



**Home**  
*in* **Place**

NEW SOUTH WALES SOCIAL AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

**TENANT  
HANDBOOK**

MARCH 2023



**Welcome to  
Home in Place.**

**Welcome to  
your new home.**

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# CONTACTING HOME IN PLACE

Call Home in Place on **1300 333 733** during office hours for all tenancy and maintenance enquiries and after hours for emergency maintenance issues.

Email addresses for the branch offices are listed below.

## OFFICE LOCATIONS

### **Broken Hill | Wilyakali Country**

32 Sulphide Street, Broken Hill NSW 2880  
PO Box 966, Broken Hill NSW 2880  
[brokenhill@homeinplace.org](mailto:brokenhill@homeinplace.org)

### **Central Coast | Darkinjung Country**

Block H/2 Reliance Drive, Tuggerah Business Park NSW 2259  
PO Box 3217, Tuggerah NSW 2259  
[centralcoast@homeinplace.org](mailto:centralcoast@homeinplace.org)

### **Cessnock | Wonnarua Country**

1c Cooper Street, Cessnock NSW 2325  
PO Box 597, East Maitland NSW 2323  
[maitland@homeinplace.org](mailto:maitland@homeinplace.org)

### **Dubbo & Regional NSW | Wiradjuri Country**

32 Victoria Street, Dubbo NSW 2830  
PO Box 2939, Dubbo NSW 2830  
[dubbo@homeinplace.org](mailto:dubbo@homeinplace.org)

### **East Maitland | Wonnarua Country**

Shop 3A/11 Molly Morgan Drive, Greenhills NSW 2323  
PO Box 2218, Greenhills NSW 2323  
[maitland@homeinplace.org](mailto:maitland@homeinplace.org)

### **Newcastle | Awabakal Country**

Suite 1/44 Beaumont Street, Hamilton NSW 2303  
PO Box 1079, Hamilton NSW 2303  
newcastle@homeinplace.org

### **Sydney | Eora Country**

Suite 3A, 12 O'Sullivan Road, Leumeah NSW 2560  
sydney@homeinplace.org

### **Taree | Biripi Country**

1/57 Albert Street, Taree NSW 2430  
PO Box 99, Taree NSW 2430  
taree@homeinplace.org

### **Upper Hunter / Muswellbrook | Wonnarua Country**

1/56-58 Brook Street, Muswellbrook NSW 2333  
PO Box 71, Muswellbrook NSW 2333  
muswellbrook@homeinplace.org

## **OFFICE ACCESSIBILITY**

Offices used by Home in Place will be well identified by signage, will be accessible and, where possible, close to public transport. If at any time customers are unable to access the premises, alternative arrangements may be made to ensure access.

## **OPERATING HOURS**

### **Tenancy Teams**

Mon, Wed, Thurs and Fri 9am – 5pm  
Tuesday 9am – 3pm

### **Housing Access Teams**

Monday to Friday 9am – 5pm

# COMMUNICATIONS

Home in Place will ensure all correspondence including letters, newsletters etc. is written in plain English. Home in Place will make arrangements for information in an alternate language and may use professional interpreter services where appropriate.

Home in Place policies are available on our website or hard copies can be provided on request.

If you have a meeting with Home in Place staff you are welcome to bring a family member, friend, or advocate to the meeting.

## TENANT NEWSLETTERS

The Home in Place tenant newsletter – MYPLACE – includes information on events and activities that you might like to be involved in.

If you would like particular information or would like to contribute to MYPLACE please call us.

