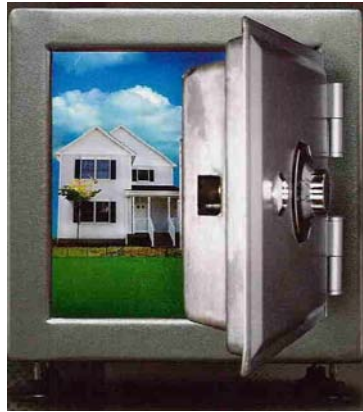


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# Housing Futures<sup>TM</sup>



## Property Management Manual

### Surrey Hills & Mooroolbark

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# 1. Introduction

This document provides the policies, rules and governance for the ordinary operation of the *Housing Futures*<sup>TM</sup> rooming or boarding house property. We strive for best practice given the chronic housing shortage in Melbourne, the demographics of clients with complex needs, and neighbourhood/community relationships driving our commitment to socially responsible rooming house management.

## 1.1 Background

Housing Futures Unit Trust (ABN 64 069 225 358) is a self-funded private trust servicing people who are experiencing, or at risk of homelessness, dependent on not-for-profit or government emergency community service providers for short-term accommodation. *Housing Futures* purchased its first rooming house in 2009 in Mooroolbark, Victoria (*Housing Futures*<sup>1</sup>) and has secured a two year commercial lease on an ex-Nursing Home in Surrey Hills (*Housing Futures*<sup>2</sup>). *Housing Futures*<sup>1</sup> was in a state of disrepair and residents had endured a low standard of living and unresponsive property management. For example, the residents did not have a laundry trough, a broken washing machine sat idle where it had been operating in the middle of a bathroom and the microwave had a rusted ring encrusted inside the bottom. The property immediately underwent multiple room renovations including a new second shower, toilet and fully equipped laundry including industrial washing machine, gas dryer, trough, built in ironing closet, and all kitchen appliances were replaced. By the time our annual Council Health Department inspection was conducted, not a single item was found to need rectification. The change in resident life satisfaction has been dramatic and very rewarding. Feedback from neighbours and the local police is testimony to noticeable massive reduction in noise and resident disagreement since this has occurred.

*Housing Futures*<sup>TM</sup> is committed to providing rooming houses that make a difference to people needing accommodation while managing our externalities and meeting the needs of our stakeholders.

## 1.2 Mission and Aims

- Our mission is to deliver the highest possible level of service and quality of accommodation at an affordable price. We provide a 'home' not 'adequate housing'.
- Our vision is to provide facilities where there is a safe, secure and supportive community environment for our residents and visitors to maximise their enjoyment of life.
- Our promise is to provide this at a lower cost than private rental in the area.
- *Housing Futures* values honesty, integrity, commitment, tolerance, respect, resilience and individuality in a safe and comfortable living environment.

Ideal outcomes for our clients are to break the cycle of homelessness by providing stable accommodation, information and referral to a wide array of support services to address issues, and where possible, assist them into the private real estate or share accommodation market as their personal circumstances permit. We facilitate this process in the first instance by ensuring that the resident feels confident that they have secure, long-term accommodation for as long as they need it. Property maintenance is conducted as fast as possible after we are advised to ensure the health, safety and well-being of residents on an ongoing basis.

## 1.3 Measurable outcomes

1. That the client breaks the cycle of homelessness (see Appendix 1 - Figure 2).
2. That the client begin to address any issues that led them to become homeless.
3. That the client has peaceful enjoyment of the property during their stay.
4. That *Housing Futures* has acted to the best of its ability with any resident requiring eviction.
5. That the family or other stakeholders are supported in their role.
6. That neighbours are not negatively impacted by our presence in the community.
7. Promptly addressing any issues or maintenance as they arise.
8. That all of our interactions with Police, Fire, Health & Community workers or Council are conducted with integrity.
9. That clients leave *Housing Futures* and enter into safe, secure long term accommodation.

## 2. Management Policies

This section provides the legal, social, economic, environmental and ethical framework for *Housing Futures* management including service standards and the rights and responsibilities of residents and staff, and the social and environmental impacts on the wider community.

