



Community Housing Income and Asset Limits (CHIAL) Policy 2020

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1. Document History

Version	Authorised by	Reason for update	Approval date	Reference
4.0	Assistant Director General, Policy and Service Design	1. Band A limits increased in line with public housing; 2. Band B limits increased to 2019/20 NRAS limits and future indexations incorporated by reference. 3. Department of Communities template used and references to the Department of Communities included where appropriate.	March 2020	20/D367597
3.0	Director Social and Affordable Housing System	1. Band A weekly to annual / Band B annual to weekly conversion rate updated to improve accuracy; 2. Band B income limits updated; 3. Band B asset limits updated; 4. Amended references to source data; 5. Formatting changed.	June 2013	2013/MSD/43
2.0	Director Social and Affordable Housing System	1. Band A weekly to annual / Band B annual to weekly conversion rate updated to improve accuracy; 2. Band B income limits updated; 3. Asset policy intent clarification; 4. Formatting changed.	May 2012	2012/MSD/49
1.1	Director Social and Affordable Housing System	1. Band B income limits updated; 2. Band B asset limits updated.	August 2011	11/D553544
1.0	Director Social and Affordable Housing System	Policy prepared to establish income and asset eligibility limits for community housing.	September 2009	11/D462978

2. Purpose

Establish the income and asset limits for Community Housing Organisations to apply when assessing initial and continuing eligibility.

This Policy is designed to:

- support Community Housing Organisations to service the social housing and affordable rental markets; and
- facilitate the movement of over income public housing tenants into properties managed by Registered Community Housing Organisations with stock growth commitments negotiated with the Housing Authority operating within the Department of Communities.

3. Scope

This Policy applies to Registered and Unregistered Community Housing Organisations in receipt of financial and other assistance from the Housing Authority (operating within the Department of Communities) to provide social housing and/or affordable housing to its tenants. This Policy does not apply to the provision of Crisis Accommodation.

4. Definitions

Affordable Housing means housing that must be leased to Eligible Persons at a rent less than 75 per cent of Market Rent or in accordance with the relevant policies.

Asset means any property or item of value the household owns or has an interest in, including those held outside Australia.

Band A refers to households who meet the Public Housing eligibility criteria (for a single person up to \$23,475 per annum) (Table 2).

Band B refers to households with income exceeding the eligibility criteria for Public Housing and not exceeding the eligibility criteria for entry to the National Rental Affordability Scheme (for a single person up to \$51,398 at March 2020) (Table 3).

Community Housing means Social Housing and/or Affordable Housing owned or otherwise under the legal control of a Community Housing Organisation.

Community Housing Organisation means any not-for-profit organisation incorporated under the Law of the Commonwealth of Australia or the State of Western Australia, or a Local Government, whose primary objective is to provide Crisis Housing, Social Housing and/or Affordable Housing to Eligible Persons in Western Australia.

Department of Communities (Communities) means the State Government agency established on 1 July 2017 under the *Public Sector Management Act 1994* and designated as the department primarily responsible for assisting the respective entities in the administration of legislation including the *Housing Act 1980*, the *Disability Services Act 1993* and the *Children and Community Services Act 2004*.

Disability means any person with an intellectual, psychiatric, cognitive, neurological, sensory or physical impairment that is permanent or likely to be permanent, which impacts on the housing needs of that person in terms of housing design, amenity level or proximity to appropriate medical and support services.

Eligible Persons means persons who meet the Housing Authority’s eligibility criteria for Affordable Housing or Social Housing (as applicable) as set out in this Policy.

Housing Authority means the Housing Authority established pursuant to the *Housing Act 1980 (WA)*.

National Rental Affordability Scheme is an Australian Government initiative under which properties are rented to eligible low-to-moderate income tenants. The entry income limits for tenant eligibility under this scheme are used as Band B income eligibility limits (Table 3).

North/West Remote and; Metro/South West means the areas depicted in Figure 1.

Public Housing is rental housing owned and operated by the Housing Authority.

Registration means the state of being registered by the Housing Authority as a Community Housing Organisation.

