

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION POLICY



Purpose

Affordable Community Housing Limited (ACHL) complies with all jurisdictions of federal and state privacy legislation that sets standards for dealing with personal information. The legislation provides that information is considered confidential if it was obtained from an applicant, tenant or third party, could identify an individual or is personal in nature. The specific obligations that apply in each jurisdiction are outlined at www.privacy.gov.au.

All requests to ACHL for information will be handled in accordance with the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act (FOI). However, to assist clients, ACHL provides procedure that may allow clients to see their personal files without making a formal FOI application. This document outlines ACHL's policy in dealing with client requests to see personal information ACHL has on file.

Requesting access to

Client requests to see their file must be in writing and be lodged at an ACHL office. These requests are normally approved, but ACHL will remove sensitive material such as:

- Medical or psychiatric reports not supplied by the client
- Confidential material such as complaints from other clients
- Documents concerning the personal or business affairs of a third person.

Request is approved

Where a request is approved, ACHL will advise the client in writing and ask them to arrange a mutually convenient time to view the file. Clients must bring at least two forms of identification with them. They may also bring another person, if they have told ACHL beforehand in writing. The other person must also bring two forms of identification.

An ACHL staff member will be with the client at all times while they are viewing the file. A client can make notes, but cannot make photocopies, take photographs or alter the file in anyway, including adding or removing material from the file.

Request is declined

The client's request to see their file may be refused if:

- There is a legitimate need for confidentiality
- Another person's privacy may be involved
- The document is exempt
- The request would unreasonably divert ACHL staff away from their normal duties. ACHL will advise the client in writing if their request is declined, or if ACHL agrees to show the client only part of the file (in addition to removing sensitive material, as outlined above).

Changing information on a file

If a client believes the documents in a file are incorrect, out of date, incomplete or misleading they may ask to have the information changed. They must submit a written request, including

- The details of the requested change
- An explanation of why they want the information changed
- Any evidence to support the change.

ACHL will consider a request to change information on a file; however, ACHL has the right to determine if the requested changes are appropriate. The General Manager, Housing Services has the authority to determine if any changes will be made to the file.