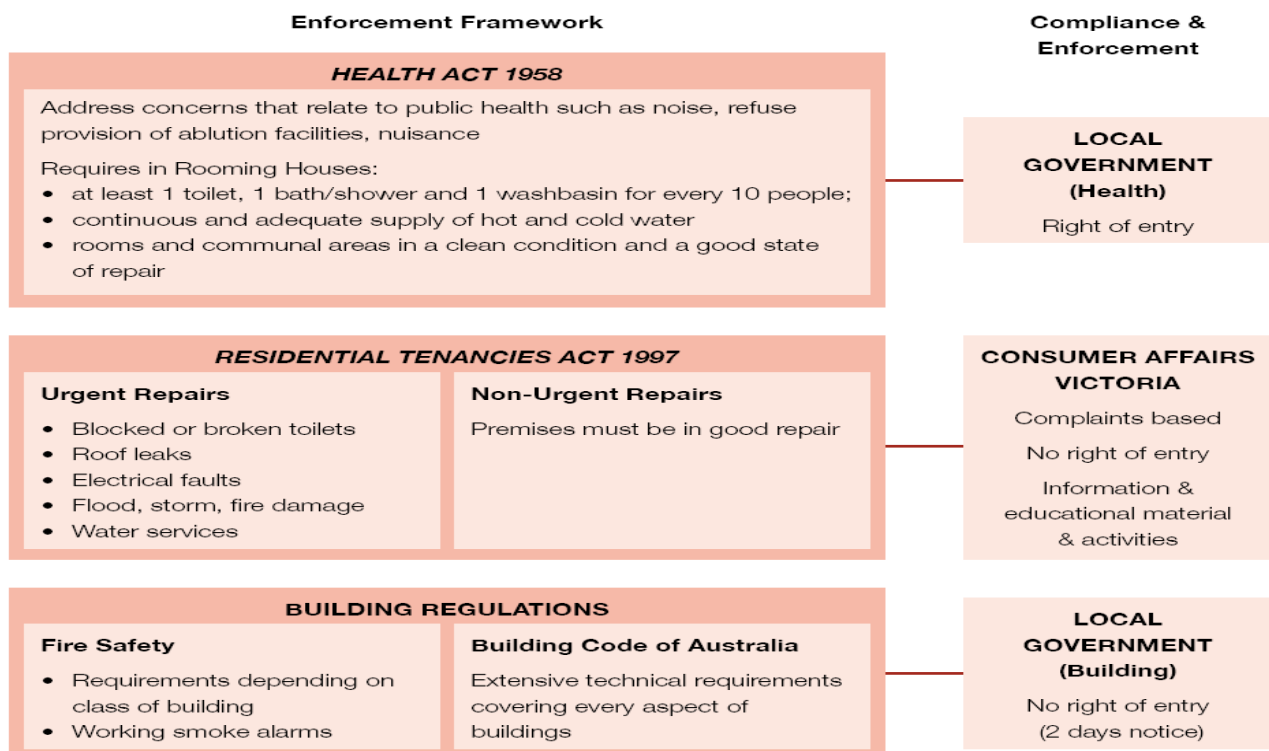
### 2.1 Legal compliance - commercial

The following outlines the activities and network of professionals who ensure *Housing Futures* is operated in an economically viable manner in accordance with all relevant law and legislation.

Commercial	Details	Complete
Entity – Housing Futures Unit Trust (fixed trust)	Trust deed	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Australian Business Number	64 069 225 358	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Unit Holders: Darren Trenker and Kim Peters	Business name, GST	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Legal consultation and compliance	Moore's Legal	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Taxation and Accounting compliance	Edwards Pearl	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Comprehensive property insurance and public liability	Brokers National	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Finance/commercial lenders: NAB	Lime Financial Brokers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Website registration, adherence to copyright etc	www.housingfutures.com.au	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Intellectual Property	Trade mark registration	In process
Employer requirements	PAYG, Super, OH&S	In process
Centrelink Provider Registration	555-077-453-V	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Four Acts govern rooming houses. The legislative requirements enforce tenancy provisions and fair trading/consumer protection administered by Consumer Affairs Victoria, and building and health standards enforced by local Councils (Department of Human Services, 2010 *Minimum standards in rooming house accommodation* [http://www.housing.vic.gov.au/data/assets/word\\_doc/0017/400850/Min\\_standards\\_rooming\\_houses-update.doc](http://www.housing.vic.gov.au/data/assets/word_doc/0017/400850/Min_standards_rooming_houses-update.doc) as shown in figure 1 and Australian Consumer Law (replaced Trade Practices Act 1974 on 1 January 2011).

**Figure 1 - Victorian rooming house compliance & enforcement framework**



Source: State Government of Victoria, 2009 [http://www.chp.org.au/public\\_news/items/2009/11/00269-upload-00002.pdf](http://www.chp.org.au/public_news/items/2009/11/00269-upload-00002.pdf) p24.

