



# Policy Manual

## Section 6: Working with the Community

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## **Policy Manual                      Working with the Community**

### **Policy 6.1                              Advocacy and Referral**

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<b>Policy Title:</b>	<b>Advocacy and Referral</b>
<b>Policy Number:</b>	<b>6.1</b>
<b>Version Number:</b>	<b>6.1.2</b>
<b>Supersedes Number:</b>	<b>6.1.1</b>

<b>Approved by:</b>	<b>Wentworth Board of Directors</b>
<b>Approval Date:</b>	<b>April 2014</b>
<b>Reviewed:</b>	<b>April 2014</b>
<b>Last Reviewed:</b>	<b>April 2016</b>

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#### **1. Purpose**

1.1 The purpose of this policy is to provide information on how Wentworth establishes and maintains practical and effective links with service providers within the community to secure active information and support for its clients.

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#### **2. Policy**

2.1 Wentworth will maintain up to date records and contact details for support agencies and community and government organisations that may be useful to tenants, applicants and clients.

2.2 Information regarding support agencies that we work with along with the services that Wentworth provides will be available at all offices and all staff will be required to have a good working knowledge of relevant support services in the area.

2.3 Wentworth will promote to applicants, tenants, clients and all other relevant persons the services that Wentworth as an organisation can provide. However, we understand the need for a holistic approach to successful tenancy management and will work with and promote the services of a wide variety of community and government organisations.

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#### **3. General Principles**

- To develop positive working relationships with community organisations and government service agencies
- To ensure staff maintain a working knowledge of services available to tenants, applicants and the organisation
- To promote the services of Wentworth Community Housing
- To develop support agreements with community and service agencies to provide housing for their clients
- To ensure employees of Wentworth Community Housing understand the referral process
- To promote Wentworth Community Housing as a housing provider of choice
- To respond appropriately to the needs of all applicants, tenants and clients of the organisation
- To work with other social housing providers to promote the industry

- To help develop and promote sustainable communities
  - To understand the different needs of community housing tenants and to respond appropriately to these needs
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#### **4. Responsibility**

- Client Service Officers and Specialist Client Service Officers: to promote and support opportunities to better work with the community
  - Client Service Managers:
  - Housing Services Manager:
  - Community Services Manager:
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#### **5. Definitions and References**

- Residential Tenancy Agreement
  - Service Level Agreements
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#### **6. Procedure**

##### **6.1 Resource Bank**

- 6.1.1 Wentworth will maintain a comprehensive resource bank at each of its offices, listing relevant accommodation, community service and departmental resources for its applicants and tenants. The resource bank will include contact details and referral requirements for the following types of services:
- emergency and medium term accommodation;
  - housing information and support;
  - counselling/support agencies;
  - local councils;
  - community health centres, legal centres, neighbourhood centres;
  - migrant information services;
  - ATSI services;
  - relevant government agencies.
- 6.1.2 The resource bank will enable Wentworth staff to assist applicants, clients and tenants with referral information.
- 6.1.3 The bank will be kept up to date on an on-going basis as information becomes available.

##### **6.2 Links with local government and community services**

- 6.2.1 Wentworth will maintain close links with a range of local services, particularly accommodation and support providers, to enhance service delivery and community service coordination.
- 6.2.2 Working closely within the local community will ensure that Wentworth:
- provides and receives appropriate referrals;
  - maintains a high profile within the community to increase access for people who require social housing and support;
  - remains relevant and responsive to community needs.
- 6.2.3 Links with the local community include (but are not limited to):
- participation on management committee's of relevant organisations;
  - participation on working parties, local forums and interagencies;
  - attendance to conferences and meetings on relevant local issues;

- informal meetings to discuss tenancy and support issues;
- partnerships on specific housing projects;
- participation in case conferences regarding integrated service delivery for complex need clients/ tenants

### **6.3 Partnerships with support agencies**

- 6.3.1 Wentworth is committed to developing partnerships with key support agencies as a means of sustaining tenancies.
- 6.3.2 Where a tenant would benefit from support from another agency in order to remain housed and agrees to receive this support, Wentworth will assist them to gain this support (refer 6.4)
- 6.3.3 Alternately Wentworth may be approached by a support agency to enter into a housing and support partnership for a particular target group. Wentworth will, where possible, facilitate this partnership.
- 6.3.4 Where Wentworth enters into an agreement with a support agency Wentworth will ensure a Wentworth 'Service Level Agreement' or other appropriate agreement has been accepted and signed by both agencies.
- 6.3.5 The 'Service Level Agreement' covers the following areas:
- roles and responsibilities;
  - time period;
  - property/s;
  - confidentiality;
  - vacancies;
  - dispute resolution procedures;
  - insurances.
- 6.3.6 Wentworth will participate in Integrated Case Coordination Panels to ensure client needs are met where cross collaboration by agencies is required.

