



DOCUMENT NUMBER	RH001
TYPE	Policy
SUBJECT	Rectory Housing Standards Policy
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Objective

The rationale for a Rectory Housing Standards Policy was clarified by Diocesan Council on 12th February 2021: “it is beneficial to have some minimum expectation of what should be rented, acquired or renovated” as housing for those whom a parish has a contractual responsibility to provide housing. This document seeks to specify the expected minimum standard in the provision of rectory housing under those conditions.

Definitions

“Housed church leader” refers to the person appointed to lead or assist in the leadership of a parish, for whom that parish has a contractual responsibility to provide housing. For clarity, this condition is distinguished from the contractual responsibility to provide a housing allowance in monetary terms or to assist in finding accommodation.

“Rectory” or “rectory housing” refers to the premises which that housing which is provided to a “housed church leader” as defined above. Accordingly, it is the intention of this policy to incorporate not only the housing of a rector of a parish (that is, the person who is in charge of a parish under the Bishop’s authority) but also of those who assist a rector of a parish (e.g. an assistant cleric or lay minister), for whom that parish has a contractual responsibility to providing housing.

“Decision makers” refers to persons who are involved in deciding how the “housed church leader” shall be housed.

General Principles

There are three main principles which guide the implementation of this policy.

First, one of the founding principles of the Diocesan Property Strategy is that “Diocesan properties are held to serve the current and emerging ministry needs of the Diocese”. Accordingly, decision makers shall consider not only the current needs of the parish or the Diocese generally but those which are reasonably foreseeable, assuming the existing scale of operations of the parish or ministry unit.

Second, housed church leaders are tenants of rectory housing. Accordingly, decision makers shall ensure that rectory housing should be safe, secure and functional and, above all, *at a*



standard expected of a rental property. Decision makers should also ensure that the WHS001 Workplace Health and Safety Policy of the Diocese is met.

Third, this policy is limited to “what should be rented, acquired or renovated” when changes are made to existing rectory housing arrangements. It is not intended to become a universal means by which existing rectories are evaluated for their suitability so as to necessitate immediate upgrades. Nevertheless, this policy shall be invoked by decision makers when renting accommodation is most appropriate, when considering the acquisition of a rectory or when planning for renovation works on existing rectories. It should also be recognised that properties of a higher standard are more likely to attract and retain housed church leaders. However, the cost of both acquisition *and* maintenance of the housing and associated fixtures and fittings should also be considered.

Rectory Housing Minimum Standard

Taking into account the guiding principles above, the minimum standard for rectory housing applies to the premises in question:

- Located within close proximity of the parish building;
- Provided with the basic facilities normally expected of a rental property with:
 - Adequate space for an average Australian family with children:
 - Living room;
 - Kitchen with stove/oven and sufficient space for a refrigerator and plumbing for a dishwasher;
 - Laundry with plumbing for a washing machine and basic provision for drying clothes;
 - Bathroom including shower;
 - Separate toilet and wash basin;
 - Bedrooms adequate to accommodate a couple and children separated by gender;
 - Adequate cooling and heating;
 - Adequate storage space;
 - Adequate parking for at least one vehicle in a secured area;
 - Adequate fencing, doors and locks to ensure the security of the housed church leader and family; and
 - Adequate storage facility for storing tools and equipment required to maintain the grounds;
- Inspected and maintained by the churchwardens, including regular pest, electrical, fire, health and safety inspections and the timely arrangement for maintenance and repairs works where warranted;
- Kept by the housed church leader at a standard expected of a rental property; that is, clean and/or well-maintained inside and outside of the property, including the upkeep user-maintainable fixtures and fittings;
- Managed by means of a condition report when moving in and out of the premises.



Assumptions underpinning of this policy

The rectory housing standards set out above are intentionally generic. Accordingly, it is necessary to state some of the assumptions underpinning this policy:

- a) The Diocese holds sufficient investment in property with the effect that it does not require housing to be purchased in all cases, particularly as capital appreciation in many parts of the Northern Territory is, at best, unpredictable. Further, the tenure of the position of the housed church leader is a relevant consideration when considering a decision to buy or rent. Accordingly, it is an equally valid option for a parish to consider the provision of rented accommodation as rectory housing;
- b) It is expected that the parish building will have a study and meeting room available for hospitality and ministry, failing which alternative arrangements should be made;
- c) It is envisaged that there may be situations where existing rectory housing is not suitable, particularly for larger families or single clerics. At the proposal of the parish council *and* by resolution of Diocesan Council prior to formal appointment of the housed church leader, alternative arrangements may be agreed to including the rental of suitable accommodation and, where relevant, the preparation of the existing rectory for renting via a reputable real estate agent; and
- d) It is normally expected that the housed church leader will live in the existing rectory, particularly if owned by the Diocese. However, it is envisaged that some housed church leaders may prefer to personally arrange for housing arrangements, whether before or after initial appointment. At the proposal of the parish council *and* by resolution of Diocesan Council, the existing rectory housing may be rented out through a reputable real estate agent *and* the notional amount of housing allowance to which the housed church leader is entitled may be credited to:
 - a. a rental account managed by a reputable real estate agent or landlord on the provision of a current valid lease agreement; *or*
 - b. a mortgage account over which the housed church leader has beneficial interest; *or*
 - c. the housed church leader's bank account as stipend, which in this case constitutes taxable income.

For completion when document supersedes any existing policy, procedure or protocol.

VERSION NUMBER OF THIS DOCUMENT	DATE OF PREVIOUS DOCUMENT	SUMMARY OF CHANGE	REASON FOR CHANGE
V.1	N/A	N/A	N/A
V.2	May 2011	Set generic framework for provision for housed church leaders as being "functional"	Policy was not able to be used in practice where it included items which are not feasible