



Rapid Rehousing - Fact Sheet

(Version 3.0. December 2016)

What this action looks like

Family violence can mean victims or perpetrators have to leave the family home. Rapid Rehousing helps people affected by family violence move into safe and affordable rental homes.

The Tasmanian Government has allocated \$2.4 million over four years for Rapid Rehousing. \$2 million is for property related costs with a further \$400 000 to provide housing support and coordinate support services.

Community housing providers will progressively establish and maintain a total pool of a minimum of 50 homes for those affected by family violence.

For each property approved by Housing Tasmania, a payment of \$10 000 will be made to the community housing provider to assist with costs (including rent and security).

Housing Connect can assist with identifying private rental properties for lease by community housing providers and delivers and coordinates support. It is an important source of referral for suitable clients as are homelessness services, Safe @ Home, Tasmania Police, Family Violence Counselling and Support Service, Defendant Health Liaison and Court Support.¹

Housing Connect will continue providing support to help families and individuals whilst in Rapid Rehousing and beyond.

What this means for those affected by family violence

This program adds to the housing options already available to those affected by family violence. People can still access crisis and other housing and support services in the usual way through Housing Connect.

Homes will be safe. It is critical that people feel safe in their new homes and are able to recover from the trauma of family violence. Allocations will be sensitive to the needs of affected clients.

Community housing providers are responsible for allocating suitable families and individuals to Rapid Rehousing.

The time housed in these properties is flexible. Leases will be for a short term (3 months or less) in the first instance but can be extended up to a maximum of 12 months.

Affordable homes will be made available and ready to occupy. Rent payable will not exceed 30 per cent of income.

¹ Safe Families Tasmania – Safe Choices will also be established by mid-2016



Who will be assisted?

The initiative will help families and individuals who are leaving a violent relationship. Perpetrators who need alternative housing so the family can remain in the family home will also be assisted. In general perpetrators may have a Police or Court Order in place. However, discretion can be exercised to determine appropriate assistance within the program.

Families and individuals with goals towards reunification should work with services on achieving those goals through an alternative program.

Where a family or individual reunites with the perpetrator of family violence Housing Connect and the community housing provider will work with relevant services, including Safe @ home, police and support services, to transition the family or individual to alternative accommodation.

All applicants must be 16 or over and be able to live independently. There are no income or asset eligibility requirements for Rapid Rehousing. There is no requirement for Australian citizenship or residency in Tasmania.

Some people assisted may already have a housing application, others may not. All clients are encouraged to complete a housing application to improve their ability to secure long term accommodation.

Clients with an existing housing application

Households escaping from family violence with an existing housing application are assessed as priority applicants under the Housing Assessment and Prioritisation System (HAPS).

Perpetrators with an existing housing application may or may not have priority status.

Whether Rapid Rehousing clients are priority or general, those who are allocated Rapid Rehousing with a lease of less than 12 months will retain their active application and status.

New clients without an existing housing application

Some families and individuals suitable for Rapid Rehousing may not have an existing housing application.

These clients should be referred to Housing Connect for assessment under HAPS.

Housing Connect will explore all housing options for the longer term and assist people to transition out of Rapid Rehousing assistance to longer term housing.

How tenants will be selected

Housing Connect, community housing providers and Housing Tasmania will work collaboratively with other service providers to coordinate the housing and support needs of people affected by family violence.

People experiencing family violence are prioritised under the HAPS. When evidence cannot be demonstrated then discretion may be required in some cases to ensure families and individuals are suitably prioritised.

Referrals for Rapid Rehousing for suitable families and individuals are managed by Housing Connect.

Community housing providers are responsible for allocations where they own and/or manage the property.



How tenants exit Rapid Rehousing

Rapid Rehousing provides safe short to medium term accommodation. It is not a long term accommodation option.

When families or individuals move into a Rapid Rehousing property both Housing Connect and the community housing provider will work with the client to plan their exit into longer term accommodation (including private, public and community housing) as soon as practical. It is expected the initial lease period with clients will be for three months with extensions up to a maximum of 12 months.