### **6.4 Referral to other organisations**

- 6.4.1 Where it is appropriate, Wentworth will refer applicants and tenants to other suitable support agencies, housing organisations and community organisations.
- 6.4.2 Staff may offer to refer clients where it is known that Wentworth will not be able to meet their immediate needs for housing or support or where tenants may require help in managing their tenancy. Staff may refer tenants and applicants to:
- Alternate housing organisations
  - Tenancy and legal advisory services
  - Government departments
  - Refuges and Specialist Homelessness Services
  - Rehabilitation facilities
  - Support agencies
  - Financial and Budgeting services
  - Community centres
  - Medical and mental health facilities
- 6.4.3 Where it is thought that a tenant or applicant may benefit from being referred to another support agency, service provider or housing association, staff may do the following:
- Arrange an interview with the client to gain further information on the clients needs
  - Provide clients with information and contact details for services that are appropriate to their needs
  - Discuss with the client the referral process and get consent prior to contacting other agencies

- Contact the relevant support agency or housing organisation to discuss suitability of client referral and arrange necessary details



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**Policy Manual**                      **Working with the Community**  
**Policy 6.2**                              **Community Participation**

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<b>Policy Title:</b>	<b>Community Participation</b>
<b>Policy Number:</b>	<b>6.2</b>
<b>Version Number:</b>	<b>6.2.2</b>
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**1. Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to provide information on how Wentworth will actively promote and develop social housing and affordable housing and the interests of tenants in the broader community.

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**2. Policy**

- 2.1** Wentworth will work with community and local government organisations to help establish secure, sustainable tenancies within the community.
  - 2.2** Wentworth will stay informed of community and social housing developments, will provide input into proposed changes and developments where possible and will contribute to the growth of the community by playing an active role in community development.
  - 2.3** Wentworth will keep tenants informed of community issues and events and will encourage and support tenants to get involved with their communities and their housing organisation.
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**3. Responsibility**

- Client Service Officer:
  - Client Service Managers
  - Sustainable Communities Officer:
  - Housing Services Manager:
  - Community Services Manager:
  - Chief Executive Officer
  - Board
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**4. Definitions and References**

- Residential Tenancy Agreement
  - Social inclusion and engagement plans
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## **5. Procedure**

### **5.1 Contribution to the development of social and affordable housing**

5.1.1 Wentworth will contribute to the development of social and affordable housing within the community at every opportunity. Examples may include:

- participation in working parties and steering committees on social and affordable housing issues;
- participating in local housing and homelessness forums;
- attendance at housing conferences;
- developing partnerships with organisations that provide support to special needs groups;
- joint ventures with other agencies to develop social and affordable housing projects, community development initiatives, research and policy development;
- contributing to the development of policies in the sector and
- maintaining up to date knowledge of social and affordable housing developments and issues through membership of peak housing groups (eg. NSW Federation of Housing Associations; Shelter; National Community Housing Forum; Homelessness NSW, etc) and subscription to relevant journals and newsletters;
- participating in local area planning through regional forums and local council planning processes to improve integration and delivery of services.
- Information about participation and/or attendance at forums and meetings will be reported to the Board on a regular basis.

### **5.2 Tenant participation in wider issues**

5.2.1 Wentworth will support opportunities for tenants to become involved in the development of the social and affordable housing industry including advertising opportunities in its newsletter and tenant groups and providing financial assistance and training to tenants where relevant to ensure their active and full participation etc .

### **5.3 Contact with the media**

5.3.1 Wentworth will ensure that any contact with the media reflects the policy and philosophy of the organisation and does not undermine or otherwise misrepresent the service.

5.3.2 The Chief Executive Officer and Chair of the Board are the designated contacts for all media liaison.

5.3.3 All media requests or promotion should be referred initially to the Chief Executive Officer for approval.

5.3.4 Where the media request or promotion is potentially controversial the Chief Executive Officer will refer the issue to the Board for approval.

