



## HOUSING POLICY

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Approval Authority	Council		
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Review:	31.05.2024	Council Meeting	

## 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 PURPOSE

This policy establishes a framework for the management of Council owned or managed residential dwellings.

## 1.2 POLICY OBJECTIVES:

To provide guidelines for the management of Council dwellings available for rent in a fair and equitable manner to both the tenants and Council.

## 1.3 COMMENCEMENT OF POLICY:

This Policy will commence on the adoption. It replaces all other specific Housing Policies of Council. (Whether written or not)

## 1.4 DEFINITIONS:

To assist in interpretation, the following definitions shall apply:

Word / Term	Definition
Council	means Diamantina Shire Council.
CEO	CEO or a delegated officer
Infrastructure	Any structure, permanent or semi-permanent.
Maintenance	Any issue, problem or defect with the existing Council infrastructure

## 2. POLICY

## 2.1 CONTEXT

This policy applies to all council-owned or managed residential dwellings, including Community Housing properties, available for rent. The Community Housing Rent Policy also applies to all Community Housing properties. If this policy conflicts in any part with the Community Housing Rent Policy, then the Community Housing Rent Policy will prevail to the extent of the inconsistency.

## 2.2 POLICY STATEMENT

Diamantina is committed to fostering diversity, innovation, and sustainability while upholding ethical conduct, ensuring health and safety, supporting community development, and fostering transparency and accountability.

## 3. STANDARDS

### 3.1 TENANCY MANAGEMENT

All tenancies will be managed in accordance with the Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008, as amended.

All tenancies will be managed in accordance with the guidelines developed by the Residential Tenancies Authority (RTA). The RTA administers the Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008 (the Act) and is responsible to the Minister for Housing and Public Works.

The Administration Officer responsible for housing will maintain a Tenancy Register.

### 3.2 HOUSING REQUESTS REGISTER

The Administration Officer responsible for housing will maintain a Housing Request Register which lists the following:

- Applicant Name
- Date of Request
- House/Unit type requested
- Income (above or below threshold)
- Housing Selection Score

Housing Applicants will submit requests using the Housing Request Form to the Administration Officer responsible for housing.

The CEO will review the Housing Requests Register against the list of available vacant housing and allocate housing based on the preferred housing for government workers, the aged/disabled, key council personnel, and the housing selection score. Applicants who score the highest selection score as per the Housing Selection Score table below will be given the highest priority for available housing.

### 3.4 HOUSING SELECTION SCORE TABLE:

	POINTS				
Criteria	10	8	6	4	2
Aged/disabled	Yes (100 points)				No
Number of years Resident in Area	>5 years	<5 years	<4 years	<3 years	< 2 years
Family Resident in Area	Relatives in need of care	Child care required	Other care required	No care required	None
Number of Children to live in Shire	>=4	3	2	1	0
Time employed by Council	>5 years	<5 years	<4 years	<3 years	< 2 years
Value to Community or Council	Has skills not otherwise available	Highly frequently sought skills	Frequently sought skills	Rarely sought skills	No skills

Current Living Circumstances	No accommodation	Temporary			Council premises
Eligible for other housing such as Aboriginal Housing Corp	No				Yes

The council reserves the right to terminate any tenancies, with the required notice, to make the best use of council premises. For example, where single tenants occupy multiple-bedroom dwellings, the Council may move them to single-bedroom premises to make them available for families.

### 3.5 PREFERRED HOUSING

#### 3.5.1 STATE GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES

The following premises are identified as preferred housing for Central West Health Service employees:

- 23 Kepler St, Bedourie, Bedourie Clinic, a 1-bedroom- and 3-bedroom dwelling.
- 31 Adelaide Street, Birdsville Clinic
- 29 Vaughan Street, Birdsville, 2 Bedroom
- 27 Vaughan Street, Birdsville, 3 Bedroom

These premises are leased to the government agencies on an annual basis.

An alternate dwelling may be offered in lieu of the preferred housing where the preferred housing can be better utilised or requires major maintenance.

#### 3.5.2 AGED AND DISABLED

The following premises are identified as aged/disabled housing, where preference is given to tenants who are in receipt of the aged pension or have a physical disability:

- 17 Kepler St, Bedourie, 2 Bedroom
- 42 Eyre St, Bedourie, 2 Bedroom
- 46 Eyre St, Bedourie, 2 Bedroom
- 11 Jardine St, Birdsville, 2 Bedroom
- 13 Jardine St, Birdsville, 2 Bedroom
- 20 Jardine St, Birdsville, 2 Bedroom

The CEO may allocate one of these houses to a non-aged/disabled tenant where there is no aged/disabled applicant waiting and no other suitable housing options exist for the tenant.

If an eligible aged/disabled applicant submits a housing request and there are no suitable vacancies, any non-aged/disabled tenants residing in designated aged/disabled premises may have their tenancy agreement terminated, with the appropriate notice, so that the house can be relet to the aged/disabled applicant. If there are no aged/disabled vacancies, the applicant will be scored as per the table above and go on the 'waitlist'.

