

FACT SHEET

Private Rental Incentives Program

Information for Applicants and Tenants

What is the Private Rental Incentives Program?

The Private Rental Incentives Program is a new way we are helping eligible low income Tasmanians access affordable private rental properties.

2 year leases will be offered under this Program at guaranteed, affordable rental prices in locations that are convenient for you.

Under this Program, you will sign a lease with Centacare Evolve Housing, a registered and experienced Community Housing Provider. You won't enter a direct lease with the property owner.

Centacare Evolve Housing will be your tenancy manager and will assist you throughout your tenancy.

Properties are being made available for all types of households – singles, couples and families, all across Tasmania.

250 leases will be made available under this Program over four years (2019 – 2023).

This Program was expanded as part of the Commonwealth Government's Debt Waiver Agreement. The expansion will see an additional 50 properties over the four years of the Program.

An additional 75 properties with 24 month leases have been made available under the Tasmanian Government's COVID-19 Stimulus Package.

The Program started on 1 July 2019. You can make an application at your local Housing Connect office or by calling 1800 800 588.



Who is eligible for the Program?

We know that affordable private rentals might not be the best housing option for everyone.

Housing Connect can help you apply to be a tenant under the Program. You must be able to show that you:

- Live in Tasmania, not another state or territory
- Are an Australian Citizen or Permanent Resident
- Are 18 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
- Are able to afford the rent and meet income thresholds
- Are able to live independently (with little to no support)
- Are able to look after the property

If you have lived in social housing before (either with Housing Tasmania or a Community Housing Provider in Tasmania), your tenancy history may be reviewed to help make the decision about whether this Program is the best fit for you.

If you have a tenancy history with substantial rental arrears, property damage or anti-social behaviour you will not be considered suitable for this Program.

What sort of properties will be available under this Program?

Properties accepted to be part of this Program will:

- Be close to health services, regular and easily accessible public transport, shops and grocery stores
- Meet minimum standards as per the *Residential Tenancy Act 1997*
- Be available to rent for a minimum of 2 years with the option of extension
- Meet the demands of applicants in terms of affordability, property type, size and location

We will choose properties that are in high demand by our applicants.

What rent will I have to pay?

Maximum weekly rents are set for properties involved in this Program. The weekly rent amount will not change during the 2 year lease.



Maximum weekly rent has been set at 25 – 30 per cent below the region median market rent based on the size and location of the property.

This is considered to be the maximum amount affordable for eligible low income Tasmanians.

The **Maximum Capped Weekly Rents** are outlined in the table below:

Region	Bedrooms	Maximum (capped) Rents (per week)
North West	1	\$130
	2	\$180
	3	\$217
	4	\$263
North	1	\$154
	2	\$224
	3	\$263
	4	\$315
South	1	\$203
	2	\$273
	3	\$322
	4	\$399

What is expected of me as a tenant?

Just like renting any property in the private rental market, you are expected to pay your rent on time, look after the property by keeping it clean and undamaged, and be a good neighbour.

A failure to do this may result in termination of your lease (in accordance with the *Residential Tenancy Act 1997*).

You need to be able to pay for your water and electricity usage.

You will be responsible for any tenant damage to the property.

Maintenance will be carried out in accordance with the *Residential Tenancy Act 1997*.

What happens to my lease after 2 years?

Under the Program, 2 year leases are offered.

Property owners can decide to make their property available for another 2 years after the first lease ends. If they do, you (the tenant) may be offered the opportunity to stay in the property for another 2 years.



How do I apply for this Program?

Contact your local Housing Connect office to apply for this Program. They will speak with you to find out if you're eligible and if so, will help you complete an application.

You can contact Housing Connect on 1800 800 588 or visit their offices in Hobart, Rosny, Launceston, Devonport and Burnie.

I am already on the Housing Register. Why do I have to complete another assessment with Housing Connect?

This Program helps eligible people find a private rental home. It is not social housing. If you are interested in renting a private rental property, then this Program might suit you.

We need to be able to make sure that this Program is right for you.

We need to make sure all of your details are correct, and we know exactly what type of property in what type of location you are looking for.

I am not on the Housing Register, but I am a low income earner/Centrelink recipient and am struggling to find an affordable rental. Can I apply for housing through this Program?

Yes. Please contact Housing Connect on 1800 800 588 to discuss your eligibility and to go through the application process.

I am a current tenant struggling to pay my rent. Can my owner or agent list the property I'm in for the Program and lower my rent?

No. Existing tenancies are not eligible for the Program.

I'm concerned my owner will end my tenancy, so they can access this Program. Can this happen?

No. Tenancies can only be ended for the reasons set out in the Residential Tenancy Act 1997.

Housing Tasmania carry out checks to make sure properties approved for this Program don't already have tenants in them.



I live in an affordable rental now, but my lease is about to expire. Can the owner choose not to renew my lease, so they can include the property in this Program?

Owners are allowed not to renew a lease at the end of a lease term date. They may do this for many reasons.

The Program is about increasing choice for tenants in the private rental market. Properties that are already being rented affordably won't be approved under this Program.

What happens if I unreasonably reject a property that is offered to me through this Program?

If you unreasonably reject a property offered under this Program that meets your preferences you chose in your application, then your application for the Program may be cancelled.

This cancellation will not impact the status of any other social housing applications you may have.

What happens to my social housing application if I accept a property under this Program?

If you accept a property offered to you under this Program and you also have an active Social Housing Application, then your Social Housing Application will be cancelled as you will be securely housed.

You are encouraged to speak regularly with your tenancy manager to work out whether you and the property owner are happy to renew your lease at the end of the 2 years. If a lease renewal isn't going to happen, get in contact with Housing Connect early so you can consider other options.

Do I pay a bond?

Yes, you will be asked to pay a bond. If you need assistance to pay this bond you are still eligible to apply for Private Rental Assistance through Housing Connect.

Will I be eligible for Private Rental Assistance?

Yes. You will be able to apply for Private Rental Assistance if accepting housing through this Program. Housing Connect can provide you with further information.

As well as assistance with bond and rent in advance payments, private rental assistance can help with rental arrears, removals assistance and starter packs for new tenancies.



Will I get Commonwealth Rent Assistance?

Yes, if you are eligible for it. You need to contact Centrelink to discuss your eligibility or check their website.

Who do I contact if there is an issue during my lease?

Contact Centacare Evolve Housing to discuss any concerns about the property or tenancy as a first step.

The following information may also help:

- Tenants Union of Tasmania: www.tutas.org.au
- Consumer, Building and Occupational Services:
www.cbos.tas.gov.au/topics/housing
- Residential Tenancy Act 1997 (Tas) – Tasmanian Legislation – Tasmania’s consolidated legislation online:
www.legislation.tas.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/act-1997-082

Who is Centacare Evolve Housing Ltd?

Centacare Evolve Housing Ltd is a Community Housing Provider who works with Housing Connect and Housing Tasmania to provide safe and affordable homes through various Programs.

Community Housing Providers manage over 4 000 properties in Tasmania.

Our Community Housing Providers are registered and experienced tenancy managers.

Under this Program owners will sign a head lease with Centacare Evolve Housing, and the tenant will sign a sub-lease with Centacare Evolve Housing.

Further Information

Housing Connect: 1800 800 588

Website:

https://www.communities.tas.gov.au/housing/tasmanian_affordable_housing_strategy/key-projects/private-rental-incentive

Email: housing.privaterentals@communities.tas.gov.au