5.3.5 All media contacts will be reported to the Board.

### **5.4 Providing Housing Information, Advice and Referral**

5.4.1 Not all people that apply to Wentworth will be either eligible or suitable for the housing programs or services that we have and those that are suitable will be advised of the potential long waiting periods for housing.

5.4.2 Where these situations occur, staff will provide information, advice and referral to interested applicants on:

- Other suitable community housing organisations in the area
- Affordable housing programs and providers
- Specialist Homelessness Services options
- Short and medium term accommodation options
- How to apply for housing with other organisations

- Refuges and Boarding houses
- Support agencies that may be suitable

## **5.5 Promotion of Community and Affordable Housing**

5.5.1 Wentworth will promote the organisation and the community housing sector by:

- Working with local community organisations and support services to ensure they are aware of and understand the services Wentworth provides
- Attending community housing and homelessness conferences, workshops and training sessions
- Getting involved in local, state and national housing issues
- Distributing quarterly newsletters to tenants, with access by relevant community and support agencies
- Promotion of community housing on the Wentworth website

## **5.5 Community Involvement**

5.5.1 Wentworth will aim to promote community involvement amongst the organisation, employees and tenants by

- Subscribing to local, state and national publications
- Inviting local community and government organisations to annual general meetings or events hosted by Wentworth
- Seeking feedback back from support agencies that we work with on a regular basis through surveys and regular meetings
- Attending community events to raise awareness about the organisation and the need for affordable housing
- Advertising community organisations, events and services in the quarterly newsletter and on the Wentworth website
- Attending community forums and workshops relating to housing and relevant social issues
- Establishing tenant groups
- Providing training and facilities for tenants interested in establishing tenant and community groups

## **5.6 Community engagement and social inclusion**

5.6.1 Wentworth is committed to Community engagement and social inclusion and will work with its tenants and the communities in which they live to improve social, environmental and economic outcomes. Wentworth ensures these principles are met in the day to day of core business in the following ways:

- Wentworth will work in collaboration with government (FACS, Police, Health, local government etc) and non-government agencies to develop and implement plans and strategies in communities of identified disadvantage and need.
- Wentworth staff will participate in activities that engage tenants and community members such as; festivals, interagency meetings, gatherings, training and workshops.
- Wentworth staff at all times encourage tenants, applicants and clients to participate in programs that provide opportunity and/ or pathways to improved outcomes pertaining to social inclusion, health related events, employment programs and events within and outside their community.
- Wentworth has a dedicated staff resource that will build engagement within and outside the organisation.



- The Tenant Engagement and Advisory Team T.E.A.M participates on all levels in relation to improving inclusion and engagement, participating in planning, advice, support and guidance to both staff and tenants and communities.
- The annual tenant survey provides Wentworth with feedback as to the delivery of its services and importantly what can be improved. This information is recorded and continuous improvement strategies are implemented through consultation, business planning and T.E.A.M consultation.

(Broader and more strategic deliverables will be identified in a Community Renewal policy – still under development)



**Policy Manual  
Community**

**Working with the**

**Policy 6.3**

**Environmental sustainability**

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**Policy Title:** Environmental sustainability  
**Policy Number:** 6.3  
**Version Number:** 6.3.1  
**Supercedes Number:** N/A

**Approved by:** Wentworth Board of Directors  
**Approval Date:** April 2014  
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**1. Purpose**

1.1 Wentworth accepts that the environment is under stress from human activity. The purpose of the policy is to provide information on how Wentworth will work to preserve the environmental sustainability of the planet at all levels of its operations, including the office environment, the asset management plan, new builds and among the tenant populace.

**2. Policy**

Wentworth is committed to reducing its carbon footprint to reduce its impact on climate change. Wentworth will:

- 2.1 establish practices that meet or exceed relevant environmental legislation and adhere to agreements and standards at local, national and international levels;
- 2.2 create and promote an environmentally sustainable and responsible culture within the organisation;
- 2.3 set and communicate environmental sustainability objectives;
- 2.4 incorporate sustainability principles in business decisions and consider environmental outcomes, in the same way that consideration is given to safety, cost, quality and time;
- 2.5 promote the efficient use, reuse and recycling of resources and the minimisation of waste; and,
- 2.6 consider favourably, suppliers who pursue good environmental management

**3. Responsibility**

- All staff of Wentworth
  - Board
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**4. Definitions and References**

- Relevant environmental legislation
- Environmental sustainability strategy (to be developed)

## **5. Procedure**

### **5.1 Building, development and acquisition of housing stock**

5.1.1 All newly developed housing stock will include environmental sustainable design features, construction methods and sustainable materials as well as inclusions to promote resource efficiency to assist tenants to reduce resource consumption and energy costs.