Where a client exceeds 12 months in a property the accommodation will be deemed to have become long term. At this point the client, where it is a positive, sustainable and desired outcome, may assume a lease for the property direct with the owner/agent. Both Housing Connect and the community housing provider will work to ensure a smooth transition into a new arrangement with the private owner/agent. Where this situation occurs the property will no longer be eligible for a further grant under Rapid Rehousing (subject to discretion by the Director).

If the family or individual vacate the property after leasing directly with the owner/agent then the property could again be submitted to Housing Tasmania for approval for a Rapid Rehousing grant.

What this means for Housing Connect

Housing Connect has four key roles:

1. identification of private rental properties
2. assessment of housing and support needs
3. referral of suitable families and individuals

4. provision of housing support, including case coordination, maintaining linkages with therapeutic services and exit planning for the end of the lease.

How referrals will be made

All referrals for Rapid Rehousing should be made to Housing Connect on 1800 800 588 (free call 24 hours).

Housing Connect will inform services and providers of the Rapid Rehousing initiative including eligibility and how to make referrals.

Families and individuals may approach Housing Connect directly or be referred by a range of referral services listed above. These services may have already undertaken a risk assessment of the families or individuals circumstances and can provide advice about the suitability for Rapid Rehousing.

What type of support is provided by Housing Connect?

Funding of \$400 000 over four years has been allocated to Housing Connect to provide housing support and coordinate support services for clients.

Housing Connect will ensure a Family Violence Worker in each region is available to coordinate the intake and assessment and to make referrals to community housing providers and Housing Tasmania.

Housing Connect support workers will engage with Rapid Rehousing tenants to plan for their long term housing solutions and to connect them to appropriate therapeutic care if this is needed.



What this means for housing providers

Community housing providers and Housing Connect identify homes of various sizes in well located areas and are responsible for allocation of suitable tenants.

Housing Tasmania prescribes and approves the location and suitability of the properties. Refer to page five (p. 5).

Housing Tasmania will make a payment of \$10 000 per home following approval of a property, confirmation the property has been occupied and confirmation any conditions of approval have been satisfied. Community housing providers, as the tenancy manager, are responsible for:

- necessary security upgrades, furniture and appliances
- bond and rent
- water and electricity costs, if necessary
- any costs normally a tenant responsibility
- managing the property and tenancy according to the *Residential Tenancy Act 1997*.

Community housing providers can apply for funding for security upgrades from Department of Justice under the 'Keeping women Safe in their home program'. Further information is available from the Safe at Home Coordination Unit at safeathome@justice.tas.gov.au or ph. (03) 6165 4986.

What this means for therapeutic, statutory services and crisis shelters.

Therapeutic, statutory services and crisis shelters should contact the Family Violence Worker in Housing Connect to refer clients who may be suitable for Rapid Rehousing.

Approval and re-approval of properties

Properties may be approved for a period of up to three years. Community housing providers will submit a Property Approval Form to Housing Tasmania to seek approval for all properties. Providers will be advised of a decision within two business days. The provider must not use the dwelling or proceed to obtain a lease until the provider has been notified of a decision by Housing Tasmania.

Application for re-approval of a dwelling must occur not less than 10 weeks prior to expiry of the initial approval. The provider will submit a Re-Approval Form to Housing Tasmania. Where a client has been in a property for 12 months or more a further grant will not be approved (subject to discretion of the Director).

Tenancy arrangements and rent

All tenants must be protected by the *Residential Tenancy Act 1997* (RTA).

Where the property *is owned by a community housing provider*, the tenancy agreement must be between the community housing provider and the tenant and the rent paid to the community housing provider.

Where the property *is owned by an associated entity* of the community housing provider, the tenancy agreement must be between the associated entity and the tenant and the rent paid to the associated entity.

