

Glossary of Community Housing

Key Terms

The below table provides a list of common key terms relevant to community housing.

Glossary

Term	Definition
Accessibility modification	Home modifications that help older people and people living with disability to safely access and use areas of the home. Modifications may include custom-built changes to the structure, layout, fixtures, or fittings, and include assistive technology.
Affordable housing	Rental housing programs targeted at low to moderate income households in which rents are set at a discount to Market Rent (rather than as a percentage of household income). Typically, rent caps can range from 74.99% up to 90% of Market Rent, depending on the program.
Anti-social behaviour (' ASB ')	Behaviour that disturbs the peace and upsets neighbours.
Appeal	A request for a review of a decision, regarding the provision of housing services.
Assessable income	Household income that is assessable for rent calculation purposes. Relevant income types are detailed in CHOs rent setting policies and/or the DFFH Rent setting and rebate operational guideline - Assessable incomes .
Assignment	Assignment (also known as succession) of: • Tenancy occurs when the rights and responsibilities under a rental agreement are transferred from the existing renter to a household member; or • Management occurs when the rights and responsibilities under a management agreement are transferred from one rental provider to another.
Assistive technology	Equipment, technology and devices that help people with disability do something more easily or safely, designed to improve daily life and help them to do everyday things.

ATO benchmark rent	Market Rent amount set by the Australian Taxation Office under the GST and non-commercial rules - benchmark market values for long-term accommodation .
Breach of duty	Failure to meet a duty provision of the RTA.
Breach of duty notice	A notice served on a renter or rental provider to inform them that their behaviour has caused them to breach one of more of the duty provisions of the RTA.
Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities (' Charter ')	The Charter enshrines civil, political and cultural rights into Victorian Law. Public authorities must observe these rights.
Community Housing Organisation (' CHO ')	A non-profit rental housing organisation, registered under the Housing Act 1983 as a Housing Association or Housing Provider.
Commonwealth Rent Assistance (' CRA ')	An Australian Government subsidy paid to recipients of Commonwealth benefits who rent in community housing or the private market. "Maximum CRA" means the maximum amount of CRA to which the renter and their household members would be entitled to at the time of the rent assessment.
Compensation order	An order granted by VCAT giving the renter or rental provider the right to seek reimbursement from the rental provider or renter.
Complainant	An individual or organisation that makes a complaint.
Complaint	An expression of dissatisfaction made to or about an organisation, related to its products, services, staff or the handling of a complaint, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected.
Compliance order	A VCAT order directing the renter or rental provider to comply with the specified provision of the RTA or rental agreement within a specified period of time.
Consumer Affairs Victoria (' CAV ')	A Victorian Government agency responsible for regulating accommodation under the RTA and other consumer protection laws.
Co-operative housing	A long term community-led form of social housing where the housing organisation is run by the people who live in it.
CRA threshold rent	The relevant rent amount limit for renters eligible to receive CRA as defined by Centrelink.
Daily independent living support	A type of funded daily support to help people with disability live in their home. The



	support may be funded by the NDIS or another specified entity or program.
Danger	A resident or their visitor, by act or omission, endangers the safety of neighbours, the RHO, or their employee or contractor.
Department ('DFFH')	Department of Families, Fairness and Housing under the Public Administration Act 2004.
DFFH Property Rent	Properties owned by Homes Victoria and leased to CHOs under a General Lease have additional contractual rent setting requirements, including a requirement that rent payable does not exceed the "DFFH Property Rent". Property rent is a figure that is determined by DFFH and notified to CHOs as a ceiling rent.
Disability	People who have long-term physical, mental, or sensory impairments, which impacts their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.
Eligibility	Criteria for a person or household to be eligible for social housing. In relation to the VHR, these are criteria as published by DFFH .
Eligible household	A household that meets the eligibility requirements for social housing (income limits, residency and asset thresholds).
Fair wear and tear	The deterioration of a property caused by reasonable use and natural environmental forces.
Financial hardship	Where unforeseen events occur that fundamentally place a renter's tenancy at risk due to an unavoidable change in financial position and an inability to pay agreed rents.
Fixed term rental agreement	A rental agreement with a fixed end date.
Goods left behind	Personal belongings or documents left behind at a property by the renter at the end of a rental agreement.
Head lease	A residential rental agreement between a private/commercial owner who has a property available in the private market and a community housing organisation with the right to sublet the property to a community housing renter.
Homes Victoria	A government agency that builds and manages social and affordable housing across Victoria.