## 2.2 Legal compliance - Rooming House specific

- Residential Tenancies Act 1997 - Rooming House provisions (Part 3)  
[http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/vic/consol\\_act/rta1997207/](http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/vic/consol_act/rta1997207/)
- Consumer Affairs Victoria [www.consumer.vic.gov.au](http://www.consumer.vic.gov.au)  
*An Operators Guide*  
[http://www.consumer.vic.gov.au/CA256902000FE154/Lookup/CAV\\_Publications\\_Rooming\\_Houses/\\$file/Rooming\\_House\\_Operators\\_Guide.pdf](http://www.consumer.vic.gov.au/CA256902000FE154/Lookup/CAV_Publications_Rooming_Houses/$file/Rooming_House_Operators_Guide.pdf)
  1. Exclusive/shared right form
  2. House Rules signed
  3. *Guide to Residents*  
[http://www.consumer.vic.gov.au/CA256902000FE154/Lookup/CAV\\_Publications\\_Renting/\\$file/rooming\\_houses\\_a\\_guide\\_for\\_residents.pdf](http://www.consumer.vic.gov.au/CA256902000FE154/Lookup/CAV_Publications_Renting/$file/rooming_houses_a_guide_for_residents.pdf)
  4. Condition report/inventory
  5. Bond lodgment form
  6. Bus card 24hr no.
  7. Lock combo/key
- Australian Consumer Law [www.consumerlaw.gov.au](http://www.consumerlaw.gov.au)
- Residential Tenancies Bond Authority responsibilities <https://rentalbonds.vic.gov.au/Default.aspx>
- Health (Prescribed Accommodation) Regulations 2001  
[http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/Domino/Web\\_Notes/LDMS/PubStatbook.nsf/93eb987ebadd283dca256e92000e4069/5a27eeaf3826ce6ca256e5b0021a96c/\\$FILE/01-040sr.pdf](http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/Domino/Web_Notes/LDMS/PubStatbook.nsf/93eb987ebadd283dca256e92000e4069/5a27eeaf3826ce6ca256e5b0021a96c/$FILE/01-040sr.pdf)
- Public Health & Wellbeing Act 2008 (replaced Health Act 1958 on 1/1/2010)  
[http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/Domino/Web\\_Notes/LDMS/PubStatbook.nsf/f932b66241ecf1b7ca256e9200e23be/8B1B293B576FE6B1CA2574B8001FDEB7/\\$FILE/08-46a.pdf](http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/Domino/Web_Notes/LDMS/PubStatbook.nsf/f932b66241ecf1b7ca256e9200e23be/8B1B293B576FE6B1CA2574B8001FDEB7/$FILE/08-46a.pdf)
- Occupational Health & Safety Act 2004, Compliance Framework  
<http://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/8241cc004071f4bda075fee1fb554c40/Victoria+Compliance+Framework+Handbook.pdf?MOD=AJPERES>
- Building Code of Australia, Building Regulations 2006  
<http://www.hendrygroup.com.au/bcaicart/Category/54-building-code-of-australia.aspx>
- Building Act 1993  
[http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/Domino/Web\\_Notes/LDMS/LTObject\\_Store/LTObjSt6.nsf/DDE300B846ED9C7CA257616000A3571/0DDB651182B1DC7ECA2578810019CF7A/\\$FILE/93-126aa086%20authorised.pdf](http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/Domino/Web_Notes/LDMS/LTObject_Store/LTObjSt6.nsf/DDE300B846ED9C7CA257616000A3571/0DDB651182B1DC7ECA2578810019CF7A/$FILE/93-126aa086%20authorised.pdf)
- Food Act 1984  
[http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/Domino/Web\\_Notes/LDMS/LTObject\\_Store/LTObjSt6.nsf/DDE300B846ED9C7CA257616000A3571/51E4254425DFA25BCA2578400074E5AC/\\$FILE/84-10082aa081%20authorised.pdf](http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/Domino/Web_Notes/LDMS/LTObject_Store/LTObjSt6.nsf/DDE300B846ED9C7CA257616000A3571/51E4254425DFA25BCA2578400074E5AC/$FILE/84-10082aa081%20authorised.pdf)
- Metropolitan Fire Brigades Act 1958 [http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/vic/consol\\_act/mfba1958258/](http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/vic/consol_act/mfba1958258/)
- Country Fire Authority Act 1958 [http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/vic/consol\\_act/cfaa1958292/](http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/vic/consol_act/cfaa1958292/)
- Victorian Civil & Administrative Tribunal responsibilities.  
Drewgood Pty Ltd v Knox City Council <http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/cases/vic/VCAT/2007/2256.html>  
Tulcanly Pty Ltd v Knox City Council <http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/cases/vic/VCAT/2003/1627.html>  
Kupfer v Whitehorse City Council <http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/cases/vic/VCAT/2008/2608.html>
- Information Privacy Act 2000  
[http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/Domino/Web\\_Notes/LDMS/LTObject\\_Store/LTObjSt2.nsf/DDE300B846EED9C7CA257616000A3571/8C508B50F3EA009DCA25776100244507/\\$FILE/00-98a021.pdf](http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/Domino/Web_Notes/LDMS/LTObject_Store/LTObjSt2.nsf/DDE300B846EED9C7CA257616000A3571/8C508B50F3EA009DCA25776100244507/$FILE/00-98a021.pdf)
- Freedom of Information Act 1982  
[http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/Domino/Web\\_Notes/LDMS/LTObject\\_Store/LTObjSt2.nsf/DDE300B846EED9C7CA257616000A3571/FF2117727E7B34F2CA257761001FBE67/\\$FILE/82-9859a066.pdf](http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/Domino/Web_Notes/LDMS/LTObject_Store/LTObjSt2.nsf/DDE300B846EED9C7CA257616000A3571/FF2117727E7B34F2CA257761001FBE67/$FILE/82-9859a066.pdf)
- Environment Protection Act 1970  
[http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/Domino/Web\\_Notes/LDMS/LTObject\\_Store/LTObjSt5.nsf/DDE300B846EED9C7CA257616000A3571/52ADCB494105B755CA257811000FE54B/\\$FILE/70-8056aa174%20authorised.pdf](http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/Domino/Web_Notes/LDMS/LTObject_Store/LTObjSt5.nsf/DDE300B846EED9C7CA257616000A3571/52ADCB494105B755CA257811000FE54B/$FILE/70-8056aa174%20authorised.pdf)

## 2.3 Legal compliance – property specific

	Mooroobark	Surrey Hills
Number of rooms	8	17
Maximum number of tenants	9	20
Business Victoria Registration and License Finder check	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Prescribed Accommodation/Health & Wellbeing Permit/registration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Maintenance of Register of Residents</li> <li>- rooms measured ensure meets room overcrowding law</li> <li>- amenities and facilities checks</li> <li>- appliance safety and functionality check/maintenance</li> <li>- clean premises as required</li> </ul>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Inspection and Annual Fee payment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Fire protection and fire safety audit inspection <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- hardwired smoke detectors, extinguishers, blankets &amp; signs</li> <li>- Fire Security Systems contract maintenance schedule 4020 Fire Indicator Panel, hose reels, sprinkler systems, exit lights, smoke doors etc as per Building Permit requirements for fire protection monitoring systems and evacuation plans</li> </ul>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Local Council Planning Permit	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Local Council Building/Occupancy Permit	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	In process
Voluntary <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- First Aid Cabinets and supplies</li> <li>- Commercial laundry facilities &amp; washing powder supplied</li> <li>- All shared consumables/hygienic products: toilet paper, hand-wash, cleaning products etc.</li> <li>- Provision of non-essential furniture &amp; services such as TV, DVD, internet etc as required.</li> <li>- Rugs, artwork and decoration to make the room more aesthetically appealing and enjoyable for the resident</li> <li>- Digital (keyless) combination locks to secure the premises</li> <li>- Colour coded chopping boards etc health, safety and environmental awareness initiatives.</li> <li>- Education and integral life skills coaching</li> <li>- Water efficiency evaluation by authorities</li> <li>- Renewable energy (Red Energy – 100% Snowy River Mountain scheme) to minimize carbon footprint</li> <li>- Seasonal celebrations, gifts and themes</li> <li>- Attendance at Council education events.</li> <li>- Facilitate house meetings to resolve any conflict or improve household procedures or functionality, including providing processes to address conflicts in the future</li> <li>- Life coaching: integral life skills, financial mgt, health, business</li> </ul>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	In process
Food premises registration/permit	N/A	In process