5.1.2 Wentworth will consider whole of life benefits and costs in the design and acquisition of housing stock including location of housing stock to promote access to public transport and proximity to essential services.

### **5.2 Retro-fitting existing dwellings**

5.2.1 Wentworth will where possible retro-fit environmental sustainable features to its existing dwellings for the benefit of our tenants and the community. Wentworth will incorporate sustainability principles into our long term asset planning.

### **5.3 Educating our tenants**

5.3.1 Wentworth is committed to undertaking activities that will educate tenants on the ways that they can reduce their energy and water consumption to create better performance through increased efficiency.

### **5.4 Staff Engagement**

5.4.1 Wentworth understands that to be efficient and environmentally sustainable we need a firm commitment from staff. To gain this commitment Wentworth will undertake various staff engagement activities to promote and raise awareness about environmental sustainability. These activities will include workshops and planning days, relevant training and information provision.

### **5.5 Energy Usage**

Wentworth is committed to reducing our energy use across all operations. To ensure reduction in energy usage Wentworth will:

- Use energy efficient equipment;
- Encourage staff to be energy efficient and to seek improvement through staff behaviour and habits related to energy use;
- Where possible install energy improvements in offices such as individual light switches, automated kill switches, energy efficient lighting;
- Ensure facilities and equipment are well maintained;
- When possible encourage the use of natural light and ventilation;
- Develop systems to accurately measure and monitor energy use;
- Promote and seek continual improvements.

### **5.6 Water Usage**

Wentworth is committed to reducing water use in our offices. To ensure reduction in water usage Wentworth will:

- Ensure all office toilets are dual flush;
- Encourage staff to be water efficient and to seek improvement through staff behaviour and habits related to water usage;
- Where possible install improvements in offices such tap aerators;
- Ensure facilities are well maintained;
- Develop systems to accurately measure and monitor water usage;
- Promote and seek continual improvements.

### **5.7 Paper, Printing and Stationery**

Wentworth uses recycled copy paper and other stationary material and recycles paper and stationary materials where possible.

To reduce paper, printing and stationary usage Wentworth will:

- Encourage double sided printing and think before you print
- Purchase environmentally sustainable paper and other stationary materials;
- Promote the responsible use of paper with an aim to work towards a paperless office;
- Encouraging email correspondence rather than facsimiles to reduce the amount of paper usage.
- Develop a plan to minimise the use of invoices, direct mail, letterhead, brochures, and internal printing.
- Ensure printed material by Wentworth is printed on recycled paper or from paper sourced from a renewal source..
- Source sustainable stationary supplies (including paper);
- Source sustainable office equipment/appliances and motor vehicles (where possible);

### **5.8 Waste and Recycling**

- Wentworth will work to minimise waste to landfill and to increase recycling. Plastic, paper, glass, food scraps will be recycled whenever possible..
- Old mobile phones, printer cartridges and other recyclable materials will be recycled where possible.
- Wentworth is committed to reducing waste from our development sites and to increasing procurement of goods from recycled and sustainable sources.
- Wentworth is committed to educating and encouraging our residents to reduce their waste to landfill and to recycle wherever possible.

### **5.9 Supply Chain**

- Wentworth aims to improve our relationships and processes to support the provision of goods and services along our supply chain, promoting and encouraging environmental sustainable processes, practices and materials.
- Where possible Wentworth will consider the environmental actions of our suppliers, service providers and contractors and include environmental sustainability as a factor for choosing a supplier, service provider or contractor.

### **5.10 Transport and Travel**

To ensure reduction in environmental impact from our transport and travel Wentworth will:-

- Train staff to plan their travel resourcefully, efficiently and effectively;
- Utilise teleconferencing wherever possible to reduce travel;
- Commit to utilisation of other technology to encourage less travel;
- Coordinate our fleet on an organisational basis to improve its fuel efficiency and environmental performance;