

Baptcare Affordable Housing Policy

Document Information

Date:	21 March 2023	
Document Author:	Peter Andrews	Complaints and Appeals
Document Owner:	Cliff Barclay	
Contact details:	cbarclay@baptcare.org.au	
Document type:	Policy	

Overview

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide a process for renters, applicants and other stakeholders to register their dissatisfaction with any of the services provided by Baptcare Affordable Housing (BAH).

Who Does It Apply To?

This policy applies only to renters, applicants and other stakeholders of BAH.

It does not apply to the following:

- Disputes or grievances between employees of BAH
- Complaints by a renter about someone else outside the organisation
- Disputes that are covered by other legislation e.g. a dispute about renter or rental provider responsibilities that come under the jurisdiction of the Residential Tenancies Act 1997.

Definitions

- a) Complaint – When someone tells BAH that they are dissatisfied with our services, standards, practices or policies.
- b) Appeal – Where a person seeks to have a decision made by BAH reviewed.
- c) Renter's Information Pack – a pack of information provided to BAH renters at the commencement of their tenancy, containing individualised details of their tenancy, rights and responsibilities as renters, local community services, service manuals for equipment in the house.
- d) Victorian Housing Register - The statewide common application record for people seeking public housing and community housing.

Policy

Overview

Principles

BAH is committed to involving and empowering renters in the provision of its services. BAH places a high value on the rights of renters to lodge complaints and appeal any decision made. BAH welcomes feedback and is committed to using it to respond to the needs of renters to continuously improve our service delivery.

To achieve this, BAH will make it easy for renters and applicants to complain through:

- The promotion of our Complaints and Appeals process in the Renter's Information Pack given to every renter upon commencement of their rental agreement
- The promotion of a specific page on the website where complaints and feedback can be lodged
- The promotion of the different ways in which complaints can be made, including email, by phone, in person and in writing.

BAH will:

- Keep all records of complaints made and actions taken in a Complaints Register, according to its regulatory requirements under the Housing Act 1983
- Ensure that all matters concerning the complaints and appeals process remain confidential and that rights to privacy are respected. Any information provided by renters or applicants will remain confidential
- Take all complaints seriously and ensure they are addressed promptly and fairly
- Not take any adverse action against renters simply because they have made a complaint
- Review complaints regularly and identify ways in which the delivery of services can be improved
- Be open and transparent in the investigation of complaints
- Keep complainants informed about the steps being taken to investigate the complaint
- Inform complainants of their right to an advocate or support person to assist them in the complaints process.

Making a Complaint

A complaint can be made in a number of different ways. Complainants can:

- Make a complaint in person, by email, over the phone, by letter or on BAH's Feedback form
- Talk directly to the person in BAH they think is responsible for sorting out the problem
- Talk to someone outside BAH who can help them with the complaint
- Ask for an interpreter to assist them

- Take the complaint to a higher authority if they are not happy with the outcome of their complaint.

How BAH Responds

When notified of a complaint, BAH will provide a written response within one working week. The response will include:

- An acknowledgement of the complaint
- An indication of the timeframe in which the complaint will be addressed
- The process undertaken internally to address the issue
- An acknowledgement of the complainant's right to an advocate or support person to assist resolution of the complaint.

Further Steps

If BAH does not resolve the complaint within 30 days, the complaint can be referred to the Housing Registrar for investigation.

Phone: (03) 7005 8984

Website: <https://www.vic.gov.au/making-complaint-about-community-housing>

Email: housingregistrarcomplaints@dtf.vic.gov.au

Mail: Housing Registrar, GPO Box 4379, Melbourne VIC 3001

If the complaint concerns an appeal about eligibility for the Victorian Housing Register, then the person wishing to make a complaint will be referred to the Housing Appeals Office in the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing. They will be required to fill out an Appeal Application Form, which is available at:

- Local housing offices
- The Housing Appeals Office: 9096 7426 or free call 1800 807 702
- Website: <https://www.housing.vic.gov.au/appeal-decision>
- Email: housingappeals@dffh.vic.gov.au
- Online at <https://onlineappeals.housing.vic.gov.au>

If the complainant wishes to appeal a decision made by BAH, they can use the internal appeals process to ask a more senior person to request a review of the outcome, the decisions made, or the actions taken. All appeals will be dealt with in a respectful manner, the right to privacy will be upheld and all details will remain confidential.

If the complainant wishes to have a decision reviewed regarding access to personal information, or correction of that personal information, this can be done by contacting the BAH Privacy Officer.

Phone: (03) 9831 7222

Email: privacy@baptcare.org.au

Mail: Privacy Officer, PO Box 230, Hawthorn, VIC 3122

Rights and Responsibilities

Renters' rights and responsibilities are protected under the Residential Tenancies Act and other Acts of parliament.

It is important for renters to know and understand their rights and that along with rights come responsibilities. At the beginning of their rental, renters are given a series of documents including a 'Rights and Responsibilities' booklet. This booklet describes both the renter's and the rental provider's rights and responsibilities. If renters have misplaced this, they can ask a worker for a replacement copy.

Information and support can also be obtained through Consumer Affairs Victoria and the Tenants Union of Victoria.

Consumer Affairs Victoria

1300 55 81 81

www.consumer.vic.gov.au

Tenants Union of Victoria

1800 068860

www.tenantsvic.org.au

Related Documents, Standards and Legislation

- BAH Brochure: How to make a complaint
- Residential Tenancies Act 1997 (VIC)
- Residential Tenancies Regulations 2021 (Vic)
- Housing Act 1983
- Victorian Housing Registrar Performance Standards
- BAH Privacy and Information Sharing Policy

Revisions and History

This policy will be reviewed every two years or earlier if the legal, regulatory and contractual environment requires.

Next Review Date:	March 2024	
Revision History	Section	Commencing
Policy no. 7.6, v.1-v.6.1 6.2	Updates to Residential Tenancies Act	17/6/2021 21/3/2023

Transparency and Accessibility

This policy will be available on the BAH website: www.baptcare.org.au/services/housing/affordable-housing

Contacts

Email: bah@baptcare.org.au

Phone: (03) 98317326

Address: Baptcare Affordable Housing, 1193 Toorak Road, Camberwell VIC 3124

Document Control

Document file name:	Complaints and Appeals Policy
Document file location:	[File location hyperlink address TBC]