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## STAFF HOUSING POLICY

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*Version 6 Amended on 24/01/2018 by Council Resolution 0118/030*

### 1. STATEMENT

Council may make available staff housing for employees to ensure that Council can attract and retain staff to fulfil various roles at both Normanton and Karumba. No guarantee of housing or an ongoing right to housing will be provided as demand for housing exceeds supply, and the allocation or withdrawal of housing will depend on the operational requirements of Council as approved by the CEO following consideration by and recommendations from the Staff Housing Committee.

### 2. PRINCIPLES

The principles underlying this policy are –

1. value for money;
2. attraction and retention of staff;
3. encouragement of and support for local trades;
4. fairness and equity in the allocation of housing;
5. provision of good quality housing;
6. responsibility and accountability of tenants.

### 3. SCOPE

This policy applies to permanent, temporary or casual employees of Council. The policy applies to the occupation and use of Council housing by any person or organisation, including contractors providing services to Council.

### 4. RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the responsibility of the CEO to ensure compliance with this policy. The CEO may delegate the administration and enforcement of this policy, or parts of this policy, to officers at director or management level where appropriate.

### 5. DEFINITIONS

**CEO** means the Chief Executive Officer of Council.

**Council** means the elected body of the Carpentaria Shire Council.

**essential housing** means housing allocated by the SHC for essential positions that cannot be recruited or filled locally.

**executive housing** means housing allocated for the CEO and directors.

**Housing Inspection Officer** means an officer appointed by the CEO to oversee housing inspections.

**locally-based staff** means staff who are residents of or recruited from within Carpentaria Shire.

**premises** includes a house/dwelling and its yard.

**RTA** means the *Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008*.

**Staff Housing Committee (SHC) refers** to the committee established under this Policy to receive and consider applications/requests and maintenance programs for staff housing

## 6. POLICY

### 1. Construction and/or Acquisition of Housing

- 1.1 Council may construct or purchase housing to attempt to ensure sufficient housing is available for staff, subject to Council's overall capital works priorities and budget.
- 1.2 Council's preference is to generally construct housing rather than purchase existing housing. However, housing may be purchased when housing stocks in the Shire's townships are considered sufficient.
- 1.3 Approval for the construction or acquisition of housing may only be granted by Council.
- 1.4 To avoid any doubt, Council's Local Preference Policy applies to building, construction and maintenance work undertaken under this policy.

### 2. Allocation of Housing

- 2.1 Housing will be allocated according to the following criteria –
  - i. Executive housing (reserved for senior positions);
  - ii. Essential housing (for filling a position that cannot be filled locally);
  - iii. Family size;
  - iv. Availability;
  - v. Operational needs.
- 2.2 Executive housing is identified and listed at table 1 below.
- 2.3 Executive housing is to be allocated only to the senior position identified.

Location	Position
87 Matilda Street	CEO
2 Airport Road	Engineer
22 Norman Street	DCS

Table 1: Reserved Housing

- 2.4 The SHC will allocate all other staff housing based on the operational requirements of Council pursuant to the criteria set out below.

- 2.5 To remove any doubt, housing may be made available for locally-based staff.
- 2.6 The SHC may reallocate housing, including moving tenants to different housing, if required for operational reasons, or without reason.
- 2.7 The SHC may allocate or withdraw a housing entitlement without reason and at the CEO's absolute discretion, subject to notice requirements pursuant to the RTA. To avoid any doubt, the initial provision of housing does not constitute an ongoing right to housing.
- 2.8 The CEO may terminate a tenancy where the tenant takes extended leave or unpaid leave of greater than 8 weeks.
- 2.9 Decisions of the CEO will be final.

### **3 Inspections and Reports**

- 3.1 Council will implement a regular inspection program of all staff housing.
- 3.2 Each house will be inspected at least every six months.
- 3.3 Council will comply with the requirements of the RTA with respect to inspections.
- 3.4 Pre-entry reports must be completed in detail and signed by Council and the tenant within three days of entry to the premises. Reports should normally be accompanied by current photographs of the condition and state of the premises.
- 3.5 Detailed exit reports must be completed and signed on the day the tenant vacates the premises.

### **4 Pets and Pest Control**

- 4.1 Pets are permitted to be kept at staff housing in compliance with Council's local laws.
- 4.2 Staff must have premises treated for ticks and fleas by a licensed pest controller at the end of the tenancy if dogs or cats are kept on the premises.
- 4.3 Pest control for all pests is the responsibility of Council.

### **5 Gardens**

- 5.1 Tenants are responsible for the maintenance of yards and gardens.
- 5.2 Council mowers are available on weekends for use by staff free of charge. Staff are responsible for picking up and returning mowers from Stores during normal business hours.
- 5.3 Staff must provide their own fuel for the mowers.
- 5.4 Hoses and sprinklers must be supplied by tenants.

- 5.5 Tenants whose house include automatic watering systems must ensure the time is set to the approved watering hours. Council reserves the right to disconnect the automatic watering system for persistent breaches of this requirement.

## **6 Housing Standards**

- 6.1 All housing will be given the highest priority for the undertaking of urgent repairs where there is an unacceptable risk to the health and/or safety of occupants.
- 6.2 The SHC will regularly update the asset management plan and strategy to ensure housing is maintained to an acceptable standard.

