

THE HAVEN FOUNDATION LTD

Policy Manual

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Contents:

1. Purpose 1

2. Basis for policy 1

3. Rent Management Policy..... 2

 3.1 Rent calculation method and maximum rents 2

 3.2 Member provision of household income information 2

 3.3 Failure by member to provide household income information 3

 3.4 Exemptions 3

 3.5 Annual estimation method of rent payable 3

 3.6 Method for payment of rent..... 3

 3.7 Due dates of rent payments..... 4

 3.8 Information on rent accounts 4

4. Authorities / Responsibilities 4

5. Related Documents / Background 4

1. Purpose

- To ensure that The Haven Foundation's calculation and collection of tenant rental payments comply with the Residential Tenancies Act and any applicable Office of Housing requirements.
- To ensure that The Haven Foundation maintains its financial viability.
- To provide a balance between tenants' responsibilities to The Haven Foundation and The Haven Foundation being supportive of the tenants in difficult financial circumstances.

2. Basis for policy

Department of Human Services' (DHS) Rental Rebate Policy
 Housing Provider Framework Lease and Property Management Agreement

3. Rent Management Policy

3.1 Rent calculation method and maximum rents

Rental will be calculated in accordance with the Department of Human Services (DHS) Rental Rebate Policy and Procedure Manual, as determined from time to time.

The Rental Rebate Policy and Procedure Manual is used to determine assessable and non-assessable income. The maximum rent chargeable for a property is the applicable Market Rent for the property as determined by the DHS from time to time.

For tenants paying less than Market Rent, the maximum rent chargeable will be determined by the formula in the DHS Rental Rebate Policy from time to time. This will include the maximum Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA) if they are eligible to receive CRA.

The Haven Foundation will seek to maximise its rental income. However, from time to time, due to hardship considerations, The Haven Foundation directors may decide to charge rent at an amount that is less than the maximum specified in the HPF Lease, or to introduce an increase at a date later than recommended under the DHS notifications.

3.2 Member provision of household income information

To be eligible for rebated rental, a tenant must provide, on a timely basis, independent documentary evidence of all household income received.

Tenants will be required by their tenancy agreement to provide these details to The Haven Foundation any time there is a change in their household income within two (2) weeks of that change.

The Haven Foundation will also undertake household income reviews at least twice per year, normally at the time the Centrelink payments are automatically increased by the Consumer Price Index (CPI) rate. Tenants will be expected to complete consent forms (see Attachment 1) to enable The Haven Foundation to obtain information that is necessary for the review.

For all The Haven Foundation household income reviews, tenants will have a period of at least 4 weeks in which to provide the appropriate documentary evidence of household income to The Haven Foundation office.

When providing household income details at any time, tenants must also provide the signed Statutory Declaration in the form provided by the Office of Housing from time to time.

3.3 Failure by member to provide household income information

Tenants who fall into arrears due to late notification of household income changes will be dealt with under the Arrears Policy.

Tenants who do not provide their full household income and Statutory Declaration documentation to The Haven Foundation within the Income Review deadline provided, will automatically be charged market rent as from that deadline until such time as the information is provided.

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

3.4 Exemptions

Tenants who agree to pay the applicable market rent for their property as determined by the Office of Housing from time to time will be exempt from the above requirements.

3.5 Annual estimation method of rent payable

Tenants 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 tenant is self-employed.

These tenants must provide to the office, 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 tenant's ability to use the annual estimation method will be decided by the CEO.

3.6 Method for payment of rent

Rent may be paid weekly, fortnightly or monthly **by arrangement**.

The normal method of payment is through deposit into The Haven Foundation's nominated bank account. If rent is paid in cash, the cash receipt needs to be witnessed by two (2) directors or a director and a staff member. An official receipt shall be issued and the monies banked within 24 hours.

Tenants receiving Centrelink payments will be encouraged to complete a Centrepay deduction form (see Attachment 2) that automatically deducts rent from their payment and deposits the amount into a The Haven Foundation nominated account.

3.7 Due dates of rent payments

The Haven Foundation requires that rent be paid so that the member'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 fourteen (14) days in advance.

3.8 Information on rent accounts

A tenant may request and be provided with a copy of their rent statement at any time.

4. Authorities / Responsibilities

Under the Rent Policy, the CEO is responsible for compliance with all of the above policy requirements.

The CEO will report to the Board regarding which tenants have been charged market rent due to the late notification of household income details as provided above.

It is the CEO's responsibility to ensure that all information regarding tenants' income be kept confidential and is stored in the appropriate lockable cabinet.

5. Related Documents / Background

Rent Arrears Policy
Residential Tenancies Act
DHS Rental Rebate Policy and Procedures Manual

THIS POLICY IS TO BE REVIEWED ANNUALLY