

Access Housing and Housing Choices Australia merger FAQs - General

Who are Housing Choices Australia?

Housing Choices Australia are one of Australia's largest Community Housing Providers, providing affordable homes for more than 8,500 people in owned and/or managed properties across five states – Victoria, South Australia, Tasmania, New South Wales and, now, Western Australia as a result of its merger with Access Housing. Please visit www.housingchoices.org.au for more information.

Who are Access Housing?

Access Housing are one of Western Australia's largest Community Housing Providers, with more than 1,800 homes owned and/or under management across the Perth metro, Peel and South West regions of WA. More than 3,000 people live in an Access Housing property. Please visit www.accesshousing.org.au for more information.

Why did Access Housing merge with Housing Choices Australia?

Access Housing merged with Housing Choices Australia to form a truly national Community Housing Provider that will be able to achieve more for people needing secure, sustainable and affordable homes than what either company could achieve on their own. The new national organisation will have a strong presence and capacity to help inform and shape government housing policy, both at national and state levels, as well as deliver a far broader and more innovative range of positive housing and community outcomes for some of Australia's most vulnerable people.

When did the merger take effect?

Wednesday 1 July 2020.

How will Access Housing fit into the Housing Choices Australia Group of Companies model?

Access Housing is wholly incorporated as a subsidiary entity of the Housing Choices Australia Group of Companies.

How big is the newly expanded Housing Choices Australia Group of Companies?

The newly expanded organisation is now responsible for managing nearly 7,000 social and affordable homes for more than 8,500 tenants and residents across Australia. This makes Housing Choices Australia the second largest Community Housing Provider in the country.

With Access Housing joining the Housing Choices Australia Group of Companies, the merged entity has assets valued in excess of \$900 million and annual revenue of nearly \$70 million. The Group has more than 220 staff across Australia.

Who will lead the newly expanded Housing Choices Australia Group of Companies?

The newly expanded Housing Choices Australia Group of Companies will be led by Housing Choices Australia Managing Director Michael Lennon. Neil Starkie, who joined Access Housing as Interim Chief Executive Officer in February this year, will continue to lead operations in Western Australia as Housing Choices Australia Executive General Manager (WA).

What were some of the recognised benefits of Access Housing and Housing Choices Australia merging?

- * economies of scale and access to wide-ranging expertise and experience, while retaining strong local reputations and connections, preserving local assets and investments and providing tailored tenant/resident programs;
- * provision of more housing and greater opportunities for current and future residents through enhanced business efficiencies and the benefits of economies of scale and shared knowledge;
- * operating with a ‘think national, act local’ approach where each State can continue to deliver the best possible services on the ground in their region, while applying and contributing to best practice at a national level;
- * greater capacity to improve services and deliver more housing to meet the ever-increasing need in our communities;
- * become an attractive partner for the private sector, other NFPs and government stakeholders in the pursuit of cohesive national responses to key policies such as NDIS, NAHA and Bond Aggregator etc.;
- * through our balance sheet, size and scale, we are able to access more favourable financial terms, enabling us to build more new and affordable homes.

FAQs – Service Delivery

What does the merger mean for Access Housing tenants and the services provided to tenants?

Access Housing tenants will not be negatively affected in any way by the merger and it is very much business as usual for our staff as they proudly continue to deliver high quality services to each of our tenants. Our staff are, as always, here to support and assist each of our valued tenants.

How do Access Housing tenants contact their Tenancy Officer?

Tenants should continue to contact their Tenancy Officer via their Access Housing email address or telephone number. Alternatively, they can call 9430 0900 and our reception team will put their call through to their Tenancy Officer or another member of our Tenancy Services team who can assist them.

How do Access Housing tenants report maintenance issues?

Tenants should continue to report all repairs or damages to their home promptly to our Maintenance Hotline by calling 1800 203 383.

How do Access Housing tenants pay their rent?

Tenants should continue to pay their rent as they have been doing until now. Our bank details and the weekly rent tenants need to pay have not changed as a result of the merger. If tenants have any queries about their rent, they should contact their Tenancy Officer or our Rent Review team on 9534 0400.

Will the Access Housing Advisory Committee of Tenants (ACT) continue?

The ACT is an important initiative that will continue as usual. The ACT will be asked to provide our staff with their suggestions as to how we can keep tenants up to date with information about the merger as things progress in the weeks and months ahead. We are committed to keeping tenants informed.

Will Access Housing’s tenant programs continue?

Our Tenant Engagement and Capacity Building team will continue to deliver its range of popular and award-winning programs for tenants. More face-to-face tenant engagement activities will recommence when safe to do so as Western Australia returns to normal following the COVID-19 pandemic. For more information, please contact our Tenant Engagement and Capacity Building team by calling 9430 0900.