Hard copies of MYPLACE are available at branch offices or from your local Community Participation Officer. They are also uploaded to the Home in Place website at [www.homeinplace.org/tenant-newsletters](http://www.homeinplace.org/tenant-newsletters)

## CONNECT WITH US

[WWW.HOMEINPLACE.ORG](http://WWW.HOMEINPLACE.ORG)



FACEBOOK

[facebook.com/homeinplace](https://facebook.com/homeinplace)

INSTAGRAM

[@home\\_in\\_place](https://instagram.com/home_in_place)

YOUTUBE

[@HomeinPlace](https://youtube.com/HomeinPlace)

TWITTER

[@homeinplace](https://twitter.com/homeinplace)





## COMMUNITY HUBS

Home in Place operates two community hubs that provide a base for local support agencies to offer outreach services as well as providing local residents with a place to meet, socialise and volunteer.

### THE MEETING PLACE

1 Northumberland Way Tumby Umbi NSW

[facebook.com/TheMeetingPlaceCentralCoast](https://www.facebook.com/TheMeetingPlaceCentralCoast)

### 123 COMMUNITY HUB

23 Creedon Street Broken Hill NSW

[facebook.com/123Creedonsthub](https://www.facebook.com/123Creedonsthub)

# About us

Home in Place is one of Australia's largest non-government social housing providers with nearly 40 years' experience in providing secure and affordable housing.

Home in Place provides tenancy and property management for over 7800 social, affordable and disability housing properties in New South Wales, Queensland, Victoria and New Zealand. The Home in Place Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) team manages 1500 places for people with high support needs.

Home in Place is an enterprising and socially committed not-for-profit organisation that undertakes all aspects of tenancy and property management. We have extensive experience in providing tailored tenancy services and tenant development initiatives.

Home in Place is registered under the National Community Housing Regulatory System as a Tier 1 provider.

Home in Place is a member of the SDA Alliance and a registered SDA provider with the National Disability Insurance Scheme for NSW, Queensland, Victoria, ACT, Northern Territory, South Australia, and Tasmania.

## OUR VISION

That all people have appropriate and affordable shelter and are engaged in sustainable communities.

## OUR MISSION

As a leader, our mission is providing homes, empowering people, connecting communities and influencing the future.

Home in Place wishes to recognise the traditional custodians of the lands and waterways where we work and live.

We celebrate the First Peoples' unique cultural and spiritual relationship to Country and acknowledge the significance of Aboriginal cultures in Australia.

## OUR VALUES

### ASPIRATION

At Home in Place we dare to think big and work to achieve our shared mission.

### ACCOUNTABILITY

At Home in Place each of us is responsible for our words, our actions and our results and collectively focus on our values, mission and plan.

### INNOVATION

At Home in Place we achieve our mission by challenging the status quo and collectively always working for better.

### SUSTAINABILITY

At Home in Place we contribute to sustainable operational & environmental solutions through responsible actions, respect, advocacy and a focus on the long term.

### LEADERSHIP

At Home in Place we are all determined to achieve our mission and encourage and support results that are motivated by decisions and behaviours that reflect our values.

### COLLABORATION

At Home in Place our best results are achieved when we work together with honesty and respect.

# SECTION 1

# Becoming a tenant

## WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM HOME IN PLACE

- To be treated fairly and without discrimination
- To be treated with respect and dignity
- To have access to safe, appropriate, and affordable housing
- To have information about you held securely, treated sensitively and confidentially
- To be fully informed of your rights and responsibilities
- To be informed of any changes about your tenancy
- To receive information about the process for making a complaint, lodging an appeal, or providing a compliment
- To lodge a complaint or appeal without fear of losing your home

## WHAT HOME IN PLACE EXPECTS FROM YOU

- Tell Home in Place when there is a change in your life that will impact on your tenancy
- Treat Home in Place staff and contractors with respect
- Take responsibility for the results of any decision that you make
- Respect the rights of other tenants
- Ensure your visitors respect the rights of other tenants
- Abide by the terms of the tenancy agreement
- Let Home in Place know if you are going to be away from the property for more than 4 weeks
- Allow staff and contractors reasonable access to your home when inspections or maintenance are scheduled

## PRIVACY POLICY STATEMENT

Home in Place will collect, manage, store, use and disclose personal information about individuals where it is reasonably necessary for one or more of our functions or activities and to meet the requirements of Commonwealth and State government contractual agreements.

