

BaptistCare Community Services Community Housing Program

APPLICANTS INFORMATION PACKAGE

Vision Statement

BaptistCare is committed to transforming lives by expressing the love of Christ. We have identified that a significant need for many in our community is the need for housing. In response to this identified need BaptistCare has developed a strategy to increase the supply of affordable housing for older people. We will continue to seek more housing opportunities.

Community Housing Mission

The provision of a physical dwelling while key in meeting the needs of many in our society it is imperative that tenants have access to support services that sustain accommodation and allow ageing in place and a connection to their community. To ensure the full needs of our clients are addressed BaptistCare continues to implement innovative options to secure funding for sustainable growth and to ensure Housing is adaptable and accessible and that tenants are able to engage and connect with other service providers and their community at large to enable a long term stable tenancy. We can only achieve this through working in partnership with the tenants and other local community groups.

BaptistCare Housing Models

BaptistCare Housing program consists of different models for different needs.

Community/Social Housing

BaptistCare provides housing similar to that which is provided by Housing NSW. Applicants eligible for HNSW can apply for this housing.

Seniors Housing

BaptistCare has housing specifically for Seniors in Lismore, Goulburn, Springwood and Five Dock.

Senior Communities are social housing complexes that house older people who want to live near other older people with similar interests and needs and there are formal

and informal support systems for older people in place. BaptistCare manages Senior communities as we have strong links with aged care services and our housing is suited to older people with good access to shops, transport and other services. Tenants are eligible for Senior Community property if they are:

- A single client aged 55 years and over, or 45 and over if Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
- A couple where one person is aged 55 years and over, or 45 and over if Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
- A two-person adult household where one person is aged 55 years and over, or 45 and over if Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

BaptistCare will individually assess applicants where an occupant is under 45 years; however, preference is given to all occupants being over 45 years due to the design of the properties and the links to aged care.

Affordable Housing

Community Housing is also about providing housing that is affordable and well located for people on low and moderate income. If you are working and have a need to live in a specific area but can't afford the market rent, this program might suit you. Contact BaptistCare to get an application form for Affordable Housing. Once you lodge an application form we will send you information on locations, waiting times and conditions of living in affordable housing.

Social Housing Information

Applications

Applicants eligible for Social Housing need to lodge an application for housing assistance with the local Housing NSW office.

Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible for BaptistCare community social housing you need to meet the following criteria:

- Be a citizen or have permanent residency in Australia
- Be eligible for and on the Housing NSW housing register
- Be resident in NSW
- Have a household income within the income eligibility limits (social housing) – refer Attachment
- Not own any assets or property which could reasonably be expected to resolve

- their housing need (there may be exceptions in certain circumstances)
- Be able to sustain a successful tenancy, with or without support
- If a former tenant of public or community housing, make repayments of any former debts to Housing NSW or the relevant community housing provider
- The person entering into the tenancy agreement must be 18 years of age or older

Eligibility Evidence

To prove your eligibility you will need to supply the following when you lodge your application with HNSW

- Income Statements
- Documentation supporting need for housing, e.g. letter from support worker, medical certificate
- Personal Identification, e.g. driver's license, pension card, birth certificate.

For HNSW to be able to provide us with your details when you complete the HNSW Housing Assistance form you need to sign the consent for release of information and that you wish to be considered for Community Housing.

Property Type

The type of properties we have to offer is affordable housing. This means basic housing which meets your housing need. Therefore the property will be safe, sound, and habitable BUT MAY NOT:

- Have a garage or carport
- Be newly painted or brand new
- Be a free standing or single level property
- Be walking distance to shops schools – but will be near transport
- Have air conditioning, separate dining or en suite bathrooms.

We cannot guarantee to offer the above facilities.

Location need

If the area you want is a very high demand area you may be asked to provide evidence of your need for housing in the area.

Bedroom Categories

Our bedroom allocation is the same as Housing NSW. The number of bedrooms you will be eligible for is as follows:

Household Size	Bedroom Entitlement
Single	1
Couple	1
2 adults or 1 adult with 1 - 2 children	2
2 adults or 1 adult with 3 - 4 children	3
2 adults or 1 adult with 5 or more children	4
Two or more single adults	One bedroom per adult
Extended families	1 bedroom per single adult or couple and 1 - 2 children per bedroom

Bedroom categories can also be dependent on age of children, custody arrangements, and medical conditions. If you consider you have a need for additional bedroom talk to our Housing Workers. (see HNSW policy).

