

DATE OF REVIEW	AUTHORISED SIGNATURE
See Version Tracking Table	

TITLE: **04.15 Housing Services Tenant Rights and Participation Policy**

SCOPE: RQ Tenants

POLICY: RQ is committed to ensuring that the rights of tenants are promoted and made clear and transparent within the organisation.

PURPOSE: To provide clear guidelines and instructions regarding how RQ encourages and supports tenant rights and participation. RQ recognises that all tenants have the rights to be treated with confidentiality, dignity and respect, and will actively promote options and procedures as to how tenants can access their rights including:

- Access to RQ Policies and Procedures
- Being provided with relevant information about their tenancy rights in accordance with the RTA
- Privacy management
- Right to complain and appeal decisions
- How they can be involved with improving the service

RQ is committed to ensuring that tenants contribute to the management of their housing and to provide opportunities for tenants to have some measure of decision making about what happens in their housing. RQ will ensure tenant participation/consultations with major policy/organisational changes and consider all views before changes are introduced.

DEFINITION/S: RQ – Roseberry Queensland
RTA – Residential Tenancies Authority
RTRAA – Residential Tenancy and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008

PROCEDURES: **04.15.01 Tenant Rights**

RQ tenants have the following rights:

- To safe and secure housing within the limitations of funding requirements and program guidelines

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- RQ compliance to RTRAA at all times
- To confidentiality and privacy of themselves and their personal information
- To appeal RQ decisions
- To use an advocate if required
- To access their own information held at RQ Housing Services office
- To be treated with respect and dignity at all times
- To refuse assistance
- To participate in the management of their accommodation wherever possible and relevant
- To access effective conflict procedures and grievance and appeal mechanisms both internal and external to the organisation
- To be provided fair, equitable and non-discriminatory treatment at all times
- To be consulted on any changes to their tenancy or its management
- To be provided information in an understandable form.

RQ Tenants' Responsibilities and Obligations

- To observe the conditions of the RTRAA, Tenancy Agreement and any special terms and conditions
- To inform the Housing Officer of any significant changes that may affect the conditions of the tenancy including:
 - Any changes to assessable income of the household
 - Any modifications required to the property
 - Any additional people wanting to live at the property
- To maintain the property in good repair and report repairs as identified
- To pay rent and service fees on time
- To respect the privacy and 'quiet enjoyment' rights of neighbours and other tenants
- To obey the law including:
 - **no** illegal drugs or substances
 - **no** illegal weapons or other similar items on the premises
 - **no** loud partying
 - **no** smoking in internal public areas of the property, including common rooms and laundries.

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04.15.02 Promoting Awareness of Tenant Rights

1. The RQ Housing Officer provides all new tenants when signing the tenancy agreement, a verbal explanation and the following information, including their tenancy rights and responsibilities through:
 - a) RTA 17 a Renting in Queensland guide
 - b) RQ Tenant Information Kit
 - c) RQ Protection of Personal Information Statement
2. RQ will also actively promote tenant rights and responsibilities and the awareness of such through:
 - a) RQ policies and procedures
 - b) Ensuring tenants are provided information on other appropriate agencies, including advocacy agencies and support services when requested and if needed
 - c) Ensuring the RQ Housing Officers receive training and an understanding of tenant rights.

04.15.03 Tenant Participation

RQ provides a range of mechanisms and structured opportunities for tenants to participate in the management of their housing, including but not limited to:

- Annual Tenant Satisfaction Surveys
- Input into RQ Tenant Newsletters
- Exit Interviews
- Regular tenant meetings
- Face to face contact and discussion
- Encouraging formal and informal feedback

04.15.04 Informing Tenants of the Opportunity for Tenant Participation

1. The RQ Housing Officer provides new tenants with a verbal explanation and a Tenant Information Kit that informs tenants of the ways they may participate in the management of the organisation.
2. Information on participation opportunities will be distributed in a timely way either through a

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- flyer (written information) and/or direct correspondence.
3. Any meetings and activities are scheduled in accessible venues and at times that suit tenants.
 4. The tenants will be informed of (where applicable):
 - The nature and purpose of the opportunity
 - Any skills required
 - The amount of time required
 - Any conditions of participation (e.g. confidentiality)
 - How to express their interest and who to contact plus any relevant timeframes.

04.15.05 Addressing Barriers to Tenant Participation

1. Tenants may experience a number of barriers to participate, including but not limited to:
 - Lack of information
 - Language, literacy and cultural barriers
 - Health and mobility barriers
 - Financial and transport barriers
2. The Housing Officer will work with the tenants to address any identified barriers that may exist including the following strategies:
 - a) Use of interpreter / translation services
 - b) Clearly written information in everyday language
 - c) Assistance to complete forms/paperwork
 - d) Verbal explanation and information
 - e) Cultural awareness training for staff
 - f) Nominating and using advocates
 - g) Phone calls and home visits
 - h) Use of accessible, centrally located venues
 - i) Reimbursement of out of pocket expenses
 - j) Provision of resources to support the activity/event.

04.15.06 Budget

RQ will fund tenant participation activities as required and in line with available funds.

04.15.06 Complaints and Appeals

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Tenants who believe their rights and their right to participate in the management of their housing have been denied are encouraged to use 02.17 RQ Complaints and Appeals procedures, as per the information provided in the Tenant Information Kit and/or further information from the Housing Officer.

ACCOUNTABILITY: RQ Housing Staff, RQ General Manager

EVALUATION METHOD: Annual Tenant Satisfaction Surveys
Tenant Feedback
Complaints and Appeals review

OTHER RELATED POLICIES / DOCUMENTS: RTA 17a Renting in Queensland Guide
Tenants Information Kit
02.17 RQ Complaints, Appeals Policy and Disputes Policy
Annual Tenant Satisfaction Survey

Policy review and version tracking				
Review	Date Approved	Approved by	Reviewed date	Policy amended: Yes/No
1	July 2013	Management Committee	March 2014	Yes
2	16/04/2014	Board	April 2015	Yes
3	5/6/18	Board	24/5/18	yes

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