

Access Housing and Housing Choices Australia merger - Frequently Asked Questions

Who are Housing Choices Australia?

Housing Choices Australia are one of Australia's largest Community Housing Providers, providing affordable homes for more than 8,500 people in owned and/or managed properties across five states – Victoria, South Australia, Tasmania, New South Wales and, now, Western Australia as a result of its merger with Access Housing. Please visit www.housingchoices.org.au for more information.

Who are Access Housing?

Access Housing are one of Western Australia's largest Community Housing Providers, with more than 1,800 homes owned and/or under management across the Perth metro, Peel and South West regions of WA. More than 3,000 people live in an Access Housing property. Please visit www.accesshousing.org.au for more information.

Why did Access Housing merge with Housing Choices Australia?

Access Housing merged with Housing Choices Australia to form a truly national Community Housing Provider that will be able to achieve more for people needing secure, sustainable and affordable homes than what either company could achieve on their own. The new national organisation will have a strong presence and capacity to help inform and shape government housing policy, both at national and state levels, as well as deliver a far broader and more innovative range of positive housing and community outcomes for some of Australia's most vulnerable people.

When did the merger take effect?

Wednesday 1 July 2020.

How will Access Housing fit into the Housing Choices Australia Group of Companies model?

Access Housing is wholly incorporated as a subsidiary entity of the Housing Choices Australia Group of Companies.

How big is the newly expanded Housing Choices Australia Group of Companies?

The newly expanded organisation is now responsible for managing nearly 7,000 social and affordable homes for more than 8,500 tenants and residents across Australia. This makes Housing Choices Australia the second largest Community Housing Provider in the country.

With Access Housing joining the Housing Choices Australia Group of Companies, the merged entity has assets valued in excess of \$900 million and annual revenue of nearly \$70 million. The Group has more than 220 staff across Australia.

Who will lead the newly expanded Housing Choices Australia Group of Companies?

The newly expanded Housing Choices Australia Group of Companies will be led by Housing Choices Australia Managing Director Michael Lennon. Neil Starkie, who joined Access Housing as Interim Chief Executive Officer in February this year, will continue to lead operations in Western Australia as Housing Choices Australia Executive General Manager (WA).

What were some of the recognised benefits of Access Housing and Housing Choices Australia merging?

- * economies of scale and access to wide-ranging expertise and experience, while retaining strong local reputations and connections, preserving local assets and investments and providing tailored tenant/resident programs;
- * provision of more housing and greater opportunities for current and future residents through enhanced business efficiencies and the benefits of economies of scale and shared knowledge;
- * operating with a ‘think national, act local’ approach where each State can continue to deliver the best possible services on the ground in their region, while applying and contributing to best practice at a national level;
- * greater capacity to improve services and deliver more housing to meet the ever-increasing need in our communities;
- * become an attractive partner for the private sector, other NFPs and government stakeholders in the pursuit of cohesive national responses to key policies such as NDIS, NAHA and Bond Aggregator etc.;
- * through our balance sheet, size and scale, we are able to access more favourable financial terms, enabling us to build more new and affordable homes.

What does the merger mean for Access Housing tenants?

Access Housing tenants will not be negatively affected in any way by the merger and it is very much business as usual for WA-based staff as they proudly continue to deliver high quality services to each of our tenants. Our staff are, as always, here to support and assist each of our highly valued tenants. The same applies for existing Housing Choices tenants in central and eastern Australia.