Where the property *is privately owned*, then a tenancy agreement will be between the community housing provider and the owner/landlord. Then an agreement will also be required between the community housing provider and the subtenant. This can only be done by a Registered Housing Provider or the Director of Housing as prescribed in the RTA.



The private owner or agent will be paid the market or negotiated rent by the community housing provider. The subtenant will pay an affordable rent to the community housing provider which will not exceed 30 per cent of income (plus Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA) if available).

How success will be measured

- Safe** families and individuals affected by family violence feel safe in their homes
- Affordable** community housing providers cover any gap between income based and market rent
- Available** homes are made ready to occupy
- Appropriate** homes are well located and meet the needs of families and individuals affected
- Effective** tenants leaving Rapid Rehousing exit to secure, affordable housing

How the program will be administered

Housing Tasmania has entered into a Crown Grant Deed with community housing providers. A one-off payment of \$10 000 per property will be made (a minimum of \$500 000 per annum or 50 properties per annum). Properties must be available for tenancing before the \$10 000 will be paid.

Payments will be demand driven and provided on a 'first in first serve' basis.

There is a maximum of 10 properties in the total pool of properties that can be owned by community housing providers. The remaining properties will be leased from private owners/landlords where the community housing provider is the lessee.

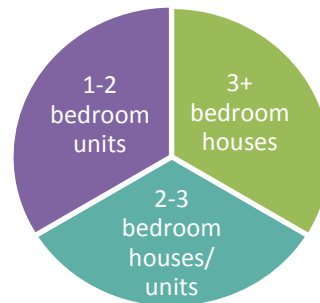
Types of properties

A range of property sizes are needed:

Small units for 1-2 adults, no children, and possibly small/medium pets

Medium units or small/medium houses for 1-2 adults plus 1-3 children, and possibly small/medium pets

Medium/large houses for 1-2 adults, 4+ children, and possibly small/medium pets.



Other desirable attributes

Accessible properties should be sought where possible.

Properties must meet minimum standards under the *Residential Tenancy Act 1997*.

Location of properties

Properties must be located in close proximity to services, especially:

- a police station (preferably staffed 24 hours)
- public transport
- preschool, primary and high schools
- child care services
- health services
- shops/grocery stores (open on weekends)

Properties in small regional towns are not preferred (though exceptions may apply) as the occupants may be too visible in smaller communities and the full suite of services and transport may not be present and available.



Table I: Preferred location of properties

South	North	Northwest
<p>West side of the Derwent, spanning the northern suburban corridor to the south including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Glenorchy area (near Glenorchy, Claremont, Moonah, West Moonah) • New Norfolk • Inner Hobart area • Kingston • Huonville <p>East side of the Derwent:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarence area (near Bellerive/Rosny) 	<p>West, South and Inner areas of Launceston including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launceston area (near inner Launceston, Newnham, Invermay, Kings Meadows, Norwood, Punchbowl, Youngtown) • Riverside • Prospect • Hadspen <p>Regional areas including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • George Town • Deloraine • Scottsdale • St Helens 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Devonport • Burnie • Ulverstone • Wynyard • Penguin • Smithton • Queenstown
<p>NB: Top priority areas are listed in bold type. Properties in Better Housing Futures areas are not appropriate for this initiative. Properties outside these locations may be agreed in some circumstances.</p>		



Table 2: Identifying safer properties

Preferred property attributes	Not preferred
Near other residential properties, with foot and vehicle traffic.	In a commercial or industrial area away from other homes. In a small town where everybody knows everybody.
Surrounded by other houses.	Property located adjacent to public area, park or vacant land.
Fenced front and rear yard.	Unfenced property.
Clear line of sight from property to street, outdoor security lighting.	Fence, building or vegetation obscures path from street to front door or there is not enough light to see people approach.
Two external entrances, solid doors – able to check identity of visitors without opening the door.	Only one entrance, hollow core door(s). Resident cannot identify visitor without opening door.
Windows provide natural light and can be secured in a way to prevent access to the home.	Insecure windows that enable people to enter the home.
NB: Discretion may be required in some cases	