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**DHHS Housing Information Session 2015:**

**Information Sheet**

The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) provided an information session for the Western LASN on:

* New Public Housing application forms;
* New Housing website

**Housing application forms**

***Key changes***:

* Separate forms for different client circumstances were introduced in 2014.
* Forms have been simplified following consumer consultation.
* The changes build on the streamlined arrangements for the Home with Support Category that were introduced between 2010 and 2012.
  + Under the 2010-12 changes:
    - The Homeless with Support category replaced the Recurring Homelessness segment of the public housing waiting list.
    - Case managers assess whether an individual or household are eligible to submit a *Homeless with Support* application.
    - Applications are now lodged directly by support providers, rather than through a Transitional Housing Management service, and regional panels no longer consider these applications.
    - Case managers no longer have to submit a case plan.

*Homeless with Support* application forms are only available online: <http://www.housing.vic.gov.au/forms-guides>.

***Context:***

* Around 4,500 public housing applicants are housed each year. There are around 3,000 applications under the Homeless with Support segment, while 25% of stock is targeted to people who are elderly. Stock for single people under 55 years of age is limited.
* Turnover of public housing stock has slowed over the past ten years for a range of factors.
* The number of ‘hard to let’ properties has decreased significantly through asset renewal approaches. These properties are now referred to as ‘Limited demand properties’.
* Moveable units may now be an option for 12 – 25 year olds: <http://www.housing.vic.gov.au/movable-units>
* On the basis of 30,000 households being assisted through homelessness services, about 10% of those people assisted by the homelessness service system will be housed in public housing, emphasising the importance of looking at the full range of housing options.

***Tips on assisting clients with applications for public housing****Homeless with Support* applications can be completed by anyone providing case managed support to an individual or household – not just homelessness support workers. Agencies submit to DHHS for an EPRIN number and then email DHHS seeking approval to assess clients for eligibility for a *Homeless with Support* application. 90,000 organisations already have EPRIN numbers.  
  
Support providers who have assessed that a client meets the eligibility for *Homeless with Support* can submit a public housing application directly with the client. Sign off is required by the Manager of the program. This is the highest category in the Segmented Waiting List.  
Homeless with Support applications will be backdated to the date case managed support first commenced. DHHS will provide advice on whether this includes provision of IR 2 assistance.

IA&P workers can assist eligible clients to complete a *Special Housing Needs* application. The application can be upgraded to a *Homeless with Support* application once the client is receiving case managed support.

It will be beneficial for some individuals/households if the IA&P service provides short covering information in support of a *Special Housing Needs* application.   
Ensure that DHHS is aware of any changes in an individual or household’s circumstances , particularly changes to contact details and changes to household size.

Individuals/households who have an existing public housing application can upgrade their application by completing an *Early Housing Supplement.*   
  
Clients can complete an Early Housing Supplement but Section L must be signed by an Access Point Service. Access Point Services should only complete Section L for individuals/households who they are assisting.   
  
Young people who are under 18 who have an income and are in a couple, will be assessed as an independent adult, rather than an accompanying child.

**Housing website**

The new Housing web address is: [http://www.housing.vic.gov.au](http://www.housing.vic.gov.au/)

This website can be accessed on a tablet or mobile phone and has been developed in plain English and covers information about a range of tenancy types.

The website provides an *Housing Options Finder*. The Finder asks some key questions about a person’s housing needs and then provides information on the relevant housing options. The Finder draws on up to date information about asset and income limits.

The website includes one page information sheets in 10 community languages.

Housing application forms can be found on the website at: <http://www.housing.vic.gov.au/forms-guides>.

Housing Policy and Procedures Manuals can be found at:

[www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-service-providers/housing-and-homelessness/public-housing/public-housing-policy-and-procedure-manuals](file:///C:\Users\sarah\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary%20Internet%20Files\Content.Outlook\K5T7GAPG\www.dhs.vic.gov.au\for-service-providers\housing-and-homelessness\public-housing\public-housing-policy-and-procedure-manuals)