



Budget 2006-2007

FACT SHEET #F13: CHANGES TO THE PUBLIC RENTAL HOUSING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

What are the changes to the Program?

The income eligibility criteria for Housing ACT will be tightened to 60% of Australian average weekly earnings for singles and 75% of Australian average weekly earnings for couples, and only those actually residing in the Australian Capital Territory will be eligible for Public Housing.

The Priority Allocation system is being reformed to focus on the most needy. A new Priority category will be created for those who are judged to have the highest and most immediate needs. It is anticipated those in this category will be housed within three months.

People to be included within this category are those facing complex needs including:

- Individuals and families facing primary homelessness (including those in homelessness services);
- Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders with complex needs;
- Women and children fleeing domestic violence;
- the frail aged; and
- people with a disability where natural support mechanisms are in danger of failing.

The Program has also been amended to prioritise transfers to enable tenants to downsize or move to areas of lesser demand.

Changes have been made to remove outdated provisions that limit where public housing can be provided, allowing the development of new and innovative responses to housing needs, and to the appeals process to ensure decisions are rigorously examined to ensure that the preferable decision is made.

How does the ACT compare to other States and Territories?

With the reduced income tests, the ACT's income eligibility is consistent with other states, including NSW and Queensland.

Why is the ACT Government making this change?

The changes to eligibility are being made to ensure that the needs of the most needy in the community, looked at on a holistic basis, are being met, and to ensure housing resources are focussed on citizens of the Territory.

These changes relating to transfers will facilitate the better utilisation of housing stock and will enable more effective matching of the needs of tenants with the housing stock.