

Seeking housing assistance

This fact sheet explains how you can apply for housing assistance in Tasmania and the types of housing that are available.

How can I get help?

Housing Connect is where people go for housing assistance and support. It provides one assessment for everything from emergency accommodation to a long-term home. Housing Connect services help Tasmanians on low incomes find or keep safe, appropriate affordable housing.

Housing Connect will help you if you are:

- homeless or at risk of being homeless
- living in unsafe housing or you cannot stay where you normally live
- a safety risk to yourself or others or there is a third-party threat to you or your household.

Housing Connect can also help if you are:

- having trouble paying your rent or bond
- moving and having trouble paying the costs
- living in a place that makes it hard for you or makes your health or mobility worse
- unable to pay for your own housing.

What sort of help can I get?

If you need somewhere safe to stay immediately or short term, Housing Connect can help you.

If you are having trouble getting or keeping your housing or you need medium or longer-term help, Housing Connect can assess you for help with:

- paying your rent, paying your bond or moving costs in the private rental market
- social housing
- supported accommodation.

How will I be assessed?

Housing Connect will talk to you about the reasons you need help. They will ask about where you are living and the circumstances that caused you to need help. They will talk to you about your family situation and any other people who may need help, including children or people you are caring for or who care for you.

Housing Connect will collect this information and use it to provide advice on the sort of housing assistance you need.

Housing Connect will assess your housing needs using a Housing Assessment Prioritisation System, which makes sure that people with the greatest or most urgent needs are helped first because of their safety, if they are homeless, suffering ill-health or mobility problems, and how much the rent is compared to their income.

The information you provide will help to make sure you can get the housing and support that matches your needs as quickly as possible in your circumstances.

What help can I get immediately?

You can call Housing Connect on **1800 800 588** or you can go to one of the five outlets in Tasmania.

Housing Connect can provide financial help to pay for emergency accommodation or they can tell you to contact an emergency accommodation provider. If you are escaping family violence, they can connect you to family violence rapid rehousing which is a type of private rental assistance.

There are many people in crisis who need emergency accommodation. There is not enough emergency accommodation for all the people who need it. This means it may not always be possible to get this help. Housing Connect will always do everything they can to help.

Housing support services

Housing Connect can help you find housing. They can also help you keep your housing.

If you are having trouble budgeting and making ends meet, Housing Connect can help you. They can also help by connecting you with services to help you keep your housing if you need it.

Help with private rental

Housing Connect may be able to help if you are having trouble paying your rent, bond or moving costs. Private rental financial assistance is only available to people who can show that they need it.

You will need to provide information to Housing Connect so they can assess you.

They will ask you to provide information that shows that you:

- live in Tasmania, not another state or territory
- are an Australian citizen or permanent resident
- are 16 years or older
- are a low-income earner who is eligible to keep a Low Income Health Care Card
- do not have assets that could be used to meet your housing needs.

If you are a member of a household, all household income will be considered when Housing Connect assess you for financial assistance.

Housing Connect can give you financial assistance once every 12 months.

Help with social housing

Housing Connect can help you apply for social housing. You must be able to show that you:

- live in Tasmania
- are an Australian citizen
- are a permanent resident including refugee visa subclasses 200, 201, 202, 203 and 204
- are 16 years or older
- are a low-income earner who is eligible for a Commonwealth Health Care Card
- do not own land or a home of your own
- do not have financial assets worth more than \$35 000 – this includes things such as shares, property and money in the bank and includes your assets and the assets of any other people who live in your household. It does not include things such as your car or your household items.

Housing Connect may require more information about your circumstances to decide how urgently you need help.

If Housing Connect decides you need social housing, they will ask you where you want to live and you will be listed on the Housing Register. The Housing Register has the information of all the people who need social housing. You need to be listed on the Housing Register if you want to receive an offer of housing.

Housing Connect will assess your level of need and tell you if you are:

- Priority – in the greatest need, or
- General – in need but not in the greatest need.

You can tell Housing Connect if you want to receive offers from all social housing providers.

Social housing providers

Homes Tasmania provides social housing statewide. Social housing is also provided by:

- Centacare Evolve Housing
- Mission Australia
- Salvation Army Housing
- Community Housing Limited
- Housing Choices.

Housing Connect can tell you where you have a choice of providers if they offer housing in an area you want to live.

Help with supported accommodation

Housing Connect can help you apply for supported accommodation. Supported accommodation is a type of social housing for people who need extra help to keep their housing.

You must show that you need supported accommodation before you can be offered this type of housing.

Supported accommodation providers may ask you for other information to help them meet your needs.

There are many supported accommodation providers.

Waiting time for social housing

There are many people in need of social housing in Tasmania. There are not enough social housing properties for all the people who need them. This means it can take a long time for a property to become vacant that would suit your needs.

People who are Priority applicants are usually offered a property before General applicants.

Keep your application up to date

You need to tell Housing Connect if your circumstances change to make sure your information on the Housing Register is up to date.

If you do not tell Housing Connect when there are changes to your circumstances, you may not be offered social housing.

You need to call Housing Connect on **1800 800 588** if you want to cancel your application.