Ratified
Date ratified	March 2025
Due for review	March 2028
Owner/s	ED Housing Strategy
Ratified by	ED Housing Strategy

Purpose
To ensure THF calculation and collection of resident rental payments comply with the relevant requirements set under the policies established by the Department of Families Fairness and Housing.

Scope
This policy applies to all residents who live in properties managed by THF.

Definitions
In this policy:

Appeal	When a person asks for a review of a decision of The Haven Foundation (THF) to which this policy applies.
Applicant	A person who THF assists to apply for community housing.
Centrelink	Government agency that provides financial support services.
Centrepay	The online government portal which THF use to obtain payments such as rent and additional charges (where applicable).
CRA	Commonwealth Rental Assistance.
DFFH	Department of Families Fairness and Housing.
Resident/tenant	A person who previously or currently resides in a property owned or managed by THF.
Service Provider	The provider of psychosocial support for tenants, through their NDIS SIL or Core Support package, as provided by the support provider (Mind Australia).
Statutory Declaration	A written statement which is signed and declared to be true and correct in the presence of an authorised witness.

THF	The Haven Foundation.
VHR	The Victorian Housing Register, the state-wide common application for people seeking social housing, which can be accessed via THF, DHHS, the MyGov portal or designated support providers.

Policy statement

THF will ensure that all residents are current applicants on the Victorian Housing Register and have incomes that are below the 30% Household Income Limits, as published by DFFH. Residents of THF will be charged a maximum of 30% of gross income (in most instances this is the Disability Support Pension), plus any Commonwealth Rental Assistance received. Gross income is determined in accordance with the Commonwealth's Assessable Income guidelines.

Rental calculations are made to support the following principles:

- To provide a balance between residents' responsibilities to THF and THF being supportive of the residents in difficult financial circumstances.
- Rent is managed in accordance with relevant Residential Tenancy Legislation requirements and performance is reviewed annually.
- Ensure information about provision of rental assistance and housing assistance is provided in formats suitable for tenants and relevant communities.
- To ensure that THF maintains its financial viability.

Eligibility

Income and Asset test and Social Housing eligibility is set by DFFH, with limits and criteria published on the Housing Victoria Website. This includes their housing eligibility criteria, income limits, and housing priority categories. THF allocates properties to residents based on THF Allocations Policy criteria and the criteria of the Victorian Housing Register.

Procedure

Rent calculation method & maximum rents

Rent will be calculated in accordance with the DFFH policies. The maximum rent chargeable will be determined by the DFFH (Currently 30% of income plus any CRA or other eligible benefits).

THF will seek to maximise its rental income however, due to hardship considerations, THF may decide to charge rent at an amount that is less than the maximum specified in the Lease, or to introduce an increase at a date later than recommended under the tenancy agreement.

Additional charges

Residents may incur charges additional to rent, such as service charges. All additional charges will be communicated with residents and must not exceed the charge for the service.

Provision of household income information

To be eligible for rebated rental, a resident must provide on a timely basis, independent documentary evidence of all household income received. Residents will be required by their tenancy agreement to provide these details to THF any time there is a change in their household income within two weeks of that change.

THF will undertake household income reviews once to twice per year, normally at the time the Centrelink payments are automatically increased by the Consumer Price Index (CPI) rate. Residents will be expected to complete consent forms to enable THF to obtain information that is necessary for the review.

For all THF household income reviews, residents will have a period of at least four weeks in which to provide the appropriate documentary evidence of household income to the THF. When providing household income details at any time, residents may be requested to provide a signed Statutory Declaration when details are provided from sources other than Centrelink.

Failure by resident to provide household income information

THF Arrears Policy will direct the process for when residents fall into arrears due to late notification of household income changes. Residents who do not provide their full household income and Statutory Declaration documentation to THF within the Income Review deadline provided, may automatically be charged market rent as from that deadline until such time as the information is provided.

Rent based on the new income information provided will only be charged from the Sunday after the date the information was received.

Annual estimation method of rent payable

Residents may be required to provide an annual estimate of household income where a significant part of the household income is highly variable. An example of this is when a resident is self-employed. These residents must provide to THF, by the end of August each year, appropriate documentary evidence (Australian Tax Office Notice of Income Assessment plus where applicable Centrelink Annual Income Statement) of the previous financial year's actual income, plus the Statutory Declaration form as above, including details of all persons living at the property and their dates of birth. A resident’s ability to use the annual estimation method will be decided by THF with consultation from their primary carer or support service provider.

Method for payment of rent

Rent may be paid weekly, fortnightly, or monthly by arrangement. The preferred method of payment is through deposit into THF nominated bank account via CentrePay.

Residents receiving Centrelink payments will be encouraged to complete a CentrePay deduction form that automatically deducts rent from their payment and deposits the amount into a THF nominated account.

For residents who have their finances managed by financial administrators (i.e. State Trustees) THF will work with them to ensure payment of rent is made.

Due dates of rent payments
THF requires that rent be paid so that the resident's rent balance remains in advance at all times, regardless of how rent is paid (refer above section). On the date the rent is paid the rent balance should be at least 14 days in advance.

Information on rent accounts
A resident may request and be provided with a copy of their rent statement at any time.

Rental and Housing Assistance Information
THF has an obligation to provide information to residents about their rights and responsibilities, rental and housing assistance (to potential and actual residents) in an easy to access and read format, consistent with that person's culture and identity. The support service provider may assist clients to understand this material where needed.

Appeals
Applicants who have been rejected for housing may appeal to THF, in accordance with the Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure, if they believe their application has been treated unfairly.

Related Policies and Standards
Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure
Arrears Management Policy
Allocations Policy
Residential Tenancies Act (1997)

Document Change History

Version	Status*	Comments	Prepared by	Ratified by	Date Issued
2	Ratified	Revised and Reviewed	D Parker	ED of Housing Strategy	8/12/2022
3	Ratified	Reviewed	J Duncan & H Marshall	ED Housing Strategy	01/07/2024
3.1	Ratified	Removed 75% discount market rent	H Marshall	ED Housing Strategy	404/03/2025