When we collect, manage, store, use and disclose personal information Home in Place complies with the Privacy Act (1988) and relevant state privacy laws.

Our policy outlines Home in Place's approach to the collection, management, storage, disclosure, and reporting of personal information, in accordance with the Australian Privacy Principles. It explains when personal data will be collected, the type of personal data that will be collected, how personal data will be used, stored, and disclosed and how the quality and security of the personal data will be maintained. In addition, it provides information on how individuals can access their personal information, how to opt out of marketing or promotions and how to make a privacy complaint if an individual feels there has been a breach of their privacy relating to Home in Place's use and disclosure of their personal information.

Home in Place is committed to managing personal information in an open and transparent way.

Our Privacy Policy is publicly available from the Home in Place website at [www.homeinplace.org](http://www.homeinplace.org) or alternatively an electronic or paper copy will be provided free of charge on request to [governance@homeinplace.org](mailto:governance@homeinplace.org) or by calling us on 1300 333 733.

## RESIDENTIAL TENANCY AGREEMENT

When you accepted an offer of housing with Home in Place you will have signed a tenancy agreement. The tenancy agreement is the legal contract between you as the tenant and Home in Place as the landlord/property manager. The tenancy agreement sets out the rights and responsibilities of the tenant and the landlord. You have been provided with a copy of the signed tenancy agreement and Home in Place will retain a copy for our records.

The tenancy agreement contains a lot of information including:

- Your name and the address of the property
- Home in Place's name and contact details
- The name of other people who will live in the property
- The current market rent for the property
- The terms of the agreement

## PROPERTY CONDITION REPORT

A property condition report records the general condition of the property room by room, including fixtures and fittings.

You have been provided with two copies of the completed property condition report.

**You need to complete your section on both copies, keep one copy for your records and return one copy to Home in Place within 7 days.**

This is an important document and will be used at the end of the tenancy to review the change in condition of the property throughout the duration of the tenancy.

# Social Housing

Social housing is a form of heavily subsidised rental housing delivered by either state housing authorities, or by not-for-profit organisations like Home in Place.

Social housing that is provided by government agencies is often referred to as **public housing**, whereas social housing delivered by not-for-profit providers is described as **community housing**.

Social housing rents are capped at market rent but calculated on 25%-30% of the assessable household income, plus 100% Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA) they are eligible to receive.

Applicants for social housing must meet strict eligibility criteria including income and asset limits.

At Home in Place, we believe community housing is about much more than providing accommodation. It's also about building communities which is why we're dedicated to making sure our tenants have a voice and are actively engaged in their communities.

In addition to professional tenancy management, Home in Place continues to be an industry leader in the provision of additional wraparound services that help sustain tenancies and delivering tenant engagement initiatives that help foster greater economic and social participation.



## SOCIAL HOUSING FAQS

### ***How is my social housing rent calculated?***

Social housing tenants can be charged between 25% and 30% of their gross assessable income in rent, plus 100% of the household's maximum entitlement to Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA).

### ***What is CRA?***

CRA is a regular extra payment from Centrelink which you may be eligible for if you already receive certain payments and pay rent. The amount you receive is dependent on the amount of rent you pay.

### ***How do I apply for CRA?***

You don't need to apply for CRA as Centrelink will assess your eligibility when you claim a payment from them. Centrelink will ask you to complete a Rent Certificate in order to calculate how much CRA you can claim.

### ***What types of community housing are available?***

There are a number of types of community housing however the two main types of housing provided are:

- General social housing in the form of long term housing services in addition to specialist support services from community organisations
- Specialist homelessness services focusing on short term crisis accommodation or transitional housing

### ***Can you live in social housing and own property?***

You will not generally be eligible for social housing if you own property. There are however a few, very specific exceptions to this rule.

