

Author name: Anonymous

Date of submission: Thursday, 11 May 2017

Submission: I want to point out the extreme difficulty in reporting earnings to FACS when living in public housing. I work intermittently, a couple of days one month, none the next, then maybe 8 days in the next month, etc. The only way I can report earnings is by completing a rent subsidy review, where I tell them what I have earnt. Then my rent gets adjusted as though I am earning that amount of money each week going forward (which Im not) and get overcharged rent for my income (which may only be dsp for that time period). Its cumbersome, inaccurate and difficult to manage. Why cant earnings be recorded each fortnight and rent adjusted accordingly just like Centrelink do. It discourages me from accepting casual work or looking for any other work. Given the casualisation of the workforce in Australia, I'd be very surprised if I was the only tenant in this predicament. Housing staff being hit and miss adds to the distress. Eg, I submitted a rent review of work done for previous 6 months in October 2016. It took a month to get the decision, then my future rent was dramatically increased but I had no ongoing work. In mid January given I had no work from October to January 2017, I submitted a new form stating as much. Despite contacting housing NSW Burwood and Strawberry Hills staff (the area I live in is continually batted back and forth between these two offices which doesnt help matters) by phone then in person at the outreach office in my area asking where my rent review was no action was taken. Finally in April 2017 I received a rent review and it was the same as October 2016. After much distress and difficulty in getting hold of a staff member, finally Elena from Strawberry Hills (I think? its hard to tell with all the movements) discovered that my form was never submitted for review in January when I handed it over. Having my rent go from approx \$100/wk to \$170+/wk was distressing and made life unmanageable.