Where only one person permanently resides in a dwelling identified above, and that person is in receipt of the old age pension or disability allowance, rent will be charged at the equivalent one-bedroom unit rate, depending on whether the unit is furnished.

### 3.6 KEY COUNCIL POSITIONS

The Chief Executive Officer reserves the right to allocate housing to key positions per the following table.

House Address	Personnel
1 Herbert St, Bedourie	CEO
15 Kepler St, Bedourie	Directors

37 Marrawilla St, Bedourie	
44 Wodonga St, Bedourie	
23 Bilby St, Birdsville	
40 Jardine St, Birdsville	

### 3.7 RENT

The Community Housing Rent Calculation Tool (ERCT), provided by the Department of Housing and Public Works, will be applied to all tenancies to determine the rent payable.

The ERCT uses Household income to calculate rent payable. Household income includes any financial support provided to the occupants by family members or others who do not ordinarily reside at the Council dwelling. For example, if the husband of the tenant works away but contributes financially to the maintenance of the household.

The current market rent values for all types of council housing used in the ERCT will be stipulated in the Fees and Charges Schedule adopted by Council.

All Council employees will pay rent via payroll deduction.

Where tenants receive Centrelink payments, rent is expected to be deducted by Centrelink and forwarded to Council automatically.

### 3.8 SHORT-TERM RENTALS

Council will rent vacant housing on a short-term basis to:

- community clubs for essential personnel such as ambulance officers to help reduce their costs.
- not for profit organisations to help reduce their costs when running fundraising events.
- consultants and contractors engaged to provide a service for Council.
- to other organisations ONLY where there are no vacancies at the established commercial accommodation businesses.

A standard RTA General Tenancy Agreement will be prepared for the short-term rentals of vacant housing, NOT including the SPA View Motel Units and the SES Donga.

No bond will be taken.

Only the furniture specified in this policy will be provided unless the CEO has approved a specific agreement.

Rental charges are specified in Council's Fees and Charges Schedule.

The SES Donga and SPA View Units will only be used by Council Employees, Consultants, and Contractors. Other occupants will only be considered where an in-kind donation is authorised through Council's Community Grants program.

### 3.9 FURNISHED HOUSING

Dwellings will be offered for rent furnished to tenants at additional cost. The standard furniture to be provided in a furnished dwelling is as follows:

Type of Dwelling	Furniture (including whitegoods)					
	Washing Machine	Fridge (minimum size)	Queen Bed	King Single Bed	Dining Suite (Square, rectangular and round)	Lounge Suite
4 Bed House	White Top Load >7kg	White Top mount frost-free fridge >420l	1 or 2	2 or 3	9 piece	1 x 3-seater 1 x 2-seater

Type of Dwelling	Furniture (including whitegoods)					
	Washing Machine	Fridge (minimum size)	Queen Bed	King Single Bed	Dining Suite (Square, rectangular and round)	Lounge Suite
3 Bed House	White Top Load >7kg	White Top mount frost-free fridge >420l	1	2	7 piece	1 x 3-seater 1 x 2-seater
2 Bed House	White Top Load >7kg	White Top mount frost-free fridge >420l	1	1	7 piece	1 x 3-seater 1 x 2-seater
2 Bed Unit	White Top Load >7kg	White Top mount frost-free fridge >420l	1	1	7 piece	1 x 2-seater
1 Bed Unit	White Top Load >7kg	White Top mount frost-free fridge >420l	1	Nil	5 piece	1 x 2-seater
Spa View Motel Unit	White Top Load >7kg	White Top mount frost-free fridge >420l	1	Nil	Small 3 piece	1 x 2-seater

**Note:** The size of furniture may be altered to fit the layout of the dwelling.

- A tenant may negotiate different furniture with the CEO if required due to family requirements.
- The partially furnished house rent rate will be payable if any council-owned furniture is in the house. For example, the full furnished rate is payable if only a fridge is present. The tenant can request additional furniture as per the above table.
- Where only one person resides in a two-bedroom dwelling, and rent is charged at the one-bedroom rate (for aged/disabled tenants), furniture will be provided as per the one-bedroom dwelling.
- If the size of a particular piece of furniture does not meet the above standard at the time this policy was adopted, the correct size will be provided when the item is replaced due to age/condition.
- When a tenant moves from one furnished Council dwelling to another furnished Council dwelling, they may be required to take the furniture with them.
- The council provided furniture, excluding outdoor furniture, which must be kept inside the house.
- A list of Council-provided furniture will be made at the beginning of each tenancy and included in the tenancy agreement. The CEO will approve all disposals and furniture issues during a tenancy. If any of these items or their replacements are missing at the end of the tenancy, the cost will be deducted from the bond.
- The Administration Officer responsible for housing will maintain a furniture register.
- Houses identified in **3.6** Key Council positions for the CEO and Directors will have dishwashers installed.
- The CEO and Directors will be eligible for outdoor furniture settings, 9 pieces for 4-bedroom houses and 7 for 3-bedroom houses.
- The DSC Info Housing Guide to Purchase Furniture, which has been amended from time to time, will be followed when purchasing furniture.

