

Policy: Public Internet and Public Access Computer Use Policy		
Policy number:	Date adopted: 8.11.22	
Approved by: Policy and Compliance Committee Endorsed by:		
Date developed/reviewed: November 2022	Reviewed by: Policy and Compliance Committee	Date of next review:

Policy Context:	
National Community Housing Standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standard 4.2.5 Keeping informed about social housing
Legislation or other requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Copyright Act 1968 Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 Online Safety Act 2021
Other standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Australian Human Rights Commission work on “A right to access the Internet”

1. Purpose and Objectives

The objective of Public Internet and Public Access Computer Use Policy is to:

- Ensure fair and equitable access to the Internet as an information resource
- Establish guidelines for acceptable use of the Internet within Homes North branches
- Ensure the safety and integrity of Homes North’s information technology network

2. Scope

This policy applies to use of the Internet from public access computers in all Homes North branches. Use of wireless Internet access on personal mobile devices within the branches is subject to the same principles of appropriate use. By using Homes North’s public internet and/or public access computer services, users agree to these terms and conditions.

3. Policy

3.1 Principles

Homes North Community Housing (Homes North) is committed to serving the information and recreation needs of its staff and clients. Homes North provides a welcoming environment, including free public access to the internet to support lawful

- Access to information and services
- Access to recreational material
- Avenues for community engagement and participation

3.2 Access

3.2.1 General

Access to the Internet is free of charge to those visiting any branch of Homes North.

Homes North does not have control over information available on the Internet and does not accept responsibility for accuracy of information or for any consequences that arise from use of that information.

As some Internet sources may cause offence to some people, users are asked to be sensitive to the values and beliefs of others when displaying information or images on computer screens that are located in public areas.

Homes North does not guarantee availability of the Internet or Internet sites at any time, nor is Homes North responsible for technical difficulties or loss of data resulting from delays or service interruptions.

All public access computers have filtering software in accordance with Homes North policy, which limits access to inappropriate or offensive materials.

However, Homes North cannot guarantee that the filtering software will block all offensive material to which users may gain access.

Nor can Homes North guarantee that the filtering software will not restrict access to sites that may have legitimate research or other value. Homes North staff, in collaboration with its IT service provider staff will endeavour to provide access to legitimate sites that are blocked. Homes North provides the public internet and public access computer use services on a “best effort” basis and does not guarantee upload or download speeds or continuity of services.

3.2.2 Children

Parents and guardians are responsible for their children's access to Homes North resources, including electronic information.

Children under the age of 16 years must have the consent of their parent, guardian, or relevant support service representative before using Homes North computers to access the Internet.

Parents and guardians are encouraged to work with their children in using the Internet. Homes North staff are available to assist with children's information and access needs; however, Homes North does not accept responsibility for monitoring their Internet access.

3.3 Inappropriate use

Users may not access the Homes North's Internet facilities to transmit materials and/or statements that are:

- Illegal, fraudulent, or part of any unlawful activity
- Slanderous, libellous, or defamatory
- Offensive, obscene, pornographic or in bad taste
- Abusive or threatening of violence
- Incitement to break the law
- Harassment based on age, sex, race, disability, or other protected status
- Anonymous or repeated messages designed to threaten, annoy or torment

3.4 Copyright

Users are responsible for complying with international and federal laws protecting copyrighted material.

Homes North has no liability or responsibility resulting from copyright infringement by users.

When printing or downloading material from the Internet, users should refer to and comply with any copying directives given by the author of the material.

3.5 Privacy

Homes North respects users' rights to privacy and does not actively monitor information or sites accessed by clients.



However, in compliance with legal requirements, use of Homes North systems is logged and stored for a short time and Homes North may be required to provide Internet logs to officers legally empowered to investigate use of the Internet where there are reasonable grounds for that officer to suspect illegal use.

3.6 Security

Security in the online environment cannot be guaranteed and Internet users are warned that all Internet transactions and communications are vulnerable to unauthorised use. Homes North does not recommend using public access computers for purchasing, banking, or other financial transactions.

Homes North cannot assume responsibility for the safety and security of any transactions carried out on the Internet, including loss of data, funds or identity theft that may result from use of the Internet in Homes North branches.

Users are advised to log out of services and should consider refraining from entering sensitive information, such as tax file numbers and banking details, while using Homes North facilities. If the entry of sensitive information is required, then users should proceed with caution.

3.7 Downloading

Downloading files and copying them to an external storage device is permitted, as long as executable software is not opened on the hard drive of public access computers. Note that files are not retained on public access computers.

3.8 Electronic communication and interactive networking

Users are permitted to access email, web-based games, chat, and social networking services, but must observe the Homes North's policy on inappropriate use of public access computers.

3.9 Wireless access

Wireless Internet access is available from all Homes North branches for use by anyone with an Internet-enabled mobile device. Homes North is not responsible for the security of communication over the wireless network.

Where Homes North staff, clients or visitors are using their own internet-enabled device, appropriate use of the device is governed by the principles of this policy.

3.10 Fees

Homes North provides free access to the Internet as part of its mission in meeting the information needs of the community.

3.11 Fair use

To ensure equal internet access for all Homes North staff, clients and visitors, Homes North operates a fair usage policy. Fair usage establishes an equitable balance in internet access across public internet and public access computer use services for all. Fair usage includes, but not limited to, being mindful of other community members who may want to use the public access computers, limiting time and bandwidth when using online streaming services and avoiding downloading large files on personal or public access devices.

Failing to adhere with the fair usage expectations may be considered to be an infringement of conditions of use.

3.12 Infringement of conditions of use

Users who do not comply with the Homes North’s conditions of use may have their Internet session terminated or be denied access to the service.

Documents related to this policy	
Related policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Digital and Social Communication Policy
Forms or other organisational documents	