

Government Employee Housing Rents and Rental Concessions

Policy

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1. Policy statement

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) (Housing) determines the rent specified in the tenancy agreement between CEO (Housing) and the tenant. The rent payable for Government Employee Housing (GEH) dwellings is determined by the Minister under Section 23 of the *Housing Act 1982*.

2. Purpose

This policy outlines the guidelines in relation to all payments associated with GEH. Areas covered are;

- Rental payments for Government owned dwellings
- Rental payments for Private Head Leased (PHL) dwellings;
- Visiting Officer Quarters (VOQ) payments;
- Administration fees;
- Security deposits;
- Payment reviews; and
- Debt recovery.

3. Scope

This policy applies to premises owned by or leased by the CEO (Housing) for the purpose of government employee housing.

4. Policy detail

4.1. Rent payable by the tenant

The government employee housing tenant will receive a rental concession as set out in Commissioner for Public Employment Determination 8 of 2015 and the relevant enterprise agreements; for example, Northern Territory Public Sector 2021-2025 Enterprise Agreement Part 7, section 46.

If the employee is not eligible to receive a 100% rental concession, the employing agency will need to have an agreement with the employee to recover the associated costs.

The following terms and conditions apply to all rental payments irrespective of the type of lease:

- (a) The GEH tenant-occupant should be directed to their employing agency for all queries regarding the amount of rent to be paid;
- (b) The amount of rent paid by tenant-occupants is linked with their employment conditions as Northern Territory Public Servants and the specific and current Enterprise Agreements (EAs) in place between the parties bound by each individual EA, and Commissioner for Public Employment Determination 8 of 2015;
- (c) Where employees share accommodation, each tenant-occupant will pay rent as determined by their employing agency subject to their employment conditions;
- (d) GEH tenant-occupants must pay rent fortnightly in advance via payroll deduction.

4.2. Rent payments for Government owned dwellings

From 1 July 2022, Government owned dwellings will be leased at a set rate of \$77 per bedroom per week, paid by the employing agency to the Northern Territory Government Employee Housing Office (NTGEHO).

Employing agencies will be billed by the NTGEHO on a quarterly basis with the first instalment made on the commencement date of the lease agreement and subsequently before the last business day of each month for the duration of the lease.

When an employing agency wishes to retain an unoccupied dwelling for a short period of time, due to staff turnover, the agency may do so and will be charged full rent.

4.3. Rent payments for PHL dwellings

Rents charged to employing agencies for leased dwellings under PHL Agreements are at market rent as agreed between the private landlord and the employing agency in consultation with the NTGEHO.

4.4. Administration fee

An administration fee of \$2,150 per annum per dwelling will be charged to employing agencies for the number of GEH dwellings allocated to their agency, including both Government owned and PHL dwellings. This fee recognises the current cost of providing GEH services at an administrative level and will support GEH sustainability for the future.

4.5. Utility and other charges

All utility connection fees are the responsibility of the employee residing in GEH. Charges for electricity and gas, unless they are not separately metered, will also be at the expense of the employee. Tenants will only be responsible for payment of excess water use where more than 500 kilolitres is used within a yearly timeframe.

Employing agencies may pay for some utilities as per their EAs or employing agencies may subsidise the charges as per their policy

In Nhulunbuy, for Developing East Arnhem Limited (DEAL) properties, the NTGEHO organises connection of electricity and upon receiving the electricity and excess water invoices makes payment directly to the service provider. The employee residing in GEH must pay the charges within the time specified in the invoice.

On vacating the residential premises the GEH Tenancy Officer will take a photograph of the water and power readings during the exit inspection. In the event this is not completed, an estimate will be made based on the vacate date.

5. Decision making and amendments

The CEO (Housing) may delegate a power or function under the *Housing Act 1982* or other Act. Delegated officers may make decisions on behalf of the CEO (Housing) in line with the Department's Housing Delegations and Financial Management Delegations.

A discretionary decision may be made outside general application of policy if it supports the policy intent, will prevent an employee or agency from being unfairly disadvantaged, and is in line with the Department's delegations and legislative obligations.

6. Review of the policy

If at any time the legislative, operating or funding environment is so altered that the policy is no longer appropriate in its current form, the policy shall be reviewed and amended accordingly in agreement with the Commissioner for Public Employment. The Office of the Commissioner for Public Employment will ensure the policy meets legislative requirements.

7. Legislation basis and related resources

7.1. Legislation

Housing Act 1982

Residential Tenancies Act 1999

Public Sector Employment and Management Act 1993

Commissioner for Public Employment Determination 8 of 2015

7.2. Policies

Government Employee Housing Operational Policy Overview

Allocation policy

Eligibility policy

Entitlement policy

NT Government Employee Housing Agency Billing Policy Determination 1.1