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AUTHORISED BY:                BAH Board

## ALLOCATIONS POLICY

### 1. PURPOSE

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The purpose of Baptcare Affordable Housing's (BAH) Allocations Policy is to explain to tenants and prospective tenants how BAH determines eligibility and allocates to its properties.

### 2. SCOPE

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This policy applies to all long-term rental properties owned and/or managed by BAH.

### 3. PRINCIPLES

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BAH establishes eligibility and allocation criteria for its housing program in order to:

- fulfil its social mission
- ensure that its housing is made available to relieve households from housing stress.
- ensure the allocations criteria support the financial viability of its housing programs
- ensure that all BAH's eligibility assessments and allocations are undertaken in a clear and transparent manner and
- ensure compliance with BAH's contractual, legal and regulatory obligations.

### 4. ALLOCATIONS

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BAH is a participating registered agency under the Victorian Housing Register (VHR). When BAH has a vacant property it will generally make an allocation of housing from the VHR, in accordance with its agreed Social Housing List. However, Determinations of the Director of Housing allow BAH to use discretion and apply agency-specific eligibility and allocation policies and also in accordance with any nomination agreements which may be in place.

In addition, where properties fall outside BAH's agreed Social Housing List, allocations may be made from outside the VHR. For example, from:

- Local churches
- Referrals from support services

- Partner agencies
- Through direct contact with BAH

Allocations may include new applicants or tenants who have been approved for transfer from both the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and other participating registered agencies.

## 5. ELIGIBILITY

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BAH requires all applicants to its agreed Social Housing List to be eligible to be registered with the VHR. All applicants with a current VHR application are taken by BAH to meet the VHR eligibility criteria.

Where an applicant is being considered for a vacancy and is without a current VHR application but meets the VHR eligibility criteria and is suitable for that vacancy then we will ensure the applicant completes a VHR application at the time of making an offer of housing.

Applicants can complete VHR applications in the following ways:

- online through MyGov at [www.my.gov.au](http://www.my.gov.au),
- in person at any Department of Health and Human Services office or community housing organisation that accepts applications over the counter
- through a designated service provider.

Information about the process and full eligibility criteria are available on Housing Victoria's website at [www.housing.vic.gov.au/apply-social-housing](http://www.housing.vic.gov.au/apply-social-housing).

To be eligible for the VHR an applicant must generally live in Victoria and:

- Be an Australian citizen or permanent resident of Australia
- Meet the income and eligibility limits for their household
- Have an independent income
- Not own a property in which they could live.

Exceptions to these criteria may be made under certain circumstances, for example, where an applicant is experiencing family violence.

Exceptions to these criteria may also apply to any properties owned and/or managed by BAH that are not on the agreed Social Housing List.

Income and asset eligibility criteria are updated regularly and published on the Housing Victoria website.

## 6. SPECIFIC ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

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BAH may apply additional eligibility criteria for a specific property depending on the housing program. This may include an allocation that is targeted towards specific groups, including but not limited to:

- Older women aged 55+ living in insecure housing and at risk of homelessness
- Applicants with significant links to the local area where housing is sought
- Applicants with support services in the area where housing is sought
- Applicants with employment in the area where housing is sought
- Households who meet other eligibility criteria as set by housing programs such as the National Rental Affordability Criteria (NRAC)
- Applicants who can demonstrate they have sufficient income to pay the rent for a property and that the rent does not exceed 30% of their income

BAH will communicate clearly with applicants and stakeholders as to the particular eligibility criteria that will apply to that property or program prior to an allocation being made.

## 7. ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR ELIGIBILITY

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In addition to meeting the VHR eligibility criteria for the BAH Social Housing List, all applicants must:

- Have no previous debt with BAH, or have entered into a debt repayment agreement where such a debt exists
- Be able to demonstrate that, where anti-social behaviour has occurred in a previous tenancy, a plan is in place to ensure that such behaviour will not continue to occur
- Be aged 18 years and over
- Not have ownership or part ownership of a house, unit or flat unless they are prevented from selling their equity or residing in the property due to specific circumstance such as Family Violence

## 8. APPROACH TO ALLOCATION

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### **The Victorian Housing Register**

For all allocations to its Social Housing List BAH will seek applicants from the VHR. BAH will allocate 75% of vacancies in Targeted Social Housing to applicants who are on the Priority Access list of the VHR.

In order to manage its portfolio of properties in a dynamic manner, BAH may also choose to allocate properties outside its Targeted Social Housing to Priority Access applicants.

### **Sourcing applicants**

BAH will first seek suitable applicants from the VHR.

There may be instances when no suitable applicants are available from the VHR. Under these circumstances, BAH will seek applications from other sources and ensure that all applicants are VHR eligible and have completed a VHR application before being offered housing. This is done for the purposes of reporting against the VHR Priority Allocations Target.

Sources of applications outside the VHR may include referrals from support services, partner agencies, and local churches and through direct contact with BAH. Such applications may be for our Social Housing List as well as properties that fall outside the list as agreed with DHHS.

### **Nomination rights**

Where nomination rights apply, BAH will:

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

## **9. MATCHING HOUSEHOLDS TO THE RIGHT HOUSING**

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In order to ensure that BAH manages its properties in the most efficient and effective manner, applicants will be matched 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 and/or managed by BAH
- Encourages a sustainable tenancy
- Meets any 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

BAH 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
- Properties with a yard/garden

## 10. SUPPORTING SUSTAINABLE AND HARMONIOUS COMMUNITIES

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BAH 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 neighbourhood tensions or disputes which may be exacerbated if allocations are not sensitively handled
- A mismatch of supply and demand making the property hard to let

## 11. DEFINITIONS

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In this policy:

Applicant	Means a person who has applied for housing via the VHR or, where permitted by this policy, directly to BAH
DHHS	Means the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services
Director of Housing	Means the Victorian government statutory authority that owns all public housing land in Victoria and is the principal funding body for community housing
Nomination rights	Means arrangements between BAH and third party support providers where the support provider nominates applicants for certain vacant properties
Priority Access	Applicants on the VHR who have been assessed as having a priority housing need. The priority Access categories are: <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>• Special housing needs</li> <li>• Special housing needs (aged 55 years and over)</li> </ul>
Public Housing	Housing owned and managed by DHHS
Social Housing	Housing that is owned and managed by either DHHS or a community housing provider
Social Housing List	Means the list of BAH's social housing set out in Schedule 2 of the <b><i>Participation in the Victorian Housing Register: Registered Agency Agreement</i></b> . This includes all agreed Targeted Social Housing and Non-Targeted Social Housing but does not necessarily include all housing owned and/or managed by BAH.
Targeted social housing	The properties that are considered Targeted Social Housing under agreements between BAH and the Director of Housing Victorian Housing Register (VHR)

Victorian Housing Register (VHR)	The statewide common application for people seeking public housing and community housing
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## 12. RELATED DOCUMENTS, STANDARDS AND LEGISLATION

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BAH Transfers and Succession Policy

Housing Act 1983 (Vic)

Residential Tenancies Act 1997 (Vic)

Housing Registrar Performance Standards

DHHS Victorian Register Operational Guidelines

Legal agreements between BAH and the Director of housing relating to the Victorian Housing Register and funding programs

## 13. MONITORING AND REVIEW

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This policy will be periodically reviewed and revised at periods not exceeding two years. This policy will also be reviewed in relation to all new contracts to provide additional housing and revised as needed to ensure compliance.

## 14. TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

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This policy will be available on the BAH website: [www.baptcare.org.au/services/housing/affordable-housing](http://www.baptcare.org.au/services/housing/affordable-housing)