Rental Policy Manual refers to the Housing Authority’s Rental Policy Manual which contains all policies related to public rental housing. The current version is accessible from www.housing.wa.gov.au

Social Housing refers to rental housing by the Housing Authority and Community Housing Organisations for Band A households.

Tenant refers to a person or persons who are charged rent by a Community Housing Organisation for occupying premises from time to time.

Unregistered refers to a Community Housing Organisation that has not achieved Registration status.

Figure 1:

Western Australia: Metro/South West
(includes Perth) and North-West/Remote.



5. Policy Statement

All Community Housing Organisations will apply the applicable income and asset eligibility tests listed in Table 1:

- Registered Community Housing Organisations housing the mix of tenants specified in relevant policies and agreements will apply the Band A and the Band B Income Eligibility Limits as appropriate.
- Unregistered Community Housing Organisations will only apply the Social Housing Income Eligibility Limits.
- Community Housing Organisations will apply the limits set by this policy until an update is issued by the Housing Authority (or by Communities acting on the Housing Authority's behalf).

Table 1: Income eligibility test to be applied by Community Housing Organisations

Type of tenant	Income test	Asset test
Band A	Social Housing Income Eligibility Limits (see 6.1)	Public Housing Asset Limits (see 7.1)
Band B	Affordable Housing Income Eligibility Limits (see 6.2)	Centrelink Asset Limits (see 7.2)

6. Income Eligibility Limits

- The income eligibility limits to be applied by Registered and Unregistered Community Housing Organisations are listed below.
- To recognise the additional costs faced by people with disabilities, a loading is added on to each income limit. This is reflected in the tables below.
- To recognise the additional costs of living in the North West and remote parts of Western Australia, a loading is added on to each income limit. This is reflected in the tables below.
- Weekly and annual income limits, rounded to the nearest whole dollar, are provided for convenience.

6.1. Social Housing (Band A) Income Eligibility Limits

To be eligible for Social Housing, the combined weekly gross income of the applicant, partner and co-applicant must be within Public Housing Income Limits listed in Table 2.

For clarification on determining income sources and applying income limits see the Rental Policy Manual; Eligibility Policy.

The weekly income limits are converted to annual limits for convenience, using the multiplier 313/6, rounded to the nearest dollar.

Table 2: Band A Income Eligibility Limits ^[1]

Metro / South West								
Number of people in household	Income Limit				Disability Income Limit			
	Single income		Dual income		Single income		Dual income	
	Weekly	Annual	Weekly	Annual	Weekly	Annual	Weekly	Annual
1	\$450	\$23,475			\$565	\$29,474		
2	\$600	\$31,300	\$710	\$37,038	\$750	\$39,125	\$880	\$45,907
3	\$715	\$37,299	\$830	\$43,298	\$895	\$46,689	\$1,050	\$54,775
4	\$835	\$43,559	\$970	\$50,602	\$1,045	\$54,514	\$1,210	\$63,122
North West / Remote								
Number of people in household	Income Limit				Disability Income Limit			
	Single income		Dual income		Single income		Dual income	
	Weekly	Annual	Weekly	Annual	Weekly	Annual	Weekly	Annual
1	\$640	\$33,387			\$795	\$41,473		
2	\$850	\$44,342	\$995	\$51,906	\$1,060	\$55,297	\$1,250	\$65,208
3	\$1,010	\$52,688	\$1,175	\$61,296	\$1,260	\$65,730	\$1,470	\$76,685
4	\$1,180	\$61,557	\$1,375	\$71,729	\$1,475	\$76,946	\$1,720	\$89,727
Additional limits per person								
Additional household member	Income Limit				Disability Income Limit			
	Weekly		Annual		Weekly		Annual	
	\$115		\$5,999		\$145		\$7,564	

6.2 Affordable Housing (Band B) Income Eligibility Limits

To be eligible for Affordable Housing, the household must have a gross annual income within the limits set out in Table 3 (in 2019/20 NRAS year).

The annual income limits are converted to weekly limits for convenience, using the divider 313/6, rounded to the nearest dollar.

