Bellorana
Limited

RFBI Group Policy Scope (Scope Policy)

1. Purpose

The purpose of the Scope Policy is to establish that all policies within the Royal Freemasons' Benevolent Institution Group ("the Group") apply across all entities within the Group. This ensures consistency, alignment with the Group's strategic objectives, and adherence to legal and regulatory requirements across the entire group.

2. Scope

The Scope Policy covers all policies within the Group, including but not limited to those related to governance, risk management, compliance, finance, human resources, operations, and information technology. The scope extends to:

- All companies (Royal Freemasons' Benevolent Institution, RFBI Concord Community Village & Bellorana Limited) within the Group.
- All employees, officers, directors, contractors, and other stakeholders who are governed by the Group's policies.

3. Applicability

All policies within the Group are applicable to every entity within the Group.

4. Policy Review

Review to this policy will be conducted from time to time, for example when legislative changes occur that require such review, or at scheduled review dates.

5. Authority

This policy is authorised under delegation by:

Frank Price

Chief Executive Office

Policy on providing support for vulnerable tenants in affordable housing

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Policy Statement

This Policy outlines Royal Freemasons' Benevolent Institution (RFBI) approach to support for vulnerable tenants in our affordable housing rental properties.

Scope

This Policy applies to all tenants living in RFBI affordable housing properties. It provides guidance to RFBI tenants and staff on the practices and pathways available to RFBI and the tenant community for arranging tenancy support to sustain tenancies.

Policy

RFBI recognises that support arrangements for vulnerable tenants, their carers and household are a fundamental component of ensuring the wellbeing of individual tenants and the community as a whole.

Tenancy support, including the identification of at-risk tenancies, is the foundation for sustaining tenancies and preventing eviction and homelessness. Person centred support or care empowers vulnerable tenants and those with complex needs to link with community and specialist services to promote improved personal, social and economic outcomes.

RFBI recognises that collaborating and linking tenants with other agencies and services can improve the wellbeing of vulnerable tenants. We also value the importance of family and community connections in the lives of our tenants.

RFBI responses to vulnerable tenants

RFBI tenancy management practices seek to recognise and respond to individuals with support needs so that capacity to sustain a tenancy can be enhanced.
RFBI will get to know its tenants through tenant visits and needs assessments undertaken as part of the establishment of a new tenancy. When a tenant chooses and consents to engage with support arrangements, RFBI will foster referrals, collaboration and linkages with appropriate support agencies.
Specific tenancy management actions associated with vulnerable tenant groups are outlined below:

1. Eligibility criteria

RFBI recognises that ageing in place provides stability and consistency in the lives of older people. Healthy ageing involves activities that maintain physical and mental wellbeing and promote independence of older people.

RFBI will assist older tenants to remain healthy at home by supporting access to information about local suitable engagement activities, and encouraging tenants to access resources such as the Healthy Ageing page on the My Aged Care website; and to access support services on www.myagedcare.gov.au/getting-support

As tenants get older, living independently at home can become more difficult. Getting a little help with daily activities means you can stay independent in your home for longer. Support at home as you age could include help with shopping, cooking or transport. Personal care to assist you to bathe, dress, and look after your health and medical needs can also be provided as part of a home support arrangement.

The Commonwealth Home Support Program funds a range of services that are subsidised through government and can be delivered to your home. Home care packages are also available for eligible older people with greater or more complex needs. An assessment process will determine what program is best suited to the individual.

Tenants with more complex needs who are eligible for My Aged Care (MAC) packages of support, and are experiencing barriers to functional living, may require home modification services such as ramps and grab rails. MAC can contribute to the cost of home modifications for older people's homes.

RFBI has *a rich history of providing care and services that enable older people to continue living independently and safely at home. We provide, or can facilitate access to, a wide range of tailored support services centred around the individual's needs, preferences and choices.*

RFBI will *support tenant and family participation in the design of an individual's support service delivery, including the provision of information to tenants and their representatives in a form and language they can understand and which enables them to make an informed choice.*

RFBI will *endeavour to allocate suitable affordable housing properties for older people who require modifications to live safely at home.*

RFBI will *ensure that it contacts older vulnerable tenants for wellbeing checks on a regular basis.*

RFBI will *flag older, more vulnerable tenants on tenancy records so that contractors and other agencies visiting their homes can be given appropriate advice relating to care and protection of elderly people.*

2. Carers of tenants

Carers are often an important part of life as tenants age or if they have a disability; care may be provided by family members or through services that help at home. Carers assist to sustain tenancies and strengthen community and families.

Carers can also experience higher levels of stress and social isolation, so fostering their community connection is important.

The Commonwealth Home Support Program also offers a range of services to support carers, including advocacy, advice and respite.

Carers can be supported to take a break from their caring role through community and flexible respite, residential respite which is generally short term, and emergency respite. More information is available through My Aged Care “Questions about respite care and carers”.

RFBI can *assist family carers, or provide caring services, including respite, through our Home Care Options programs.*

RFBI will *provide or facilitate access to a range of easy-to-understand information about support options for carers; including information on engagement opportunities in the community.*

RFBI will *where possible, consider requests for additional bedroom allocations for a tenant who requires a live-in carer. RFBI will require medical evidence that supports a tenant’s ongoing requirement for a live-in carer. The carer must be over 18 years of age and in receipt of a Carer’s Payment or Carer’s Allowance from Centrelink before RFBI can consider requests from the tenant for an additional occupant who is a carer. If the tenant’s property is unsuitable for accommodating a live-in carer, transfer options may be considered for the tenant.*

3. Tenants experiencing domestic violence

Tenants of RFBI affordable housing are entitled to lead their lives in safety and dignity, without fear of abuse or family violence.