## 2.4 Social and ethical compliance

To conduct ourselves in a manner that demonstrates an understanding and commitment to human rights - Universal Declaration <a href="http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/">http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/</a> and the <i>Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities</i> <a href="http://www.humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au/pdf/The%20Charter%20of%20Human%20Rights%20and%20Responsibilities%20-%20Protection%20of%20freedoms%20and%20rights%20for%20everyone%20in%20Victoria.pdf">http://www.humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au/pdf/The%20Charter%20of%20Human%20Rights%20and%20Responsibilities%20-%20Protection%20of%20freedoms%20and%20rights%20for%20everyone%20in%20Victoria.pdf</a>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Neighbour feedback/communication including 24 hour contact no.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Social responsibility involvement with local businesses	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Incorporation of stakeholder needs/requirements	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Policy to provide accommodation cheaper than private rental, to select and manage residents to the best of our ability with compatible and appropriate demographics and living skills	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
To work with Community Workers with integrity and respect	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Copies of the <i>CAV Rooming House Resident Rights</i> poster prominently displayed	Ordered
Sensitivity to residents' disabilities and accommodating any additional needs in communication and service practice.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Social Accountability and Reporting based on UN Global Compact and GRI Reporting principles published annually.	In process
To make situational decisions ethically, based on the individuals welfare, protection of all residents and in the public interest. For example, specifically but not limited to: 1. Where a client is not in possession of any money and may not be expecting a Centrelink payment for several days a room will be made available in good faith of back payment 2. Where a client is in need to pay for expenses to secure or continue their livelihood, the 7 day rent arrears eviction right will not be exercised, in good faith of late payment. 3. All decisions are to be made with equal weighting of importance in regard to ensuring profitability, the welfare of the client and best interests of the common good. 4. Where a client presents with extended homelessness due to the ownership of an animal, which is safe and acceptable to the other residents at the property, such pet may be accommodated. 5. All avenues of assistance and referral will be exhausted before the primary rights of immediate eviction are exercised. 6. Existing clients of the property will have the opportunity for input and are involved in a consultation process during each new client accommodation offer/room vacancy.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

## 2.5 Environmental compliance

Compile a strategy using <i>ResourceSmart</i> Healthcare Environmental Strategy template (Sustainability Victoria <a href="http://www.resourcesmart.vic.gov.au/for_businesses_4168.html">http://www.resourcesmart.vic.gov.au/for_businesses_4168.html</a> )	In process
Member of <a href="http://www.carboncompass.com.au">www.carboncompass.com.au</a> 81 points to date	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Green Project Energy efficiency evaluation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Water efficiency evaluation by Yarra Valley Water and installation of the efficient fittings	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Renewable energy service provider Red Energy (100% Snowy River Mountain scheme) to minimize carbon footprint	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Client education and information provision of efficient routine household practices	In process
Use solar when possible	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Upgrade to efficient appliances as profitability permits	In process
Installation of roof insulation etc	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Compliance to all Building Code of Australia environmental clauses	Ongoing
Business Carbon emissions calculator – 48.8 tonnes & reducing (two properties) <a href="http://www.carboncompass.com.au/external-solution?nid=194">http://www.carboncompass.com.au/external-solution?nid=194</a>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Become a <i>ResourceSmart</i> Business investigate client project <i>Beyond Best Practice</i> 1300363744	Ongoing
Potential to create Climate Community project partnerships <a href="http://www.climatecommunities.vic.gov.au/grants/page/18">http://www.climatecommunities.vic.gov.au/grants/page/18</a>	In process
	In process

## 3. The Service Program

This section provides an overview of our service delivery.

### 3.1 Clients and services

#### *Primary clients*

A client is a person who is homeless or at risk of homelessness who take up the offer of accommodation.

#### *Secondary clients*

Secondary clients' are family, partners and other significant person/s in the client's life and property neighbours. *Housing Futures* also works closely and cooperatively with and for emergency accommodation providers and relevant agencies.

#### *Services*

Specific services provided by *Housing Futures* include 24 hour on-call staff, safe, temporary accommodation, related consumables, maintenance and cleaning. We intend to look at a Food Handling Permit with a view to providing a meal service in the future.

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### ***Primary client demographics***

There are specialist correctional services and as such we do not accept people being released from prison or with any current drug addiction problem or unmanaged mental illness. As at September, 2010 clients residing in *Housing Futures*<sup>1</sup> were aged between 19 and 44, with the majority being unemployed, on a Disability Support Payment for a current mental illness or other issues. Three out of ten tenants were in the workforce full time. All are highly functioning and in some instances operate better in a community environment and may not be capable of managing the full care of a property on their own. In other instances such as with depression, it is the company that they seek. Surrey Hills requires preference to people who are studying or employed in some capacity. We are not backpacker accommodation and service people looking for stable or long term accommodation while they are Melbourne.

Until recently, a full 100% were long-term residents. Of the eight rooms, it was eight months into our ownership before we had a vacancy to a resident who secured a room in share accommodation in the private rental market. Based on this property alone as a sample, it would suggest that the chronic housing shortage in Melbourne has actually converted rooming houses into stable accommodation, rather than transient. The majority are single - some may have children who they do not have custody of, who visit.

## **3.2 Standards, rights and responsibilities**

This section provides an ethical framework for the work of *Housing Futures*, including service standards and the rights and responsibilities of clients and staff.

### **3.2.1. Service standards**

We have a responsibility to provide services in accordance with the following service standards:

#### ***1) Efficient and Effective Property Management***

To ensure that clients, neighbours and the local community receive the benefit of well planned, efficient property maintenance and amenable management.

#### ***2) Co-ordinated, Planned and Reliable Tenancy***

To ensure that each client receives compliant Residential Tenancy services.

#### ***3) Complaints and Disputes***

To ensure that clients, neighbours and the local community have access to fair and equitable procedures for dealing with any complaint.

#### ***4) Privacy and confidentiality of Personal Information***

To ensure that the rights to privacy and confidentiality are respected.

### **3.2.2. Clients rights and responsibilities**

*Housing Futures* staff has the responsibility to ensure that clients exercise their rights and carry out their responsibilities to the maximum extent possible. Clients have the following rights and responsibilities.

#### ***Rights***

Clients have a right to:

1. Respect for their individual human worth, dignity and privacy.
2. Participate fully in the life of society.
3. Be informed about available services and how to participate in and contribute to decision-making.
4. Have services provided by an appropriately qualified person
5. Be consulted about their needs and preferences and have services match their ongoing needs/goals
6. Have control over their own lives and have a say in the services that affect them.
7. Appropriate assistance which is flexible in response to their changing needs and priorities.
8. Access to quality services irrespective of sex, race, ethnicity, culture, language, religion, marital status, disability, sexuality or age.
9. Expect assistance that is reliable, of high quality, culturally and linguistically relevant.
10. Privacy and confidentiality (except compelling ethical, moral/legal reason eg child protection laws).
11. Express grievances and seek redress without fear of it affecting the service they receive.
12. Have any grievance heard and dealt with in a fair and objective manner.