Allocating a Property

When you lodge your HNSW application you will go on the HNSW waiting list according to your status, chosen location, bedroom size and other essential needs. When a BaptistCare property becomes available we will access the HNSW waiting list to find applicants which the property may suit.

We will contact potential tenants and you will be asked to attend an interview. BaptistCare houses are allocated to applicants according to priority need for housing. We will also confirm you are still eligible for social housing.

We cannot tell you the waiting time for vacancies in our properties as this relies on tenants vacating or us getting new properties.

Offers

If you are selected we will arrange for you to inspect the property on offer. You will have 2 days to view the property and let us know if wish to accept or decline the property.

If you do not respond within 2 working days, we will assume that you are not interested in accepting the property and this will be classified as a rejection.

You will be asked to sign whether you accept or refuse a property.

Number of Offers

You will be eligible for a maximum of two reasonable offers of housing from BaptistCare. In some instances if BaptistCare housing is limited in that region, there may be considerable length of time before we can make a second offer. If you decline our offer you will remain on the HNSW waiting list. If you decline the second offer from BaptistCare you will be removed from our waiting list.

If you decline the first offer you will receive only one more offer unless you can prove the offer is not suitable. This would include providing us with additional evidence of special needs.

If you believe the second offer was not suitable you will need to provide a letter and any other supporting documents to us within 14 days. The letter should explain your reasons for rejecting the offer. We will consider any information you have provided as to why you did not want to accept the offer. We will advise you whether the offer will be classed as a cancellation or a rejection. If you do not provide a letter within 14 days, the offer will be considered reasonable. When two reasonable offers are rejected your name will be removed from the waiting list.

Suitable Offer

A suitable offer means that we have met your need by offering a property that meets your bedroom size and a suitable location, not a specific suburb, and any special needs as demonstrated in your application.

Accepting the Offer

If you accept the offer the Housing Worker will tell you what needs to happen before you can move in, and when you can expect the property to be ready.

Moving In

When you accept the home you have been offered, BaptistCare will expect you to move in as quickly as is reasonably possible to avoid lengthy vacancies of houses. At the time of accepting the offer, your Housing Worker will make an appointment time for signing the tenancy agreement.

The tenancy agreement you will sign is the same as the agreement tenants sign with a real estate agent, giving you full rights under the Residential Tenancy Act. If you are being housed under a specific program, there may be an additional clause explaining the conditions of the program.

Department of Housing application

If you are allocated a capital property, we will notify the Department of Housing that you are now a tenant of our housing program. It is likely that your name will be removed from their waiting list.

Appeals

If you don't agree with BaptistCare decisions you can appeal the removal of your name from the waiting list. Firstly, talk to the Housing Manager to ensure there has been no misunderstandings. If this does not resolve the issue, then you will need to complete the appeals form and lodge with our Senior Manager. Your appeal will be investigated. If you are not satisfied with the decision you can then ask for the Housing Appeal Committee to review the decision.

Rent & Other Charges

Before you sign your Tenancy Agreement, BaptistCare will ask you to provide us with evidence of the total gross income of every member of the household. This includes any wages, Pensions, Benefits, Child Support Payments and overseas pensions, etc. In general, rent for community Housing is assessed at 25% to 30% of the gross income of everyone living in the house who is employed, or at 25% to 30% of the pension and benefits of all adults, plus 100% of rent assistance, and 11% - 15% of Family Tax Payment A and B. If you would like a copy of the full rent assessment policy please ask at the office. No household pays more than the market rent for their home as their rent. The 'Market Rent' is assessed as the rent that could be received if the property was leased through a real estate agent, and is stated on your tenancy agreement.

How to Pay Rent

The following ways of paying your rent are available; they need to be discussed when you sign your tenancy agreement. You can change your arrangements at any time by talking to your Housing Worker.

The preferred options for payment are:-

- Centrepay arranging with Centrelink for the rent to be deducted directly from your Pension or Benefit
- Making your own arrangement with your bank for a Regular Deductions
- Rent is always expected to be in Advance

On the day you sign the tenancy agreement we will expect you to pay at least one week's rebated rent. If you are paid fortnightly you may prefer to pay two weeks' rent so that your rent is paid up to your next pay but that is your decision.

Bond

Usually, the bond required is equivalent to 4 weeks of your rebated rent. We will discuss with you paying a portion at sign up and paying the balance over the next 3 months. No bond is charged for Seniors Housing.

Electricity/Gas

These are your responsibility to have connected in your name and to pay the accounts.

Pets

We appreciate that you may wish to have a pet however; some of our properties do not permit pets. If you do have a pet you need to apply in writing for approval.

If you have any concerns or need assistance to complete an application form

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