Table 3: Band B Income Eligibility Limits (2019/20 NRAS year only)

Metro / South West				
Household type	Income Limit		Disability	
	Weekly	Annual	Weekly	Annual
Single person	\$985	\$51,398	\$1,232	\$64,248
Two adults/couple	\$1,362	\$71,061	\$1,703	\$88,826
Sole parent / 1 child	\$1,363	\$71,110	\$1,704	\$88,888
Sole parent / 2 children	\$1,690	\$88,160	\$2,112	\$110,200
Couple / 1 child	\$1,689	\$88,111	\$2,111	\$110,139
Couple / 2 children	\$2,016	\$105,161	\$2,520	\$131,451
North West / Remote				
Household type	Income Limit		Disability	
	Weekly	Annual	Weekly	Annual
Single person	\$1,232	\$64,248	\$1,539	\$80,309
Two adults/couple	\$1,703	\$88,826	\$2,128	\$111,033
Sole parent / 1 child	\$1,704	\$88,888	\$2,130	\$111,109
Sole parent / 2 children	\$2,112	\$110,200	\$2,641	\$137,750
Couple / 1 child	\$2,111	\$110,139	\$2,639	\$137,673
Couple / 2 children	\$2,520	\$131,451	\$3,150	\$164,314
Additional annual limits per person				
Metro / South West				
Additional household member	Income Limit		Disability	
	Weekly	Annual	Weekly	Annual
Each additional adult	\$377	\$19,663	\$471	\$24,579
Each additional child	\$327	\$17,050	\$409	\$21,313
North West / Remote				
Additional household member	Income Limit		Disability	
	Weekly	Annual	Weekly	Annual
Each additional adult	\$471	\$24,579	\$589	\$30,723
Each additional child	\$409	\$21,313	\$511	\$26,641

- Band B income eligibility limits are the 'Initial household income limits' of the National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS). These are indexed each NRAS year, from 1 May to 30 April. For the latest income limits which apply at any time refer to: <https://www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/housing-support/programs-services/national-rental-affordability-scheme/national-rental-affordability-scheme-nras-household-income-indexation>
- To convert the annual eligibility limits provided on the NRAS website to a weekly amount, apply the following formula:
 - $\frac{\text{Annual \$ limit}}{313/6} = \text{Weekly \$ limit}$
- To add the loadings for households including a person with a disability, and households in the North West/Remote areas, apply a 25% loading for each purpose. For example, for a household in the North West with a person with a disability, increase the metro limit by 25% (for location), and then increase that by a further 25% (for disability).

7. Asset Eligibility Limits

- Households must not own or be part owner of property or land that constitutes a viable housing option. Clarification on this criterion can be found in the Rental Policy Manual; Eligibility Relating to Property Ownership and Other Residences.
- The asset eligibility limits to be applied by Registered and Unregistered Community Housing Organisations are listed below.

7.1 Social Housing (Band A) Asset Eligibility Limits

- The Public Housing cash asset limits listed in Table 4 applies to Band A tenants.
- Further clarification on the application of these limits can be found in the following sections of the Rental Policy Manual: Eligibility Policy and; Housing for People with Disabilities.

Table 4: Band A Asset Eligibility Limits ^[1]

Household Type	Cash Asset Limit
Single	\$38,400
Couples	\$63,800
Seniors 60 years plus (singles or couples)	\$80,000
People with disabilities	\$100,000

Social housing assessable assets ^[1]

Definition of a cash asset:

- Deposit in a bank, credit union, building society, savings/cheque account, cash, term deposit, shares;
- Managed investments such as loans, debentures, friendly society and insurance bonds, unlisted equity and property trusts.

Assets *excluded* from assessment:

- Car,
- Antique furniture,
- Stamp collection,
- Life insurance policies.

Superannuation:

Superannuation and annuities that are not accessible are not assessed, but any annual income/return/dividend received are assessed as part of the income assessment process.

- **Superannuation funds for applicants under the age of 55 years:**
Superannuation funds that cannot be realised (e.g. superannuation roll-over fund) are not assessed as an asset.
- **Superannuation funds for applicants 55 years of age and over:**
Where a lump sum superannuation payment is taken, it will be treated as a cash asset and any income derived will be assessed for eligibility and rent assessment purposes.

7.2. Affordable Housing (Band B) Asset Eligibility Limits

Registered Community Housing Organisations with stock growth commitments negotiated with the Housing Authority are to apply the asset limits listed in Table 5 for all Band B tenants.

