



COTA NEW SOUTH WALES

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FACT SHEET

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## COMMUNITY HOUSING

Community housing provides low cost rental accommodation for those eligible for public housing. It offers secure, affordable, long-term housing, and most of the houses are owned by the Government. Like public housing, community housing is supported by the Government. Unlike public housing, it is managed by non-profit organisations rather than by the Housing NSW. This means that as a tenant, you deal with a person from a community housing organisation in paying the rent, sorting out repairs and so on. Community housing providers have similar policies to public housing but there are some key differences:

- Some community housing providers allow their clients to select more than one location when applying for housing
- The length of lease offered can vary and may include continuous leases
- Some providers may charge a small bond at the start of your tenancy.

### Type of Housing

There are four main types of community housing: >> Housing associations, housing co-operatives, church based housing and Aboriginal housing. These offer many forms of accommodation, such as flats, townhouses, small houses (villas) and large houses, also bed-sitters/one bedroom apartments with self-contained bathroom and kitchenettes. Often large communal laundry and/or kitchens are also available. A community housing tenant might be living near other community housing tenants (for example on an estate or smaller cluster of houses) or in a single rented property.

**Housing Associations:** are non-profit organisations that manage Government-owned housing for you. They also manage houses that are not owned by the Government. The housing is managed by employees of the housing association (for example, you would see one of these employees about repairs).

**Housing Co-operatives:** are also non-profit organisations - you still pay a similar rent, you still live in your own separate household. The difference is that all the managing of the co-operative - repairs, selecting tenants, organising payment of rent - is done by the tenants themselves. This gives you a lot more say in how the housing is run but you also need to take more responsibility. Many co-operatives have been set up to meet the needs of particular social and ethnic communities. Most residents remain in Cooperative Housing for long periods and the number of vacancies available is low compared with other housing providers.

**Church-based agencies:** have responded to need in their local communities and bring church resources to the table. In partnership with government they have played an important role in providing local solutions.

**Aboriginal housing:** There is also a distinct, Indigenous-controlled, housing system. While much of this housing is managed through the NSW Department of Housing, there is also significant number Aboriginal community based housing providers. This sector is administered by the [Aboriginal Housing Office](#).

## Eligibility, Rent and Waiting Time

Assets and income are assessed for eligibility and a tenant needs to be able to live independently. In nearly all cases, community housing rent is 25% to 30% of your gross household income (household income before tax). This is similar to the percentage paid by public housing tenants. Note that rent for co-operative accommodation can be as for public housing or up to market rental.

Waiting times are about the same as for public housing in the same areas and can stretch from 4 years to over 10 years according to popularity of area.

## How to Apply

Application is through Housing NSW (public housing). Tick "yes" on the Housing Register form where it asks **"Do you wish to be considered for housing with a community housing provider?"** (If you've already applied and didn't tick this, contact the Housing NSW and they will adjust this for you.)

Application forms are available from <http://www.housingpathways.nsw.gov.au/How+to+Apply/>

**NOTE:** If your housing need is **urgent**, contact **Link2home on 1800 152 152**. Link2home is the single, statewide homelessness information and referral service. <http://www.housing.nsw.gov.au/help-with-housing/specialist-homelessness-services/find-a-service/link2home>

It will be necessary to provide and attach proof of income information/support, letters about any medical condition or any other condition which affects your ability to house yourself on the private rental market. Once you have been accepted you will be put on a waiting list. The waiting time is about the same as for public housing in the same area and can be considerable in certain areas.

**Note that with community housing you may be able to apply for rent assistance from Centrelink.**

### **To enquire about Community Housing, contact:**

#### **NSW Government Housing Contact Centre**

<http://www.housingpathways.nsw.gov.au/contact-us>

Ph: 1800 422 322

#### **Community and Private Market Housing Directorate**

Ph: (02) 8753 8280

Fax: (02) 8753 8294

Address: 223-239 Liverpool Road, Ashfield NSW 2131

#### **NSW Federation of Housing Associations**

[http://www.communityhousing.org.au/F2\\_how\\_to\\_apply.html](http://www.communityhousing.org.au/F2_how_to_apply.html)

Ph: (02) 9281-7144

#### **Common Equity (Co-operative Housing) NSW Ltd**

<http://www.commonequity.com.au/>

Ph: 1800 066 834

Office: (02) 9356 9200