There are a number of stress points that can exacerbate family violence including financial difficulties, substance abuse and mental health problems. Responses to domestic or family violence require a wholistic approach and cannot be addressed by legal compliance, or law and order alone.

Tenants at serious and ongoing risk of family or domestic violence, and can substantiate that risk, can apply for a transfer of housing.

RFBI will *collaborate with support and referral agencies that can assist tenants experiencing family or domestic violence.*

***RFBI will** undertake to report to the relevant authorities, incidents which demonstrate significant risk of domestic or family violence to its tenants.*
***RFBI will** assist tenants who can substantiate serious risk of ongoing family or domestic violence to apply for a transfer of housing.*

4. Tenants with disability or mental health issues

RFBI recognises that people with disabilities can face multiple barriers in finding housing which meets their needs for accessibility, safety and security; and that community infrastructure which supports participation by people with disabilities is an important contributor to wellbeing.

***RFBI ensures,** in the design of its affordable housing sites, that outdoor and indoor spaces permit free access and encourage healthy, safe living outcomes.*

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) can transform the living experiences of eligible people with disabilities (under 65 years), and offers them the ability to exercise choice and control over the support arrangements in their life. NDIS support plans can assist tenants with disabilities to improve access in their homes through subsidising the cost of home modifications.

Disability Gateway provides information and services to assist people with a disability to find the support they need in Australia; including:

- financial support,
- aids and equipment,
- housing,
- transport,
- health and wellbeing,
- daily living and
- rights and legal services.

For many people living with mental illness, the ability to choose, access, and maintain safe and affordable housing provides the cornerstone to stabilising their lives and illness. Co-ordination of services that can meet the needs of a tenant living with a mental illness is an essential component of sustainable tenancies.

***RFBI will** facilitate improved in-home accessibility for tenants with disabilities by providing access to information and referrals, if required.*
***RFBI will** collaborate on a case-by-case basis with agencies delivering NDIS support, or mental health support, for tenants in our affordable housing properties so that tenancies can be sustained.*
***RFBI will** facilitate arrangements for involvement by the tenant's guardians, case managers, or advocates as needed, when tenancy management decisions are required for people with disabilities.*
***RFBI will** assist people who can demonstrate their housing needs have changed as a result of an ongoing disability to apply for a housing transfer, when their property no longer meets their needs.*

5. Tenants experiencing substance abused keeping for applicants

Tenants experiencing significant substance abuse are at greater risk of serious health issues, including mental health issues. Linkages to appropriate health and support services can assist in the prevention of homelessness for this group of vulnerable tenants.

Tenants with problematic substance abuse may be engaged with drug and alcohol rehabilitation services, and may have to move into a rehabilitation facility for an extended period. If their reasons for vacating an RFBI affordable housing property to enter a supported care facility can be substantiated, they can be considered for reinstatement of their tenancy if they meet RFBI eligibility criteria.

***RFBI will** collaborate with health and support agencies and facilitate intensive support arrangements, when tenancies are at risk due to problematic substance abuse issues.*

6. Antisocial and illegal behaviour of tenants

Anti-social behaviour consists of:

- Harassment
- Criminal and illegal activities
- Behaviour that places the safety of others at risk
- Causing deliberate or reckless damage to property

Serious anti-social behaviour disturbs neighbours, and places the safety and security of neighbours and RFBI staff at risk. If the behaviour is serious, repeated and proven, and results in a breach of the tenancy agreement, RFBI will take action to resolve cases through the NCAT.

In cases where the likely cause of the anti-social behaviour arises from the complex support needs or vulnerabilities of the tenant; and where the behaviour is ongoing but not illegal, RFBI will seek to engage the tenant with appropriate support agencies.

***RFBI will** take action if its affordable housing tenants are engaged in proven severe and ongoing illegal or anti-social behaviour by referring the matter to the Police and/or NCAT where eviction is the likely outcome of the behaviour.*
***RFBI will** seek to engage support for a tenant exhibiting prolonged anti-social behaviour which is not illegal or severe.*

Record keeping and privacy for vulnerable tenants

RFBI maintains records of referrals, interventions and support arrangements in place for vulnerable tenants of its affordable housing properties. Vulnerabilities or support needs of tenants are flagged so that they can be taken into account when any notable tenancy management decisions are being considered.

If a tenant's written consent is provided, RFBI will provide relevant documentation concerning a tenant's support needs to agencies or case managers involved with support plans or delivery for that individual.

All tenant records are confidential and kept secure from unauthorised access and use. The privacy of information about RFBI tenants and their support arrangements is managed consistently with the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (NSW).

Related Policies and Legislation

- Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (NSW)
- NSW Carers (Recognition) Act 2010
- NSW Anti-Discrimination Act 1977
- NSW Residential Tenancies Act 2010
- RFBI Affordable Housing Tenancy Management Policy
- RFBI Affordable Housing Allocations Policy

Policy Review

Review of this policy and procedures will be conducted from time to time, for example when legislative changes occur that require such review, or at scheduled review dates.

Authority

This policy is authorised under delegation by: **Frank Price Chief Executive Officer**