

Tenant and Community Engagement

Related Policy: Centacare Housing Services Policy

Purpose & Objectives

Centacare Housing Services (CHS) acknowledges the importance of engaging with existing tenants as well as the broader community as a whole. Tenant and community engagement provides a base for good decision making, and strengthens CHS' integrity and reputation within the local region. It is a planned process for working with stakeholders, local government and members of the public to help contribute to and shape decisions that may impact their lives.

CHS views tenant and community engagement as an opportunity for continuous improvement, collaboration and joint decision making that will benefit all parties. CHS will encourage actions that build trust and credibility within the community.

To improve social and economic benefits for tenants, establish and maintain sustainable tenancies, and to provide a greater understanding of the role that Community Housing can provide in achieving these and many other results, it is the objective of CHS to:

- Participate actively in the local communities in which it operates
- Promote and develop affordable housing
- Promote the interests of its tenants in the broader community
- Work with other organisations to assist tenants and applicants to access and achieve the best possible housing outcomes.
- Ensure CHS Directors and staff maintain their currency of community housing industry knowledge

Procedure

Tenant Engagement

The Centacare Housing Manager in collaboration with relevant staff including the Rental Officer, Chief Executive Officer and/or Manager Quality & Risk is responsible for the collection, analysis and reporting on Tenant Engagement.

CHS strategies for engaging with current and prospective tenants are:

1. Biennial Tenant Survey (currently modelled on the Housing Registrar of Victoria "Getting Tenants Involved Good Practice Guide" suggested format)
 - Tenant Survey posted to all existing tenants in July 2017 and every two year period thereafter as per the Housing Registrar's Performance Standard 1.1.1
 - Reply paid envelopes are included to increase return rate by tenants
 - Survey results are received by the CHS Rental Officer, collated and reported in a structured format to the Centacare Housing Manager
 - Relevant survey results are entered into CHiMES by the 31st August of the same year to ensure compliance with Key Performance Measures.
2. Feedback, Suggestions and Complaints form on the Centacare website (with instructions in the CHS Client Guide) <https://www.centacareballarat.org.au/contactlocation/feedback/>
 - Refer 6.0 Feedback and Complaints Procedure
3. Initial discussions with prospective tenants via the application process for community housing
4. Ongoing consultation between existing tenants, the CHS Rental Officer and Housing Manager
5. Informal discussion during routine inspections and/or maintenance requests / repair appointments
6. Suggestion box at the Mitchell Park Apartments Community Hub

7. Seeking input from potential tenants when undertaking any property developments
 - For Points 3-7 the Rental Officer, Centacare Housing Manager and/or in consultation with maintenance contractors document all feedback according to the *6.0 Feedback & Complaints Procedure*

Community Engagement

The Centacare Housing Manager in collaboration with relevant staff including the Chief Executive Officer and/or the Marketing & Communications Officer is responsible for the coordination of Community Engagement activities.

CHS strategies for community engagement include:

- Communicating with local community service providers and other relevant organisations to promote the benefits of community housing, for example attendance at Group Conferencing Sessions at Berry Street.
- Collaborating with local community service providers and relevant organisations to improve outcomes for tenants, for example referring CHS Tenants to Adult Mental Health services, Drug & Alcohol Rehabilitation, as well as Centacare services including (but not limited to) Victims Assistance Program and Family Relationships Centre.
- Promoting the benefits of CHS services, and the positive experiences of CHS tenants in the local media including TV, Radio, social media and other relevant formats.
 - All media representation is to be undertaken in consultation with the Marketing & Communications Officer and in accordance with the relevant Branding and Media Procedures