Details can be found on the Department of Communities and Justice website [www.facs.nsw.gov.au](http://www.facs.nsw.gov.au)

THERE ARE MORE FAQS ON THE HOME IN PLACE WEBSITE AT

[WWW.HOMEINPLACE.ORG/FAQS](http://WWW.HOMEINPLACE.ORG/FAQS)



# Affordable Housing

Affordable housing is an alternative for very low to moderate income households experiencing housing stress in the private rental market. It is offered at a rebated rent.

Home in Place manages affordable housing acquired or managed through funding assistance from the NSW Department of Communities and Justice and in some cases in conjunction with some local government authorities. These properties have been purchased specifically for affordable housing and are generally let at 80% or less of current private market rents.

To qualify, household income must be within the limits set by the Affordable Guidelines published by the Department of Communities and Justice.

For affordable properties acquired under the Building Better Cities Program the income limits are set by Home in Place. They are available to key workers in the Newcastle area on low to moderate incomes and a percentage of household income is required to be employment related.

Home in Place manages Affordable Housing which has been acquired under the National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS) on behalf of private investors and developers.

**Affordable housing encourages tenants to pursue real property ownership while paying reasonable rent in their present circumstances.**

## AFFORDABLE HOUSING FAQs

### *Who owns and manages Affordable Housing?*

Affordable rental housing may be owned by private investors, local governments, charitable organisations or community housing providers. It is usually managed by not for profit community housing providers such as Home in Place.

### *How is my Affordable Housing rent calculated?*

Affordable Housing rents are set on a percentage of the market rent – usually between 75%-80%. The amount you pay will depend on the market rent for a similar property in the same area.

### *Am I eligible for Affordable Housing?*

To be eligible for Affordable Housing you must:

- Be an Australian citizen, a permanent resident or have a valid visa to reside in Australia.
- Have a connection with the area that you are applying for housing in. This could be through work, education, family or long term residency.
- Be a low-moderate income earner.
- Have no outstanding debt to Home in Place, Housing NSW, or any other Community Housing provider.
- Be earning below the income level relevant to your household type.

More info at [www.homeinplace.org/faqs](http://www.homeinplace.org/faqs)

### *How do I apply for affordable housing?*

All Home in Place Affordable Housing vacancies are advertised on [realestate.com](http://realestate.com) under the relevant locations.

Links can be found at [www.homeinplace.org/affordable-housing](http://www.homeinplace.org/affordable-housing)

Prospective applicants are encouraged to register their interest in available dwellings via the online enquiry form within each listing.

THERE ARE MORE FAQs ON THE HOME IN PLACE WEBSITE AT

[WWW.HOMEINPLACE.ORG/FAQS](http://WWW.HOMEINPLACE.ORG/FAQS)



## **SECTION 2**

# **Your tenancy with Home in Place**

## HOW YOUR RENT IS CALCULATED

**In social housing, the amount of rent you pay is based on a percentage of your assessable household income. If eligible, this also includes Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA).**

CRA is a non-taxable income supplement paid through Centrelink™ to individuals and families who are renting. It aims to address basic living costs by reducing the proportion of household income that is spent on housing. The amount of rent you pay will not exceed the market rent.

More information on CRA eligibility rules can be obtained from the Centrelink™ website [www.servicesaustralia.gov.au](http://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au).

Rent paid in affordable properties will depend on the type of program.

## RENT REVIEWS

Home in Place will undertake a general income assessment and rent review approximately every six (6) months for all Social Housing tenants and annually for Affordable Housing tenants.

Tenants are notified of the upcoming rent review and asked to provide updated household income details. If this information is not provided, you may be charged market rent until the information is received.

Home in Place will also review its market rents annually to make sure that the rate at which market rent is assessed is in line with the published Government Median Rent amounts. If we have to adjust the market rent tenants will be given at least sixty (60) days' notice in writing.

