



Guidelines to complete an Application for Accommodation in Regional Community Facilities

Context

ACT Property Group in the Department of Territory and Municipal Services manages a number of Regional Community Facilities ranging from former depots, which usually accommodate a single tenancy, to former schools and health centres, which provide a wide range of accommodation as multi-tenanted facilities. The former schools range from small preschools to substantial primary and high schools. The properties are rented out to a range of organisations. Most are community organisations, while some are small businesses.

As demand for access to accommodation within these facilities is high, the number of facilities limited and turnover low, ACT Property Group runs an Applications Register to manage interest from community groups for accommodation in Regional Community Facilities. Once an application is received, it is registered and offers of accommodation are made if space that matches stated requirements becomes available.

As the ACT Government has recently announced the intended use of three former school buildings as Regional Community Facilities, there is now an increase in accommodation available to community organisations that meet the application criteria. A public expression of interest process will initially be used to allocate space in the three new Regional Community Facilities. Organisations already on the ACT Property Group Applications Register will be invited to participate in the expression of interest process.

The Regional Community Facilities will be located at three sites and will have a specific focus on service delivery for the following:

- Cook – Arts/Cultural Hub;
- Chifley (Melrose) – Health and Wellbeing Hub; and
- Weston – Community Services Hub

It is not possible to guarantee all applicants accommodation in the refurbished space. Some of the organisations with applications on the ACT Property Group Applications Register may not be successful in their applications because of the location or size of accommodation sought. In addition the demand expressed through the selection process may be greater than the space available. There may also be more efficient ways of providing space for some groups including shared space, inclusion in consortia and guaranteed access to community managed space.

Eligibility Criteria

(i) To be eligible for community accommodation an organisation must be:

- A non-government organisation (An organisation which provides services to the community by employees or volunteers, either as individuals or connected with a variety of businesses and charitable organisations, which operate across a wide range of industries. Services typically include those activities ‘which assist or support members or the community in personal functioning as individuals or as members of the wider community.’¹); and
- An association incorporated under the *Associations Incorporation Act 1991 (ACT)*; or
- An Australian Public Company Limited by Guarantee registered in the ACT under the *Corporations Act 2001 (Cwth)* with the main point of business located in the ACT; and
 - Which has income tax exempt status as a non-profit entity as determined pursuant to the *Income Tax Assessment Act 1936(Cth)* with evidence of self-assessment deemed sufficient. The entity will need to provide evidence of its constituent documents for review by Property Group with a requirement that they contain provisions consistent with non-profit entities as determined by the ATO; and/or
 - Entities which fall into one of the exempt categories outlined in the list of Exempt entities issued by the ATO but not including Educational Organisations, Employment Organisations, Non-Profit Hospital, Resource Development Organisations, Scientific Organisations and Sporting Organisations that hold a club licence (ref ‘Income Tax Guide for Non-Profit Organisations’, Type of Exempt Entity - List, March 2007).

(ii) **Priority** for filling vacant space for community groups will be given to existing tenants that need to be relocated. After this, applications from organisations will be dealt with in the following order:

1. Consortia – ACT Government funded organisations that partner in consortia with one or other organisations that demonstrate they are willing to share administrative resources, (examples are front desk, transport, financial and/or other corporate services) in the following areas:
2. Targeted service delivery – organisations whose service delivery have identified priorities in areas including: early intervention, children youth and family services, disability, older people, social housing and homelessness, alcohol and other drugs, mental health etc. (First priority in this category to ACT Government funded organisations); or
3. Social wellbeing – organisations whose service delivery in the area of arts, sport, wellness, health promotion;
4. Organisations that deliver targeted service delivery and social wellbeing services that do not form a consortium;
5. Non-government organisations in inappropriate accommodation;
6. Non-government organisations providing services similar to those of ACT Government and aligned with community services and support services for service delivery organisations for example peak organisations, special interest, education; or
7. Other non-government organisations.

The Regional Community Facilities will not be available for use by non-government schools.

¹ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, National Classification of Community Services, Version 2.0, Cat. No. HWI, Canberra, 2003

Non-government schools and other community organisations can apply to join the Applicant Register and would be considered for other ACT Government Surplus Properties.

(iii) Organisations will be required to demonstrate **the level of contribution** they make to the ACT community through advising in their applications examples of the number of members in the organisation and number of clients assisted. Preference will also be given to organisations delivering services to the ACT community, rather than those that have a national focus.

(iv) In applying for accommodation community organisations will be required to demonstrate their ability to **pay rent** as per the rental policy (see below).

Types of Applications

(i) The Government has indicated its preference for accommodating consortia in the three new Regional Community Facilities. Consortia applications will need to demonstrate how their model is cost effective and efficient. Applications are being sought from organisations that are innovative in their proposal and in their intended use of space and shared facilities. Organisations should be mindful that it is important that other organisations in the consortia share similar objectives and are able to function in an environment where resources are shared.