Table 5: Band Asset Eligibility Limits

Household Type	Asset Limit
Single	\$332,000
Partnered (combined)	\$412,500
Couple but separated due to illness (combined)	\$412,500

Assessible assets include:

- any cash or money you have in bank, building society or credit union accounts (including interest free accounts), interest bearing deposits, fixed deposits, bonds, debentures, shares, property trusts, friendly society bonds and managed investments
- any assets you hold in superannuation and rollover funds if you are of Age Pension age
- the value of any real estate, including holiday homes, you own (this does not include your principal home)
- the value of any businesses and farms, including goodwill (where goodwill is shown on the balance sheet)
- the surrender value of life insurance policies
- the value of gifts worth more than \$10,000 in a single year or more than \$30,000 in a five year period
- the value of any loans (including interest-free loans) you have made to family trusts, members of the family, organisations
- the value of any motor vehicles you own
- the value of any boats and caravans you own which you do not use as a home
- the value of your household contents and personal effects
- the value of any collections you have for trading, investment or hobby purposes
- the value of your entry contribution to a retirement village if it is less than the difference between the homeowners' and non-homeowners' assets limits
- some income stream products
- the attributed value of a private trust or private company where you are a controller of that trust or company
- the value of a life interest created by you or your partner, or upon the death of your partner.

8. Legal and Policy Framework

This Policy works within the broader framework of the *State Affordable Housing Strategy 2010-2020: Opening Doors to Affordable Housing*, and the *WA Housing Strategy 2020-30*, which can be found at the website www.housing.wa.gov.au.

This Policy works in conjunction with other relevant policies, which can be found at www.housing.wa.gov.au.

This Policy has also considered, and remains consistent with, the *Residential Tenancies Act 1987 (WA)* and any relevant community housing tenancy agreements. This Policy does not replace or remove any of the legal obligations contained in these, or any other, legal documents.

Social Housing (Band A) income eligibility limits are derived from the Housing Authority's Rental Policy Manual: Eligibility relating to the income of applicants.

Social Housing (Band A) asset eligibility limits and Affordable Housing (Band B) income and asset eligibility limits are derived from various Commonwealth Government policy settings and are updated in line with indexation as appropriate.

9. Roles and Responsibilities

This Policy will be implemented by Community Housing Organisations.

Communities officers who, acting on behalf of the Housing Authority, deal with these Organisations will review how this Policy is being applied as a part of their contract management procedures.

The Registrar of Community Housing will consider how this Policy is being applied by Registered Community Housing Organisations when conducting regulatory compliance reviews.

The Policy and Service Design Division of Communities is responsible for reviewing this Policy and ensuring it is up to date.

10. Support and Advice

For support and advice about the procedures and guidelines relating to this Policy, please email Communities at communityhousing@housing.wa.gov.au. Further information may also be found at www.housing.wa.gov.au.

Please note that you can also request to acquire any documents available on the Housing Authority website in the following formats:

- Printed/hardcopy
- Documents to be made available in an alternative format such as plain text file.

Please use the details available on the Communities website at <https://www.communities.wa.gov.au/contact/> to make a request.

11. Communication

The Policy will be communicated to the public in the following manner:

- The Policy will be publicly accessible at www.housing.wa.gov.au;
- Peak community housing bodies will be asked to assist in communicating this Policy to Community Housing Organisations.

12. References

[1] Housing Authority “Rental Policy Manual: Eligibility relating to the income of applicants” [Online]. Available: http://www.housing.wa.gov.au/HousingDocuments/Rental_Policy_Manual.pdf.

13. Summary Information

Strategic links	<i>Residential Tenancies Act 1987 (WA)</i> <i>Affordable Housing Strategy 2010-2020: Opening Doors to Affordable Housing</i> <i>WA Housing Strategy 2020-30</i>
Responsible officer	Executive Director, Housing and Homelessness, Policy and Service Design
Contact officer	communityhousing@housing.wa.gov.au
Superseded documents	Community Housing Income and Asset Limits Policy 2013
File number	2020/01910
Associated documents	Community Housing Agreement Community Housing Allocations Policy