---

### ***Responsibilities***

Clients who are using *Housing Futures* services have a responsibility to:

1. Respect as individuals everyone involved in *Housing Futures* and fellow residents.
2. Respect the rights of others including their rights to confidentiality and privacy
3. Inform *Housing Futures* of support needs
4. Read, understand and agree to abide by the House Rules before signing
5. Let the service know if they intend to leave.
6. Act in a way which respects the rights of residents, staff, neighbours and local community.
7. Take responsibility for the results of any decisions they make.
8. Seek a fair resolution of any complaint.

### 3.2.3. Staff rights and responsibilities

#### ***Rights***

Staff have the right to:

1. Equal opportunity in all matters relating to employment, i.e., no discrimination on the grounds of sex, ethnicity, marital status, disability, sexuality, religion or age.
2. Participate or be represented in decision making which affects them.
3. Information regarding decisions affecting them.
4. Have personal information kept confidential.
5. Work in an environment free from harassment including sexual harassment.
6. A safe and healthy work environment.
7. Access to training and development to extend their knowledge and skills

#### ***Staff have a responsibility to:***

*To Housing Futures Unit Trust:*

1. Understand and represent *Housing Futures* and its mission, aims and social responsibility philosophy
2. Follow policies and practices set down in the *Housing Futures Property Management Manual*
3. Report any concerns regarding occupational health and safety issues.

*Respect Others:*

4. Respect as individuals everyone involved in the service including residents, neighbours and community
5. Not consume alcohol or illegal substances whilst at work
6. Not sexually harass any other staff or client.
7. Respect the rights of others including their rights to confidentiality and privacy
8. Work with clients in a manner that recognises their dignity and rights as individuals in their own residence, in their interpersonal relationships and within society

*Services - Inform and Involve:*

9. Exercise a duty of care for clients, neighbours and the local community.
10. Respect the rights of clients, neighbours and the local community.
11. Involve clients and other stakeholders in decision making about services.
12. Inform clients of the standards they can expect in the provision of the service.
13. Let clients know their rights and the implications of services available to them.

*Complaints:*

14. Deal with complaints fairly and promptly without retribution.

*Professional skills:*

15. Maintain professional skills.

---

### 3.3 The Service Process

This section provides an overview of *Housing Futures* direct service processes. The goals are:

- Clients have quiet enjoyment of quality housing including furniture, fittings and appliances
- Neighbours have quiet enjoyment surrounding a *Housing Futures* property
- Clients are placed in appropriate and compatible house demographics
- Clients have accurate, relevant and up to date information.

Clients may require different levels of assistance. The specific processes will be tailored to each client. Working with clients to achieve those goals usually involves the following process:

1. Preliminary telephone assessment (may be by referral from Community Worker)
2. In person assessment
3. View available room
4. Assessment of the current house dynamics and clients potential impact on said dynamics
5. Formal acceptance paperwork
6. Ensure client is appropriately supported to achieve quiet enjoyment
7. Where appropriate build support networks
8. Any notified maintenance conducted in a timely manner

#### Preliminary telephone and in-person assessments

The assessment process should be kept as informal as possible and usually takes place over the phone. At the same time it is acknowledged that aspects of the client's situation and need may only be able to be fully assessed in person. Assessment should consider the client's social history and history of involvement with the service. It should be a holistic assessment taking into account a wide range of factors which may affect the client's situation.

#### **Policy**

- Assessments are currently only carried out by Kim Peters.
- Assessments should commence as soon as possible after the referral or the client contacts *Housing Futures* and is used to assess immediate needs
- *Housing Futures* will coordinate with other agencies. Clients should undergo minimal assessment e.g. where an agency has undertaken a thorough assessment prior to referral it may not be appropriate for *Housing Futures* to discuss this further directly with the client.
- Complete the client details as fully as possible
- Gather information about what involvement the client has had with other services and/or contact the services to develop a full picture of their situation if necessary.
- Details of the needs of the client should be noted using an *Assessment Checklist* as a prompt. Make sure assessment information reflects the client's own assessment of needs.

#### In person viewing of Accommodation/Room

The client attends at the appointed time to be given a tour of the House. This includes:

- Laundry facilities, ironing centre and advised about the provision of washing power and responsibility to wash their bed linen weekly
- Toilets, advised provision of toilet paper and hand-wash
- Bathrooms, advised of responsibility to clean it after themselves
- Kitchen(s): all appliances and processes, plus provision of dishwashing, cleaning products etc
- Yards and common recreational areas, in particular specifically to smoking only outdoors.
- Advised of internet usage, time limits on telephones if someone waiting, computers etc
- Discuss local transport, amenities and recreational facilities etc.
- Asked to read the House Rules to confirm agreement and intention to comply.
- If assessed as compatible asked to meet the other residents to ensure cohesiveness.

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### Formal offer of Accommodation

Acceptance paperwork includes some/all of the following dependent on the client's circumstances:

1. Exclusive/Shared Use Form
2. *CAV Rooming Houses: A guide to residents* book
3. Centrelink provider payment form
4. Condition Report
5. Inventory of furniture/room contents provided
6. Two copies of the House Rules. One to be signed and kept by *Housing Futures*, one client copy
7. Business card and magnet with 24 hour contact number (emergency repairs/any problem)
8. Bond lodgement/transfer or application form
9. Key and/or combination code provision.

### Ensuring client is appropriately supported to achieve quiet enjoyment

Strong relationships with the residents are fundamental to knowing when there is any conduct on the property that is disruptive. Regular presence on the premises also facilitates this. Discussing complaints with the client concerned resolves the matter in 90% of cases.