## PAYING YOUR RENT

Before you signed the tenancy agreement you would have been asked to supply income details for each member of the household to enable Home in Place to calculate your entitlements to subsidised rent.

Home in Place asks that tenants to pay rent up to two weeks in advance.

It is important rent is kept in advance at all times. You can pay your rent weekly or fortnightly, it should be paid at the same time each week or fortnight in accordance with your tenancy agreement.

## RENT ARREARS

A tenant who does not pay rent will be in breach of the Residential Tenancy Agreement.

If rent falls into arrears at any time, Home in Place will work with tenants to set up a payment plan to catch up. Hopefully, this should only be a one-off situation. Falling behind in rent can put your tenancy at risk. If a tenant is more than 14 days in arrears, Home in Place may issue a notice of termination.

## NON-RENT CHARGES

### WATER USAGE

Water usage charges are identified separately on tenant statements and will need to be paid separately to rent. Home in Place tenants will be charged water usage in accordance with the relevant legislation.

### PROPERTY DAMAGE

Tenants must not cause or allow any damage to the property, either intentionally or through lack of care or attention, including by other occupants or invited guests. If the tenant causes or allows damage to the property, Home in Place may ask the tenant to arrange to repair the damage or to pay for costs of the repairs if they are undertaken by Home in Place.

## CHANGE OF CIRCUMSTANCE / CONTACT DETAILS

Home in Place needs to know of any changes that may occur in a tenant's household. These include changes in income or the number of people living at the property. Visitors can stay overnight but if you want someone to move in permanently, you must apply for approval by completing an application for an additional occupant and submitting this to Home in Place for consideration.

**Tenants must advise Home in Place within 21 days of any change in circumstances.**

Failure to provide this information may result in the loss of the rental rebate and market rent being charged.

It is also important that tenants notify Home in Place if they change their contact details.

## ANTISOCIAL/DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOUR

Home in Place takes all complaints about antisocial or disruptive behaviour seriously and will investigate each incident in a fair and reasonable manner. Home in Place can only act when satisfied that the antisocial/disruptive behaviour has occurred, and the complaint relates to a tenancy issue.

Home in Place can only investigate allegations if the alleged behaviour may be a breach of a tenancy agreement.



**Home in Place cannot investigate alleged illegal behaviour and this type of alleged activity must be reported to the police.**

Other types of disruptive behaviour can be reported to other relevant authorities.

Behaviour that can be reported to the local council includes:

- Noise complaints
- Excessive dog barking
- Dangerous or roaming animals
- Cars blocking footpaths

Home in Place encourages tenants to sort out problems in an informal manner, for example, talking with the person first as this may solve the problem quickly. Tenants can also be referred to mediation services for assistance.

**Where the problem involves harassment, verbal/physical abuse or intimidation tenants are encouraged to contact the police before contacting Home in Place.**

This type of alleged behaviour, if proven, may be a breach of a person's tenancy agreement and Home in Place may take action in the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NCAT).

**More on this topic on Page 41 in Section 5**



## ENDING THE TENANCY

If a tenant wants to end a residential tenancy agreement, they are required to provide a termination notice giving the following notice periods in accordance with the Residential Tenancies Act 2010:

- Fourteen (14) days' notice before the end of the fixed term to end the agreement on or after the end of a fixed term;
- Twenty one (21) days' notice to end a continuing agreement;
- Fourteen (14) days' notice if the landlord has breached the residential tenancy agreement;
- Fourteen (14) days' notice to end a fixed term agreement without compensation if the tenant:
  - ▷ Has accepted an offer of social housing;
  - ▷ Has accepted a place in an aged care facility, or
  - ▷ Has been notified by the landlord of their intention to sell the property and was not notified of this before entering into the residential tenancy agreement, or
  - ▷ A co-tenant, occupant, former co-tenant or occupant is prohibited by a final apprehended violence order from having access to the property.

Home in Place may, at its discretion, agree to periods of notice.

