

Resident Advisory Committee Handbook



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1 AIMS

THE AIMS OF THE RESIDENT ADVISORY COMMITTEES ARE TO:

- To facilitate communication between residents and Housing Choices;
- To represent residents' diverse needs and interests; and
- To enhance community development and the engagement of all residents in their communities.

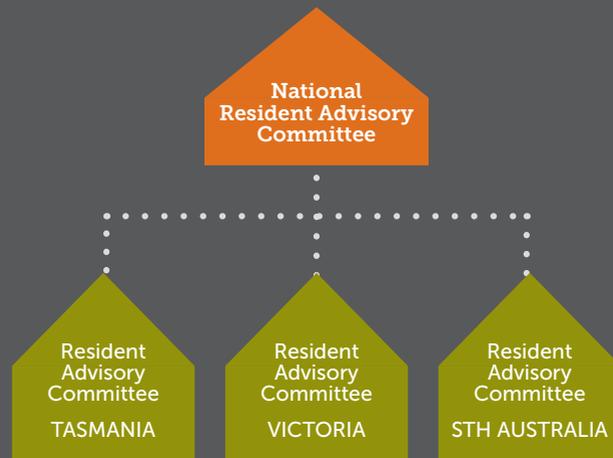


2 OUR RESIDENT ADVISORY COMMITTEES

Housing Choices has an active commitment to encouraging resident participation in shaping the delivery of services. The Resident Advisory Committee function was first established in Victoria in 2010 as a resident consultative body and has since then become a valuable voice for residents across all our operations.

Housing Choices has a state-wide Committee structure for each State we operate in, so local residents can be consulted on all service delivery issues relevant to residents in each State. This is supported by a National Resident Advisory Committee that reviews the activities of all State Committees and provides advice on national policies.

Our Committees have a positive impact on services and welcomes enthusiastic residents to join them.



3 WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE COMMITTEES?



THE OBJECTIVES OF THE COMMITTEES ARE TO:

- Raise collective issues that affect residents and present a resident perspective in its advices and recommendations;
- Provide advice and feedback to Housing Choices on matters to help improve policies, operations and influence service delivery to increase resident participation;
- Enhance community development and the engagement of all residents;
- Support Housing Choices' advocacy work and its voice on affordable housing; and
- Periodically communicate and consult with residents on the activities of the Committee.

The Committees are a forum to discuss collective and overall issues. If a member has a personal or private issue with their tenancy or property they should raise it with their Housing Officer.

The State Committees provide advice to client services teams for each State and the National Committee provides advice to the Managing Director and Chair of Housing Choices.



4 WHAT DO THE COMMITTEES DO?

THE COMMITTEES ARE A FANTASTIC WAY TO MEET NEW PEOPLE AND CONTRIBUTE TO THE WIDER COMMUNITY OF RESIDENTS.

The Committees have actively influenced a wide range of topics that affect residents for example:

- The annual Resident Satisfaction Survey;
- Improving our letters to residents;
- Approving community development projects;
- Redesigning the Home Stories newsletter;
- Influencing Housing Choices' business plans;
- Encouraging more local resident meetings;
- Providing specific feedback to improve tenancy policies and practices; and
- Learning more about affordable housing and social issues.



5 WHO AND HOW CAN YOU JOIN?

5.1 WHO CAN JOIN?

We encourage all residents of Housing Choices' properties to volunteer. People who represent a resident such as carers or support agencies can also apply to join.

- We have a maximum of 12 residents on each State Committee. The National Committee consists of 2 representatives from each State Committee;
- Committee members are appointed for a two year term and can be re-nominated; and
- If there are not any positions available on the Committee, you can join the waiting list or get involved in local resident groups.

Subject to applications members will include young people, residents with disabilities, older residents and residents from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Each Committee will aim to have at least one member of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background and at least 25% of members with a disability.

5.2 HOW TO JOIN?

Simply complete the 'Join the Resident Committee' form at the back of this booklet and send it to your Housing Officer.

A panel consisting of representatives from the Committee and Housing Choices will assess the applications. Your Housing Officer may also approach you to see if you are interested in joining.

If you are interested, call us on 1300 312 447 to find out more.

6 RESPONSIBILITIES

RESPONSIBILITIES OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS INCLUDE:

- Attend Committee meetings, with annual attendance rate of 60%;
- Prepare for each meeting by reading the materials that are sent to you before the meetings;
- Attend special projects, workshops and events as appropriate and required;
- Respect the privacy of residents and all personal information is to be treated as confidential;
- Be respectful of others' opinions and conduct oneself in an unbiased and non-judgmental manner; and
- Be mindful of one's role to represent the views of Housing Choices many and diverse residents.

7 COMMITTEE OPERATIONS

7.1 MEETINGS

The State Committees meet every 2 months.
The National Committees meets every 6 months.

The meetings are held at Housing Choices' offices, unless informed otherwise.

The meetings run for approximately 2 hours and might be during the day or evening, depending on what works best for most members.

Committee members receive agendas and papers to read one week before the meetings. Housing Choices facilitates the meeting and take minutes.

At least three Committee members need to attend a meeting for decisions to be made.

7.2 COSTS

We reimburse members' travel costs and will provide refreshments and food for the meeting.



8 HOUSING CHOICES COMMITMENT

HOUSING CHOICES HAS MADE THE FOLLOWING COMMITMENTS TO THE STATE AND NATIONAL COMMITTEES:

- We will not treat Committee members any differently (positively or negatively) as a consequence of their membership of the Committee;
- The Committees will review proposed changes to all tenancy policies prior to their finalisation;
- We will assist the Committees to prepare an annual report that outlines their achievements to be tabled with Housing Choices' Board;
- We will identify training and development opportunities for Committee members;
- We will report feedback from the Committees to the client services teams and leaders;
- We will respond to feedback and advice from the Committees and let them know the results of their advice; and
- We will provide secretariat support to the Committees including: developing agendas, taking and distributing minutes, facilitating meetings, developing required papers, arranging logistical requirements for meetings, and organising staff and other organisations to attend meetings for the purpose of providing specialised advice.

9 JOIN THE RESIDENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Name:

Address:

Length of stay at current address:

Contact Number:

Are you part of, or have you ever been part of any committee or group? No Yes
If so, what are/were they?

Why would you like to join the Resident Advisory Committee?

How did you hear about the Resident Advisory Committee?

Please post this form to the nearest Housing Choices' office and address it to the Community Development Team.

We will contact you once we receive your application.





Phone: 1300 312 447
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