- The clients satisfaction will be monitored consistently on an ongoing basis.
- A client's case manager/agency has primary responsibility to contact *Housing Futures* if their client is in need of anything.
- Where clients have complex needs *Housing Futures* may take a more proactive role in monitoring the client.
- Housing Futures* will have an evaluation policy that includes systematic monitoring of the quality of services to clients. This is usually discussed at "House meetings" where any new household practices, suggestions or any other changes are discussed and agreed with the clients.
- Clients are involved in decision making about the house chores, management or implementation of changes; individual needs and preferences are taken into account. These may include: physical, emotional, cultural, religious, or socio-economic needs.
- Housing Futures* staff will review the reasons why/if any clients come back to *Housing Futures*.

### Building support networks

An essential element of working with clients in order to make the accommodation transitional is building their support networks. This can be as simple as referring them to another service or it may be complex.

### **Policy**

As part of the preliminary assessment or ongoing service process *Housing Futures* will:

- Identify the client's support networks
- Refer clients to appropriate services and support networks

We are currently compiling a database and contact network to facilitate coordinated information provision. Kim Peters is a qualified life coach and management consultant. Once *Housing Futures*<sup>2</sup> is operational we intend to offer coaching in integral living skills (such as health and financial management) and business planning, to assist interested residents to start their own businesses.

### Any notified maintenance conducted in a timely manner

Pursuant to the *Residential Tenancies Act* it is mandatory to complete urgent repairs as fast as possible. Routine maintenance is scheduled based on perceived priority and is consistently conducted on an ongoing manner.

### Assistance to secure private accommodation

Where a client has been diligent in the payment of rent, adhering to the House Rules and being a productive member of the House it is appropriate to provide the client with a formal letter of reference in order to assist them to secure private real estate, employment or for other purposes.

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### Closing the file

- Clients files will be closed when:
  - The client secures permanent long term accommodation;
  - The client voluntary leaves for other reasons; or
  - The client is evicted.
- When one of the above reasons exists, the file will be closed. Files will potentially contain:
  - Signed copy of House Rules
  - Copy of Centrelink provider payment form
  - Copy of Bond lodgement/transfer/claim form
  - Copy of Bond receipt
  - Copy of Condition Report
  - Forwarding address
  - Other relevant documents/progress notes
- The room will be evaluated against the condition report and any significant damage costed.
- If no damage or monies owing, a bond claim form completed to return any bond to the resident or Department of Housing (DoH). Forms sent as appropriate.
- Keys are returned and combination entry locks to the property are changed.
- The file is archived.
- Details of departure are included in the House Resident Register.

### Privacy and confidentiality of information

Clients' rights for privacy, confidentiality and access to information should be respected.

#### **Privacy**

Privacy relates to areas including the right not to be watched, listened to without consent and/or in a manner which is not appropriate and relevant to the client's well-being. Privacy refers to the client's environment and possessions, physical and bodily needs, personal relationships and personal information and needs. Staff must be mindful of the following:

1. Recognising the need for privacy and individual differences in the extent privacy is desired
2. Attempting to organise works when suitable for clients
3. Seeking only the information which is needed for supporting the clients needs
4. Respecting confidentiality.

#### **Confidentiality and access to information**

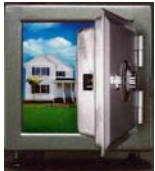
Staff acquire considerable amounts of information about clients' health, families and other social relationships, personal interests, skills, behaviour patterns and financial affairs. Confidentiality relates specifically to the protection of this private information concerning the clients. This information is not to be released to any third party unless it is with the consent of the client. Any information regarding the client is released only to those who have a legitimate interest, need for the information as part of their role in caring for the client or have the legal need for such information (i.e. Court of Law or similar). Additionally, any private information must be released to the client at his/her request in accordance with the *Freedom of Information Act*. Staff should ensure that:

1. Any written information known of clients is kept in locked filing cabinets.
2. Staff operate on a 'need to know' basis. That is seeking only the information about the clients that is necessary to the provision of a suitable service.
3. All clients should have access to their records and should be informed of this right.

## 4. Operational Policies

### 4.1 House Rules: hygiene, noise reduction and a co-operative community

Formal operation of the property occurs through compliance to an agreed set of House Rules. Seven days formal notice is required by CAV to change the House Rules. House Rules are specifically designed to ensure the quiet enjoyment of the property including **zero tolerance** of drug use, violence, theft and criminal activity:



Housing Futures™

## HOUSE RULES

For your quiet enjoyment of living at (address)

A Boarding/Rooming house is NOT a Residential Tenancy. Residents must:-

- Abide by these **HOUSE RULES**
- Consider other residents' and neighbours' rights to peace and quiet
- Take adequate care of the house, property and appliances provided for your enjoyment and convenience

If there is a *Breach of Duty* of the **HOUSE RULES** which seriously disrupts the peace and quiet the offender can be required to leave immediately. **Three consecutive *Breach of Duty* notices may force a *Notice to Vacate*.**

1. Know your responsibilities contained in the *Rooming House Guide* provided.
2. Your room must be kept clean and tidy. Bed linen must be washed weekly, washing power is provided.
3. To protect you and other residents from fire and health risks smoking is banned anywhere indoors.
4. Always be responsible for your own dishes, tidy/wipe down the kitchen, bathroom and toilet after you. Respect recycling and water conservation.
5. No guests after 10 pm.
6. Disruptive noise levels to cease between 10pm and 9am, respect your neighbours and the other residents' rights to quiet enjoyment of their home.
7. Residents and any visitor(s) must ensure orderly conduct with no disturbances to other residents or neighbours.
8. Inappropriate or antisocial behaviour, including any complaint from a neighbour, will trigger a *Breach of Duty* and may lead to a *Notice to Vacate*. Any verbal or physical threat will be immediately reported to the police.
9. Drugs are not permitted on the premises. Any form of criminal activity must be reported.
10. Any damage must be reported and you may be financially responsible for the repair or replacement of the item (excludes general wear and tear).
11. Report any emergency repair immediately call 0417350099.
12. No common house property is to be kept in rooms and personal property is not to be left outdoors or common areas, especially the exits, which need to remain clear in case of fire.
13. Rubbish is to be wrapped and put in the outside bins when you find a kitchen bin full.
14. At present you can enjoy the *responsible* consumption of alcohol in the house, however, should alcohol related incidents occur; alcohol will be banned from the premises.
15. You must pay your rent/lodgings on time and provide at least two business days notice when you vacate.
16. You are required to attend House Meetings as and when these are called.
17. You are required to act with integrity, friendliness and respect in any interaction with neighbours or the local community. Generally all queries should be directed to management in the first instance, do not approach neighbours regarding any matter without consulting management.
18. If you lose your key/lock yourself out, do not attempt to break into the room, call Kim 0417350099.
19. If you have suggestions of how the house can run better, please contribute at a meeting.