Each consortia application will also need to include an individual application for each organisation applying. Individual applications may be considered if the consortia application is unsuccessful.

(ii) Organisations that deliver targeted service delivery and social wellbeing services that not form a consortia are also eligible to apply for accommodation in the former schools sites.

Neighbourhood Halls

There will be Neighbourhood Halls to be used for casual hire by the public within two of the Regional Community Facilities. One of the organisations located in each of the two Facilities (Chifley and Weston) will be required to manage the casual hire of the Neighbourhood Halls. This may be an individual organisation or a consortia depending on which is allocated the space.

If an applicant on the ACT Property Group Applications Register no longer requires accommodation, please let ACT Property Group know so that it can update its records. The contact numbers for queries in relation to the application or the properties available are 6205 6546, 6207 7038 or 6207 5966.

Applicant Identity

If you are applying on behalf of an organisation, you will need to produce evidence of your authority to apply. A letter of authority signed by your organisation's Chief Executive, President or Public Officer or other documentation demonstrating your authority will suffice.

If you are an incorporated body, please attach a copy of your ACT Certificate of Incorporation to your application.

Contact details

Applicants will need to provide any changes to their contact details to ACT Property Group to make ensure the organisation can be contacted for the purpose of making an offer of

accommodation or for ACT Property Group to update an organisation's details when undertaking our annual review of the applicant register.

Applicant Details

We need to know who you are, so the more information the better. We need to distinguish between business and non-business applications. We also need to ensure that in buildings with multiple tenancies, that there is a compatible activity mix. So matters such as sharing (see later), hours of operation, use of space part time, are part of the application process.

Proposed use

We need to know what activities you intend undertaking in our accommodation. Please describe your activities in a way that will help us to understand what your accommodation needs are.

Do you carry out administrative or other function that would be best located in an office type environment? Do you provide on site services to your clients – and if so, are they provided 'one on one' or are they provided to groups? If to groups – how large are they, how often do they meet? What times do they meet? Etc.

Specific requirements

It is critical that we know what your specific needs are. Do you need external space? If so what for? Outdoor activities? Outdoor storage? Do you need external access to your space? How large does the opening need to be?

The more specific you are the easier it will be to match accommodation. However, it is also important that you are flexible and give us options, just in case some aspects of your request cannot be met at all. The size of your accommodation requirements in square metres is critical.

Public liability indemnity insurance

Anyone entering into a tenancy agreement with the Territory must have the required level of public liability indemnity insurance once accommodation is offered to you. **It is a legal requirement that when an offer is accepted you must complete the risk profile available at the following website: www.insuranceriskadvice.act.gov.au**

If you do not have internet access, please contact Kevin Wenman, Policy Officer on 6207 0381 Legal and Insurance Policy, ACT Department of Treasury for advice.

The following legislation may be referred to – Financial Management (Public Liability Insurance) determination 2005 and (Public Liability Insurance-Non Profit Entities) Determination 2005.

Preferred locations

Organisations will need to indicate their preference/s for accommodation. By only nominating one preference organisations decrease their potential for being allocated accommodation. Applicants are encouraged to nominate more than one preference for accommodation.

Rent, grants and funding

Rents vary according to activities and the quality of the accommodation. Once granted a tenancy, rents will be reviewed annually.

At the time an offer is made, you must demonstrate your capacity to pay the rent. If you receive a grant that includes a rent component, you must advise us accordingly. We need to know that you can pay your rent. Community organisations pay a concessional 'cost-

recovery' rental rate whereas commercial organisations will pay a rental rate close to market rent.

As Property Group's standard rental rates are based on cost recovery, we regret that no subsidy or reduction can be made on rental rates. If you cannot afford the rental rates as shown in this document, then you/your organisation must seek adequate finances to cover your rental commitments either from your members or externally from the private or government sectors.

Rental Rate Explained

Property Group applies a standard Cost Recovery Rental Rate for all community properties. These rates will apply to any offer of tenancy and are set out below:

The applicable rate for community groups in shared buildings for 2008-09 is \$117.81 per square metre per annum (inc. GST) – this price is inclusive of outgoings such as gas, electricity, water, building insurance, building management and maintenance, security and cleaning of common areas.

Please Note: The rates shown above are valid from 1 July 2008 until 30 June 2009. An annual 3% rate rise will occur as of 1 July 2009 for community tenants.

Notification of Receiving your Application

Applications will be assessed within four working days of receipt. Applicants will be notified of the decision within ten days after assessment.

Other matters

Submitting an application does not guarantee an offer of accommodation by ACT Property Group.

Organisations that do receive an offer, will normally be offered a lease term of five years with no option period. This means however you are not bound for five years and may leave earlier.

None of the buildings managed by ACT Property Group allow for residential accommodation due to the overarching statutory planning requirements and to the existing layout and intended community use of the buildings.