

Ref: HOG11/62980

Rebecca Main
Principal Council Officer
Legislative Council Standing Committee on Law and Justice
lawandjustice@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Dear Ms Main

I write in response to your letter of 15 December 2011 enclosing a transcript of evidence given by Housing NSW representatives and additional questions on notice.

I do wish to make only minor corrections to the transcript.

Housing NSW's response to the two questions on notice is as follows:

Q1. In your view, what methods could be employed to ensure people living in rural and remote communities have access to the tribunal system?

A. In Housing NSW's view the tribunal system should have a range of hearing options available and be able to flexibly deploy these options as needed. So, for example, face to face hearings should be available when the volume of applications justifies it. Hearing by telephone or, more ideally, video conferencing should be available to supplement face to face hearings when there are sudden peaks in demand, when face to face hearings are not feasible, and to deal with purely procedural matters. In addition, decisions about catchment areas for hearing locations (whether for face to face or telephone/video conference) should take into account the more limited nature of public transport options in most rural and remote locations.

Q2. Venue for review of decisions to remove rental rebates

A. Housing NSW does not agree with the suggestion made by the Tenants Union and Redfern Legal Centre.

Housing NSW clients who seek to have a decision reviewed by the Housing Appeals Committee have already exercised an option for a first tier or internal review of the decision by Housing NSW and are dissatisfied with the outcome.



The Housing Appeals Committee is an independent agency that deals with appeals from people unhappy with a decision of a social housing provider, whether Housing NSW or a community housing provider. Many of the decisions reviewed by the Housing Appeals Committee have a high impact on the person concerned.

The Housing Appeals Committee was established in 1994 with the objective of maintaining a credible and independent housing appeals agency committed to providing a method of review of social housing decisions which is fair, just, economical, informal and quick. It is headed by a Chairperson who reports directly to the Minister for Family and Community Services and works from offices that are separately located from Housing NSW.

The Housing Appeals Committee therefore operates independently from Housing NSW and the community housing providers whose decisions it reviews. More information about the Housing Appeals Committee is available at www.hac.nsw.gov.au

Housing NSW considers the Housing Appeals Committee provides a robust option for social housing clients who are unhappy with a decision made by a social housing provider.

Please contact Catherine Stuart, Director Client Service Operations on if further information relating to these responses is required.

Yours sincerely

Paul Vevers
Executive Director, Housing Services

13/1/12