

# Neighbours Procedure

## Related Policy: Centacare Housing Services Policy

### Purpose & Objectives

This procedure outlines the rights and responsibilities of both Centacare Housing Services (CHS) and CHS tenants; to ensure that tenants have peaceful enjoyment of their property, live in harmony and respect the privacy and comfort of their neighbours.

### Procedure

#### CHS Responsibilities

CHS will communicate openly and honestly with neighbours and encourage our neighbours to do the same. CHS will respond promptly to any disputes or complaints from neighbours.

CHS commits to building respectful, positive and constructive relationships with neighbours.

CHS will contribute to an improved understanding of the issues that affect tenants.

CHS commit to an inclusive and responsive manner including problem solving and negotiation with the tenant.

CHS will provide tenants with an opportunity to change and address any anti-social behaviour.

CHS will not tolerate any form of harassment, abuse or discrimination towards any resident, visitor or household occupant.

CHS will follow up appropriately with any serious or persistent breaches of the tenants Residential Tenancies Agreement; including action through the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT).

#### Tenant Responsibilities

CHS tenants are required to agree to, follow and display the values in the Department of Health and Human Services *Neighbourly Behaviour Statement (Appendix 1.10-1)*. This includes:

- Respecting each other's rights and privacy
- Taking responsibility for their actions and those of their family and visitors
- Respect communal areas and others right to appropriately use this spaces
- Are considerate and tolerant of others

CHS tenants must not interfere with their neighbours rights. Examples of un-neighbourly behaviour includes:

- Vandalism and destructive behaviour
- Aggressive or violent behaviour
- Excessive noise or disruptive behaviour
- Breaches of neighbours privacy

CHS tenants agree to treat CHS staff, other tenants, approved household occupants, visitors and contractors (tradespeople) with respect and courtesy at all times.

CHS tenants have a responsibility to comply with the provisions in the Residential Tenancies Act (1997) and the tenancy agreement that they have signed.

CHS tenants have the right to submit a complaint or constructive feedback in relation to their tenancy.

CHS tenants have the right to contact Victoria Police in any circumstance where a tenant, family member, carer or visitor feels at risk of violence, abuse or harassment from a neighbor tenant or household visitor.

### Related Procedures, Practice Guidelines and Forms

1.06 Feedback and Complaints Procedure

Neighbourly Behaviour Statement

### Document History

14.05.20189 Created at request of Housing Registrar to meet requirements of 'Agency Publication of Online Policies'.

#### Appendix 1.10-1

## Neighbourly Behaviour Statement

Most public housing tenants are good neighbours, but the behaviour of some tenants can make life in public housing communities less enjoyable and unsafe for others.

In March 2014, the Victorian Government released its plan for social housing. New Directions for Social Housing: A Framework for a Strong and Sustainable Future.

As part of the framework, the Victorian Government announced that a neighbourly behaviour statement would be introduced for all public housing tenants.

This statement outlines the behaviour expected of public housing tenants. Tenants who do not meet their obligations and responsibilities risk losing their public housing tenancy.

**New tenants must sign this statement prior to the Director of Housing entering into a tenancy agreement with them.**

### Neighbourly behaviour statement

Before you proceed, save this document into your hard drive or desktop.

Most public housing tenants are good neighbours, but the behaviour of some tenants can make life in public housing communities less enjoyable and unsafe for others.

This Neighbourly Behaviour Statement issued by the Department of Health and Human Services outlines the behaviour expected of public housing tenants. Tenants who do not meet their obligations and responsibilities risk losing their public housing tenancy.

New tenants must sign this statement prior to the Director of Housing entering into a tenancy agreement with them.

#### Being a good neighbour

Local communities work best when neighbours:

- respect others' rights and privacy
- take responsibility for their actions and those of their family and visitors
- respect communal areas and others' right to appropriately use these spaces
- act considerate and tolerant of others.

#### Un-neighbourly behaviour

Tenants who interfere with neighbours' rights are not good neighbours. Examples of un-neighbourly behaviour include:

- vandalism and destruction of others' property or common areas
- aggressive or violent behaviour
- illegal activity
- excessive noise or disruptive behaviour
- failing to keep the rented property in a reasonably clean condition including the outdoor areas.

Keeping a property reasonably clean could include sun things as maintaining the garden, not undertaking repairs on automobiles, motorcycles and bicycles in front yards or on the street, properly disposing of rubbish, not storing excessive amounts of furniture, household goods or papers which could create a fire risk.

#### Your tenancy agreement with us

Your tenancy agreement sets out your rights and responsibilities. Information on your rights and responsibilities is also available on the department's [website](http://www.housing.vic.gov.au) <[www.housing.vic.gov.au](http://www.housing.vic.gov.au)>

#### Complying with your tenancy agreement

You are expected to:

- pay your rent and related charges on time
- always provide accurate information about who is living in your property



- not sub-let any part of your property
- keep your rented property reasonably clean both inside and outside
- avoid damaging your property or common areas
- not interfere with your neighbours' rights to peace, comfort and privacy.

#### Consequences of breaching your tenancy agreement

The Department of Health and Human Services (the department) will issue a breach of duty notice if you, a household member or visitor to the house:

- cause a nuisance or interfere with the reasonable peace, comfort or privacy of your neighbours
- damage your rented property or common areas
- fail to keep your rented property in reasonably clean condition
- install any fixtures or make any alteration, renovation or addition to the rented property without the department's consent.

Under the department's 'three strikes policy', if you breach the same duty provision three times within a 12-month period, or breach a compliance order, a decision may be taken to terminate your tenancy in accordance with the Residential Tenancies Act 1987.

The department will seek compensation for any damage to a rented property, and seek to end a tenancy where necessary to ensure the safety and wellbeing of others.

The department will take a zero tolerance approach to:

- malicious damage to a property
- endangerment of the safety of other occupants
- use of a property for illegal purposes or drug-related conduct.

If you engage in any of these activities, you will risk being evicted under the Residential Tenancies Act 1987.

I/We acknowledge the behaviour expected of me/us while living in public housing:

Full name of Tenant 1	Signature	Date
Full name of Tenant 2	Signature	Date
Full name of Tenant 3	Signature	Date
Full name of Tenant 4	Signature	Date

#### Information privacy

The Department of Health and Human Services is committed to protecting the privacy of your personal information. Personal information is information which directly or indirectly identifies a person. We need to collect and handle your personal information in order to be able to process your application. All the information you give us will be handled in accordance with the Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 and the Health Records Act 2001.

If you are using other department programs we may share some of your information with them to help us coordinate better services for you. We will not use your information for any other purpose other than those listed on these forms, to provide services to you, or without your consent, unless the law requires us to do so.

You can access your information through the Freedom of Information Act 1982 or through the Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014. For information about Freedom of Information requests, call 1300 850 172 or apply online at [www.foi.vic.gov.au](http://www.foi.vic.gov.au). For further information about privacy, call: 1300 884 706 or email: [privacy@dhhs.vic.gov.au](mailto:privacy@dhhs.vic.gov.au)

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