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## 4.2 Neighbour Relations

House Rules facilitate noise reduction, waste management and personal affect placement on the property. Clients' respecting neighbours is also ensured through discussion and education on an ongoing basis.

### Policy

- Kim Peters personally introduces herself to the immediate neighbours of each property providing:
  - Business cards/magnets and clear instruction that the neighbour can contact 24 hours a day to report any issue whatsoever or discuss joint property maintenance at any time
  - A *Housing Futures* brochure and direct them to the website for more detailed information
  - Acknowledge them for the role that they play in the life satisfaction of the residents.
  - Offer to meet with neighbours every six months to discuss any issues or concerns relating to the property.
- Discuss with each client the importance of neighbour relations and respect.
- Monitor the appearance of the property.
- Ensure all clients advise neighbours (by mail drop) of any intention to hold a function.

Neighbours are encouraged to meet with management on an ongoing basis to discuss their level of satisfaction with operations, including visitor parking allocation and contribute to constructive changes to management or the house rules.

## 4.3 Parking and traffic management

Car parking will be managed to the fulfilment of local council requirements and to the satisfaction of neighbours. Consideration of parking will be given at time of each tenant selection. All efforts will be made to minimise the use of street parking at all times and cater to the needs of specific neighbours. Particular emphasis will be placed on the street sweeping and garbage collection timetables at Surrey Hills. Vehicles must not be parked in front of rubbish bins on collection days.

## 4.4 Noise Control

The House Rules facilitate client compliance to noise level time limits and usually another resident making comment resolves the issue immediately. Any complaint is addressed by immediate attendance and discussion in regards to *Breach of Duty* by failure to comply with House Rules. Surrounding property neighbours are provided with a 24 hour number to ensure they have a process for excessive noise levels.

## 4.5 Safety and Security

### Occupational Health & Safety (OH&S)

The purpose of the occupational health and safety policies is to abide by all lawful requirements:

- To minimise the risk to health, safety and well-being of clients, staff or other people who may be attend the property to the fullest extent possible
- To promote improvement to the workplace environment to protect people's physical and mental health
- To provide a simple framework which utilises practices and guidelines to improve health and safety.

*Housing Futures* is committed to providing a safe and positive working environment for staff and volunteers. Under the Occupational Health and Safety Act, *Housing Futures* has an obligation to provide safe working conditions and work practices. Under this legislation Staff must take reasonable care of the health and safety of others. Staff must co-operate with OH&S requirements:

- Take reasonable care to protect their own health and safety and the health and safety of others
- Co-operate in ensuring that the workplace is safe and healthy and report to the employer any situation at the workplace that could constitute a hazard
- Follow the instruction and training provided, use personal protective equipment provided and not interfere with anything set up in the interests of health and safety.
- The legislation also recognises that Staff have certain rights with regard to health and safety in their workplaces. These include the right to:
  - Be informed, i.e. to know about potential hazards
  - Staff are expected to take reasonable care for their own safety and that of clients.
  - To report safety concerns directly to Kim Peters.
  - To follow policies and guidelines.
  - To cooperate in the process of developing good safety guidelines.

- 
- Not to take unnecessary / unacceptable risks (use common sense).

Clients are required to:

- Allow management to do a 'hazard check' of their room, regular room inspections are conducted at least six monthly (with sufficient legal notice provided).

To achieve the goal of a safe and healthy workplace we will work with Staff in implementing the following.

- Consultation
- Provision of policies and guidelines and review of work practices
- Provision of relevant information to promote Staff safety when working with clients.
- Record and investigate any accidents/injuries, identify the cause and take action to prevent recurrence
- Measures will be taken regularly to identify, assess, eliminate or minimise risk. These are:
  - Assessment of records such as Work Safe, incident reports etc. Review emergency procedures.
  - Hazard checks when assessing new clients
  - Adequate provision of information to Staff, ongoing training as available and appropriate
  - Use of behaviour intervention, support or plans
  - Register of accidents, injuries and first aid
  - Fully stocked First Aid Cabinets, Fire Extinguisher & Blanket signs and instructions.

### **Accident reporting policy**

If an accident occurs, Staff are required to:

- Contact Management to inform them as soon as possible
- Fill out an *Accident Report Form* supplying all the relevant facts
- Meet in person with Management to discuss possible immediate and underlying causes.

Recommendation will then be made regarding future action to minimise accident reoccurrence.

### **Staff security in any risk situation**

Should a resident behave in a manner that endangers themselves or another, the following process is used:

- If Staff feel unsafe, they are to leave the situation. Staff have the right to refuse to see a client.
- Staff will share any concern for safety and management will attend accompanied by Ambulance, Police or take other appropriate response in the best interests of staff and/or the client(s) or other person.
- A mobile phone should be kept on at all times with a pre-programmed emergency number.
- Discuss with the police the best methods of contacting them in an emergency.
- Adhere to safety strategies to minimise threatening and stressful situations.
- Personal management, including awareness of own limitations. Staff need to be aware of their professional boundaries, recognising where the working role begins and ends.
- We intend to install security cameras in common areas so as not to invade client privacy rights.
- External security lights installed are motion sensor solar lights.

### **Staff numbers**

*Housing Futures*<sup>1</sup> has always operated perfectly with having 24 hour on-call management. However, in addition to this, at *Housing Futures*<sup>2</sup> we propose to have one House Manager residing at the property. Multiple staff are usually on-site conducting maintenance and/or room renovation works regardless.