## **7 Improvements and Modifications**

- 7.1 Tenants must not undertake any improvements or modifications to the premises, including any fixtures or fittings, without a request being considered by the SHC and the prior written approval of the CEO.

## **8 Rent, Bond and Payment**

- 8.1 Rent payable on premises will be determined by the Council and reviewed annually.
- 8.2 Payment will be made fortnightly by payroll deduction.
- 8.3 When approved leave is taken, tenants may be required to pay rent in advance for the period of leave.
- 8.4 Prior to taking leave without pay, which will result in the inability to pay rent through payroll deductions, employees must make arrangements for the payment of rent in advance. Such arrangements must be approved in advance in writing by the SHC and approved in writing by the CEO.
- 8.5 A bond equivalent to four times the weekly rental will be payable.

## **9 Furniture**

- 9.1 Council and the tenant may enter into an agreement for the provision of furniture to rented premises.
- 9.2 The provision of furniture will be cost neutral to Council over the expected life of the furniture.
- 9.3 Where furniture is provided, the tenant will not be entitled to full relocation expenses and the amount of relocation expenses will be determined by the CEO.
- 9.4 Tenants must enter into an agreement to pay for any damage, other than fair wear and tear, to furniture through automatic payroll deductions.
- 9.5 Where damage, other than fair wear and tear, is found at the end of the tenancy or employment, Council may withhold the cost of the damage from any final payment due to the former tenant or employee.

## **10 Tenancy Agreements**

- 10.1 Tenants must enter into tenancy agreements with Council pursuant to the RTA.
- 10.2 Compliance with the terms of this policy will form part of any tenancy agreement and contract of employment
- 10.3 Tenancy agreements are not required for tenancies of less than six weeks duration (short term tenancies).
- 10.4 Rent for short term tenancies will be paid in advance and a security deposit will be payable in advance for the tenancy. The security deposit will be retained by Council in the event of any damage or loss caused to the rented premises. If the cost of the damage or loss is less than the amount of the security deposit, the balance of the security deposit must be refunded to the tenant.
- 10.5 Tenants are not permitted to sub-lease or enter into any accommodation arrangement with any person unless otherwise approved in writing by the SHC in advance. If an arrangement is approved by the SHC, the tenant remains responsible for the premises, including any loss or damage.

## **11 Smoke Alarms**

- 11.1 Council will be responsible for testing and cleaning smoke alarms and replacement of any flat or nearly flat batteries within 30 days before the start or renewal of a tenancy.
- 11.2 Tenants must:
- test and clean (by vacuuming or dusting) each smoke alarm at least every 12 months;
  - Replace any flat or nearly flat batteries;
  - Advise the property owner/manager if there is any issue with the alarm (apart from batteries);
  - Allow the property owner/manager right of entry to install smoke alarms; and
  - Not remove a smoke alarm or the battery (other than to replace it), or do anything to reduce the effectiveness of the alarm e.g. paint it.

## **12 Former Employees**

- 12.1 Former employees must vacate Council premises within two weeks of their last day of service unless otherwise approved in writing by the CEO or the Council in the case of the CEO and senior executive employees.

## **13 Leasing of housing to non-Council employees**

- 13.1 Housing will not be available for private rental to non-Council employees or organisations.
- 13.2 Council may make housing available to contractors providing services directly to Council following consideration by the SHC and approval by the CEO. Rent, bonds and/or security deposits will apply to such rentals unless otherwise approved by the CEO.

## **14 Keys and Locks**

- 14.1 Tenants will be issued with keys at the commencement of a tenancy.
- 14.2 All keys must be issued through the central register at the Normanton office and be signed for by the tenant. No keys are to be given out other than through this system.
- 14.3 Tenants will be responsible for the costs of replacing lost or damaged keys and/or locks.
- 14.4 If keys are lost, tenants must also pay for the cost of replacing all locks in the house, including any sheds or other outbuildings.

## **15 Loss and Damage**

- 15.1 Tenants will be responsible for the costs of repairing or rectifying any loss or damage to premises other than through normal wear and tear.

## **16 Utilities and Services**

- 16.1 Tenants are liable for the costs of power and gas utilities unless varied by a condition of a contract of employment.
- 16.2 Tenants will be liable for excess water charges.

## **7. STAFF HOUSING COMMITTEE**

The Staff Housing Committee will be established to receive and consider all applications for staff housing and other uses of Council owned houses under this policy.

The SHC will comprise:

- 2 x Councillors
- Chief Executive Officer
- Manager Human Resources
- Housing Inspection Officer
- A tenant of a Council house duly elected by the tenants of Council houses/dwellings.

An election will be held every two (2) years to elect the tenant representative for the SHC. Should that elected representative no longer work for the Council, an election for a new representative will be held within one (1) month of such departure.

The SHC will meet at least quarterly or more frequent if required to consider the allocation, maintenance and general operation of Council owned staff housing facilities.

## **8. LEGAL PARAMETERS**

Non-compliance with this policy potentially exposes Council to legal and other risks.

## 9. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

- *Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008*
- Residential Tenancy Agreements
- Payroll Deduction Agreements
- Local Preference Policy
- Register of Pre-qualified suppliers

## 10. NEXT REVIEW

2019.

**This version replaces all previous versions of this policy.**

## 11. RESOLUTION

Amended by Council on the 24 January 2018 by Council Resolution 0118/030.

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Chief Executive Officer

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Date