Household income	Assessable income received by all household members used to calculate the rent amount payable and repayment agreements.
Household member	Any person other than the existing renter/s living at a property.
House rules	Rules relating to the use and enjoyment of facilities and rooms in a rooming house, as set by the rooming house operator.
Housing Act	The Housing Act 1983 (Vic). The principal legislation governing social housing in Victoria.
Housing Association	A CHO that is registered with the Housing Registrar as a Housing Association. Housing associations are larger, more complex businesses than Housing Providers which have demonstrated the ability and resources to manage, maintain and grow a large social housing portfolio.
Housing Provider	A CHO that is registered with the Housing Registrar as a housing provider. Generally smaller in scale than a Housing Association.
Housing Registrar	The Office of the Housing Registrar (Housing Registrar) provides regulatory oversight of Victoria's registered community housing agencies to ensure the sector is sustainable and meets the needs of renters.
Income-Based Rent (' rebated rent ')	Rent that is calculated based on household income. CHOs that are Registered Housing Agencies under the Housing Act can apply a rental rebate. The calculation of rebated rent is referred to as Income-Based Rent.
Income earning household member	Any member of the household who earns an income from any source including, but not limited to wages, salary, Centrelink benefits, and compensation payments.
Legal agreement	A payment plan agreement for rent arrears made between the rental provider and the renter and ratified by VCAT.
Local agreement	A payment plan agreement for rent arrears made between the rental provider and the renter, without proceeding to VCAT.
Long term housing	Rental housing that is intended to be provided for an indefinite period or a period of multiple years.
Managed premises	Managed premises are defined as caravan parks, rooming houses, Part 4A parks, and 'managed high-density buildings', which are



	buildings that contain two or more rented premises and have an onsite manager.
Manager	Manager of a managed premises, which includes an onsite manager, rooming house owner, caravan park owner or site owner.
Market Rent	The Market Rent of a property is what the property could rent for in the private market. There are detailed rules regarding how this can be calculated for taxation purposes. CHOs should take care when using or determining the Market Rent of a property outside of an independent market valuation or ATO market value benchmark rates (where applicable).
Market-Based Rent	The maximum/default rent that will be charged for a home. For homes where service charges apply, the service charge will be listed separately and is not included in the Market-Based Rent.
National Disability Insurance Scheme (' NDIS ')	A government funded program that provides funding and connections to support services to eligible people with disability and their families.
National Rental Affordability Scheme (' NRAS ')	An affordable housing initiative delivered by the Commonwealth Government, in partnership with state and territory governments, that offers annual incentives aimed at stimulating the supply of new affordable housing. The NRAS is no longer taking new investments.
Nomination rights	Arrangements between CHOs and support providers where the support provider nominates households for tenancies owned or managed by the CHO.
Notice of entry	A written notice to let the renter know that the rental provider requires entry to the rented premises.
Notice of intention to vacate	A written notice used by renters to let the rental provider know that they plan to vacate the rented premises.
Notice to Leave (' NTL ')	A legal notice to a rooming house resident in cases of serious violence which immediately suspends the tenancy and requires them to leave the premises.
Notice to Vacate (' NTV ')	A legal notice to a renter that the rental provider wants them to vacate the property by a certain date, issued in accordance with the RTA.



Occupational therapist ('OT')	Licensed health care professionals who assist people with health issues or disability that impact their ability do daily activities. OTs help people gain independence through therapeutic activities, assistive technology and environmental modifications.
Onsite manager	A person whose duties include the security of the building, day to day operational responsibility for the building, and are present at the building or available to be present at least 7 hours a day, 5 days a week.
Periodic agreement	A rental agreement that does not have a fixed end date (ongoing).
Pest control agreement	A written agreement that sets out the responsibilities between the rental provider and renter to undertake pest control treatment, and an agreed plan for follow up preventative measures.
Possession order	An order granted by VCAT giving the rental provider the right to obtain a warrant to evict the occupants and regain possession of the property. The order is valid for a six month period.
Prescribed form	The form that is required to be used when issuing a notice or providing information to renters as defined by Victorian rental law.
Priority access	Prioritised categories on the VHR for applicants who are in urgent housing need. Applicants who meet the criteria for priority access can be allocated housing before other applicants on the register who may have earlier effective dates.
Private rental	Rental housing that is offered on the private market.
Public housing	Housing owned and managed by Homes Victoria.
Reasonably clean	Where an item or surface is free from dirt, marks or stains and cannot be improved to a reasonable standard with additional cleaning.
Register of interest	A register of applicants on the VHR who do not have a priority need but who are seeking housing assistance.
RentAssist bond loan	Bond assistance provided by Homes Victoria, available to renters who meet the department's eligibility criteria.
Rent arrears	Unpaid rent owed by the renter to the rental provider.



