

PROGRAM POLICY: TENANCY AND HOUSING COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS

Policy number	PPOL006	Version	DRAFT v2.0
Drafted by	Policy Development Coordinator	Approved by Board	26 July 2017
Responsible person	Complaints Coordinator	Scheduled review date	26 July 2019

1. PURPOSE

1.1 The purpose of this policy is to ensure that:

- a. tenants and prospective tenants are aware of their right to make a complaint or appeal a decision of CEHL or a member co-op on matters relating to rental housing
- b. complaints and appeals are managed in a fair and prompt manner
- c. the effectiveness of the complaints and appeals system is regularly monitored and reviewed
- d. complaints are used to improve the Program.

2. POLICY CONTEXT

Under the Housing Act 1983 (Vic), a registered housing agency must:

- establish a procedure for dealing with complaints by tenants or prospective tenants who are affected by decisions of the registered agency on matters relating to rental housing
- comply with the Performance Standards for Registered Housing Agencies, which include a requirement to have in place policies and procedures to ensure the effective management of complaints and appeals made by tenants in relation to tenancy and housing issues.

CEHL and member co-ops share responsibility for compliance with these obligations in accordance with this policy and the Program Principles.

3. POLICY STATEMENT AND PRINCIPLES

3.1 STATEMENT

- a. CEHL and landlords will ensure that complaints or appeals made by tenants and prospective tenants are managed in a prompt, fair and transparent manner.
- b. CEHL and landlords will make all reasonable endeavours to resolve complaints and appeals in a timely fashion.

3.2 PRINCIPLES

- a. CEHL and landlords will inform tenants and prospective tenants of their right to make a complaint or appeal and the process by which complaints and appeals are managed, including any right to refer a complaint to the Housing Registrar.

- b. CEHL and landlords will have in place documented procedures for registering, investigating, resolving and recording the outcome of complaints and appeals made by tenants and prospective tenants. In the absence of their own procedures, member co-ops will adopt the Program Complaints and Appeals Procedure developed by CEHL.
- c. Member co-ops will provide CEHL with the complaints and appeals procedures they have in place.
- d. CEHL and landlords will have in place procedures to regularly monitor and review the complaints and appeals system, to ensure its continued effectiveness.
- e. CEHL and landlords will review the outcomes of complaints and complaints data to identify systemic issues and to improve the Program.

4. SCOPE

4.1 This is Program Policy. It applies to CEHL and all member co-ops.

5. DEFINITIONS

5.1 A complaint is registered expression of dissatisfaction with any service delivered, action taken or decision made by CEHL or a co-op related to tenancy and housing issues.

5.2 For all other definitions relating to this policy, please refer to the Program Glossary.

6. LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

6.1 This policy adheres to and incorporates guidance from:

- a. Performance Standards for Registered Housing Agencies: section 1 Tenant and Housing Services
- b. Housing Act 1983 (Vic) Part VIII Division 5, Subdivision 2 – Dispute Resolution
- c. Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities 2006
- d. Residential Tenancies Act 1997.

7. PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

7.1 This policy is consistent with:

- a. Program Principles:
Working Together
Member Support & Development.
- b. CCA.

8. RELATED PROGRAM POLICIES

8.1 Program Complaints and Appeals Procedure.

8.2 Rent Arrears Program Policy.

8.3 Ending a Tenancy (Landlord initiated) Program Policy.

8.4 Ending a Tenancy (Tenant initiated) Program Policy.

8.5 Referral to Support Agencies Program Policy.

9. AUTHORISATION

Approved by	CEHL Board	Date of approval	26 July 2017
Position	CEHL Chair	Karren Walker	