### 3.10 LIMITED LIFE ITEMS

A number of limited life items will be provided at the beginning of all tenancies as follows:

- One good quality Fabric Washable Shower curtain (if required)

- Working Light bulbs in each light fitting
- Sink and bath plugs

These items will be checked as part of the Entry Inspections and the tenant will be responsible for replacing or keeping them clean and in working order during the tenancy.

Some special light bulbs will be available through Stores on a private works basis (i.e. the tenant pays).

A number of limited life items will be provided at the beginning and during tenancies as follows:

- One good quality washable cover per lounge suite or recliner chair (furnished houses only)
- One good quality fitted mattress protector per bed (furnished houses only)
- One sprinkler and one 30m garden hose for small yards (<800m<sup>2</sup>), two sprinklers and two 30m garden hoses for large yards (>800m<sup>2</sup>)
- Up to two tap timers, depending on the number of taps at the property.
- Pop-up sprinklers will be maintained like for like where provided.

These items will be replaced upon presentation of worn/broken items or after a routine six-month inspection conducted by Council officers.

### 3.11 FIXTURES AND FITTINGS

All windows and sliding doors will have pinch-pleat style off-white blackout curtains. Where curtains are inappropriate, roll-up blinds will be installed.

The Council will provide appropriate screening for privacy, sun, and/or wind in windows and outdoor areas where reasonably possible.

If a particular item does not meet the above standard at the time this policy was adopted, the standard item will be provided when it is replaced due to age/condition.

### 3.12 CONSUMABLES

Council may provide up to two bags of lawn fertiliser per year if the tenant proves to the satisfaction of the CEO that an effort is being made to maintain/restore the lawn.

### 3.13 MAINTENANCE

When a tenant identifies a defect or the need for maintenance, they must complete a Maintenance Request form providing the exact location and nature of the problem. A Maintenance Request must be submitted for any faults or defects in Furniture and Fittings, including fridges, washing machines, furniture, etc., before any replacement items will be issued.

Maintenance will be conducted in accordance with relevant Asset Management Plans and the DSC Info – Housing Maintenance Guide, as amended from time to time.

### 3.14 PETS

Approval to have pets inside the premises must be sought by submitting an Animals in Housing Application form.

The Tenant is required to keep their animals in accordance with the Council's Subordinate Local Law No. 2 (Animal Management) 2013.

The law states that the owner of the animal must comply with the minimum standards for keeping an animal and provide a proper enclosure to contain the animal. Thus, the tenant is responsible for ensuring that the fencing at the property is adequate to contain their pet and that material likely to become offensive, such as excreta, is collected daily and disposed of appropriately.

### 3.15 TENANT INFRASTRUCTURE ADDITIONS

The tenant must seek approval from the CEO, in writing, for any infrastructure additions.

Any infrastructure added by the tenant (after receiving approval from the Chief Executive Officer), such as sheds, greenhouses, awnings, and shelves, must be removed when the tenancy ends unless by written agreement with the CEO. Council may charge the tenant for the removal of these items.

### 3.16 BREAKAGES

The tenant will cover the cost of any breakages caused by the tenant or their guests, regardless of whether the breakage is accidental. Where Council's insurance covers the breakage, the tenant will be required to pay the excess relating to the insurance claim.

### 3.17 SUPPORT FOR IMPROVEMENTS

Council provides support for tenants, who are employees of Council to make improvements through landscaping works by providing the following:

- Plant and equipment in accordance with the Use of Council's Plant and Vehicles Policy.
- Soil for top-dressing lawn.
- Grass seed.
- Up to five free plants where Council is purchasing plants as part of a broader acquisition per year where the tenant has proved to the satisfaction of the CEO that an effort to improve the yard is being made.

The tenant must complete a Property Improvement Request form for approval by the CEO before work commences.

### 3.18 YARD MAINTENANCE

The Tenant is responsible for maintaining the yard to the same standard as reported on the Entry Condition report. Push lawnmowers and whipper snippers are provided by Council for a fee as per the current Fees and Charges schedule

## 4. REFERENCE AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

### 4.2 RELATED POLICIES, LEGISLATION AND DOCUMENTS:

Links to supporting documentation
Housing Request Register
DSC Form - Animals in Housing Application
DSC Form – Furniture Issue/Disposal
DSC Form - Housing Request
DSC Info - Furnished Housing Offer Fact Sheet
DSC Form - Property Improvement Request
DSC Info – Housing Guide to Purchase Furniture
RTA Website: <a href="https://www.rta.qld.gov.au/">https://www.rta.qld.gov.au/</a>
Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008

**Links to supporting documentation**

Use of Council's Plant and Vehicles Policy

**4.3 VERSION CONTROL:**

PREVIOUS VERSION NUMBER	ADOPTED/APPROVED DATE
Version 1 (Original)	Minute No. 2015.07.20-OM-21
2	Minute No. 2016.10.10-OM-12
3	Minute No. 2020.01.20-OM-10
4	Minute No. 2020.06.22-OM-11
5	Minute No.