Rent payable	The amount the renter is required to pay for their home. Rent payable will be the lower amount of Market-Based Rent and Income-Based Rent.
Rental provider	A residential rental provider (formerly landlord) who manages a residential tenancy.
Renter	A person (formerly tenant) who occupies a premises under a residential rental agreement.
Resident	A person who occupies a room in a rooming house under a rooming house agreement.
Rent review	An assessment of household income and/or composition, conducted during a tenancy, to align the rent payable by the renter with their current circumstances.
Rental agreement	The Residential Tenancies Act (RTA) defines different types of agreements that are dependent on the type of premises and legal arrangement, such as a residential rental agreement or rooming house agreement.
Residential Tenancies Act (' RTA ')	The Residential Tenancies Act 1997 (Vic). The principal legislation governing rental housing in Victoria.
Residential Tenancies Bond Authority (' RTBA ')	A statutory authority that holds all Victorian residential tenancy bonds.
Residential Tenancies List	VCAT hears disputes under its specialist 'lists'. Residential tenancy disputes are heard under the Residential Tenancies List.
Residential Tenancies Regulations 2021 (Vic) (' RT Regs ')	The Regulations contain supporting details for the Residential Tenancies Act 1997 (Vic).
Respondent	The party a VCAT application is made against.
Rooming house	A building where 4 or more people can live in rented rooms, some of which might be shared with communal facilities, or which has been declared a Rooming House under s19 of the RTA.
Rooming House Operator (' RHO ')	A Rooming House Operator (formerly owner) who runs a rooming house.
SDA residency agreement	An agreement entered into or established under Part 12A of the RTA. SDA residency agreements are similar to residential rental agreements but include additional protections for SDA residents.
Separation certificate	A document issued by the government to show basic details about a person's employment, including period of employment, final pay, reason for



	termination and how much they were earning when they left.
Social housing	An umbrella term that includes both public housing and community housing. It generally indicates housing that involves some degree of subsidy.
Specialist Disability Accommodation (' SDA ')	Accommodation funded by the NDIS for people with disability and specialist needs (homes with design features and the provision of intensive supports). SDA may be occupied by one person with disability or shared with other people with disability.
Summary of proofs	A written summary for a VCAT claim. It should contain all the information the VCAT member needs to make a decision.
Support	Community, welfare, health, local government or departmental services for tenancy support management.
Supported Independent Living (' SIL ')	A type of NDIS-funded support that helps with daily tasks and independent living.
Supported Residential Services (' SRSS ')	A form of privately operated group homes registered and regulated by the Victorian Government.
Sustaining tenancies	Housing management policies and practices designed to assist renters to manage their tenancy successfully and to achieve improvement in their lives, or to avoid tenancy failure through eviction or exit under duress.
Unreasonable complainant conduct	Refers to behaviours exhibited by individuals when making complaints that go beyond what is acceptable or rational.
Unreasonable complaints	Grievances or concerns raised by individuals that are seen as excessive, unfounded, or lacking a reasonable basis.
Temporary crisis accommodation	Accommodation provided on a non-profit basis for a short period where no residency or tenancy rights are created.
Tenancy Plus	A government-funded support program, provided by tenancy support providers that aims to prevent homelessness and support social housing renters to stay in housing.
Transitional Housing Management (' THM ')	A supported short-term accommodation program designed to help people move to more permanent housing in public housing, community housing, or the private rental market.
VCAT online	IT hub used to issue a notice to vacate and possession applications.



Victorian Civil & Administrative Tribunal (' VCAT ')	A legal institution set up to administer several Acts. For residential tenancies, the Tribunal administers the RTA.
VCAT applicant	A person who has made the application to VCAT.
Victorian Housing Register (' VHR ')	The waiting list for people seeking access to public and community housing.
VHR applicant	A person who has applied for social housing via the Victorian Housing Register (VHR).
VHR Eligibility Policy Framework	The Eligibility Policy Framework outlines the criteria an applicant must meet to be eligible for the VHR, how the register works, how to apply to the register and what happens after applying.
VHR Operational Guidelines	The Operational Guidelines support the VHR Eligibility Policy Framework and outline the policy and procedures regarding eligibility, the assessment and management of applications and matching people to housing.
Warrant of possession	A legal document issued by VCAT authorising police to proceed with an eviction.

Further assistance

Should you have any questions or comments in relation to the information in this resource please email leadingpractice@chiavic.com.au.

This resource will be periodically reviewed and continually updated based on sector feedback.