## **4.6 Alarm Procedure**

The site has an integrated 4080 fire indicator panel which incorporates an alarm for the sprinkler and smoke detector systems, and emergency exit lighting and smoke doors. Procedure on the sounding of the alarm is for Staff to attend the panel to determine the affecting zone location. Immediately attend the room to conduct an assessment of the incident to determine if the situation requires escalation. If it is a false alarm, Staff are to execute a stand down process, overriding and resetting the fire panel and advising all clients.

If there is a legitimate risk event, Staff are to either (a) attend to the cause with the nearest fire blanket or extinguisher if they assess the risk to be manageable, if the event has not been of sufficient size to activate the sprinkler system in that zone or room, and/or (b) immediately notify the Fire Brigade using the pre-programmed number in their phone and proceed with the evaluation plan. The smoke doors will have engaged to contain any smoke in either the front or rear section of the house. Notification will also be facilitated by pager or other remote device activated by the fire indicator panel. The fire indicator panel is then reset in the event that the incident was a false alarm.

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#### **4.7 Evacuation Plan**

Staff will conduct a building sweep with the master key to ensure all present calmly leave the building. Exit lights direct clients to three exit doors, located at the front, side and rear of the house. Magnetic electronic safety latches disengage on the exit doors ensuring these are unlocked when the system alarm is active. All clients will follow evacuation drill procedures and proceed to Evacuation Area 1, located at the furthest point from the house in the asphalt car park area on the Canterbury Road street frontage. Evacuation plans will be placed prominently inside the door of each room and in common areas.

#### **4.8 Waste Management**

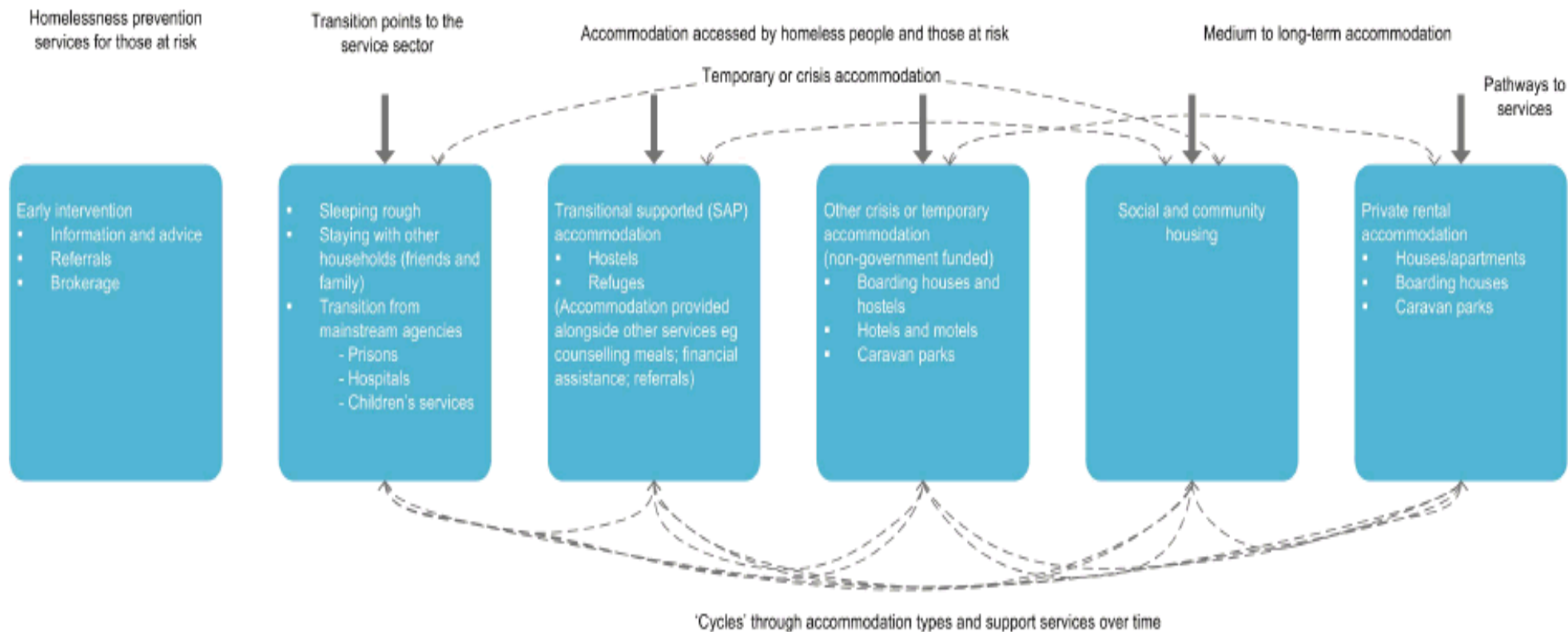
Waste management is conducted by providing separate bins in kitchens, denominating type of rubbish or recycling, and small receptacles are provided in the toilets, bathrooms and laundry. Disposal is via Council nominated recycling, green waste and general waste bins. The *House Rules* facilitate client participation in emptying of internal rubbish bins to the external recycling bins on an as required basis.

NB The procedures outlined in this Property Management Manual are subject to change, in compliance with the building permit approval in process with the Building Surveyors of the City of Whitehorse and the Best Practice Guidelines soon to be launched by the Premier of Victoria.

## Appendix 1 - Figure 2 – Cycle of Homelessness

### The Australian Homelessness Cycle - Access to accommodation

Figure 1 is a flow chart illustrating the connections between support services and access to public and private accommodation. The homeless population can “cycle” through the services over time (Commonwealth of Australia, 2009). Rooming houses can provide temporary, medium or long term accommodation to either support emergency accommodation service users or discretionarily take only applicants from the private rental market, who may, or may not, be homeless.



Source: [http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/housing/pubs/homelessness/Urbis\\_rpt/Documents/3\\_overview.htm](http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/housing/pubs/homelessness/Urbis_rpt/Documents/3_overview.htm)