



FAMILY TAX BENEFIT CHANGES TO RENT CALCULATION

WHAT IS CHANGING?

The Department of Housing (the Department) has changed the way that public housing rents are calculated for tenants who receive Family Tax Benefits (FTB) from Centrelink.

WHY HAS IT CHANGED?

Over a number of years various government benefits have been treated differently when assessing people's income and the rent they pay. The change to the assessment of FTB is a step towards making the rent calculation fairer for all tenants. For example, seniors receiving an aged pension income were paying a greater proportion of their income in rent than families receiving FTB payments.

The rent you pay in public housing is less than what you would pay in the private market. The State Government offers public housing tenants a reduced rent to make sure the rent you pay is, and remains, affordable.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR TENANTS?

This means that if you receive FTB your rent will increase. This increase does not apply to those required to pay market rent.

Your rent is calculated to ensure that you pay no more than 25% of your total household income in rent. In fact, even after this change most families will still pay less than 25% of their income.

WHEN WILL THE CHANGES START?

New tenants in receipt of FTB, signing a tenancy agreement from 1 July 2014, will have all of their FTB assessed at 15%.

Current tenants in receipt of FTB, including tenants transferring, will have their assessed FTB increased to 15% in stages. Affected tenants will receive letters explaining the changes.

| Date | Current Tenants |
|-------------------|---|
| 14 July 2014 | 60 days' notice of the FTB assessment changes |
| 15 September 2014 | Rent increase - FTB assessed at 11% |
| Before June 2015 | 60 days' notice and rent increase - FTB assessed at 15% |

www.housing.wa.gov.au

Call 1800 093 325 for details of your nearest Department of Housing Office

DOES THIS AFFECT MY ELIGIBILITY?

No. The change only applies to the calculation of rent not to eligibility.

WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION?

If you have any further questions please contact your Housing Services Officer. Alternatively you can visit the Department's website for further information contained in the Rental Policy Manual available at www.housing.wa.gov.au.

WHAT IF I AM EXPERIENCING FINANCIAL DIFFICULTY?

If you are experiencing financial difficulty, you may be able to access assistance through concessions and payments provided by the State Government. These include the Hardship Utilities Grant Scheme (HUGS) and the Cost of Living Assistance payment (CoLA).