Always ensure all belongings and rubbish are removed from the property and the property is left in a clean and tidy condition.

**The charges associated with storage, removal and disposal may be passed onto you to pay.**

The property should be returned to Home in Place in the same or similar condition it was in at the commencement of the tenancy, taking into account fair wear and tear. Tenants should refer to the Property Condition Report for any repairs/damage they may be responsible for.



For more information, please refer to POL-025-38 Ending Tenancy Policy on the Home in Place website at [www.homeinplace.org/publications-and-policies](http://www.homeinplace.org/publications-and-policies)





# SECTION 3

# Property Care and Maintenance

## PROPERTY INSPECTIONS

Home in Place will inspect your property one to four times per year. You will be notified in writing of the date of the inspection. An inspection report will be kept on your file following each visit. If Home in Place is concerned about property care or damage a follow up inspection may be arranged.

## PROPERTY CARE HINTS

A few hints to make sure the property is well looked after:

- Regularly clean the inside of the property
- Keep the property, including any yards or gardens, free of rubbish
- Sweep concrete paths around the property on a regular basis
- Regularly remove any mould from walls and tiled areas

## COMMON AREAS

Tenants are requested to assist in keeping common areas tidy and must not store items in common areas. Items stored in common areas may be removed without notice as they pose a risk to the safety of all tenants and visitors.

## GARDEN CARE

If you live in a house with a yard it is your responsibility to maintain the outdoor areas of the property. Tenants are required to keep plants and lawns watered, mow the lawn regularly, and remove weeds and debris as required. Tenants must also to comply with any water restrictions.

During periods of absence from the property, tenants are asked to make arrangements to have the garden watered and maintained.

Trees must not be removed from properties without the written approval of Home in Place. Excessively tall trees can become dangerous and Home in Place may arrange to have them lopped.

Home in Place is responsible for the upkeep of common grounds/areas attached to units. If you live in a unit complex that has an enclosed or fenced off garden or courtyard, it is your responsibility to maintain the enclosed area.

## SMOKE ALARMS

Working smoke alarms are the best way to alert people to fires in their home. Home in Place properties are fitted with hardwired smoke alarms. Home in Place will:

- Ensure that least one smoke alarm is installed in a hallway, outside a bedroom or another suitable location
- Check smoke alarms every year to ensure they are working
- Install or replace batteries every year (or lithium batteries, in the period specified by the smoke alarm manufacturer)
- Replace smoke alarms within 10 years of manufacture, or earlier if specified by the smoke alarm manufacturer
- Give the tenant at least two business days' notice to inspect or assess the need for a smoke alarm repair or replacement
- Give the tenant at least one hour notice to carry out a repair or replacement of a smoke alarm
- Use a licenced electrician to repair or replace a hard-wired smoke alarm.

**All tenants must notify Home in Place if a smoke alarm is not working. This includes when a battery needs to be changed.**

**Smoke alarms are installed for tenant safety. Do not remove the battery, or interfere with the smoke alarm for any reason.**

## CAR PARKING

If you are provided with a designated parking space, this means the space is for your use only. In some unit complexes it is not possible to allocate designated parking, this means any tenant can park in any space. Some complexes may have visitor parking or parking for emergency vehicles, these spaces must not be used by tenants.

Vehicles of any description must not be parked on common areas, for example, lawns.

## PETS

In some cases, tenants can have a pet live with them in their home. There are conditions about the type of animal and the type of housing the tenant is living in.

Tenants must seek permission to have any type of pet at a property by completing a Pet Request form.

## RUBBISH

Rubbish must be placed in the correct rubbish and recycling bins as approved by the local council. Generally, the council will not collect rubbish placed in boxes or other containers. If the bin goes missing during the tenancy, please contact Home in Place.

Each local council provides bins for the homes in their zone. The bin lid colours indicate what rubbish or recycling you put in that bin. Councils can use different systems for their rubbish and recycling bins.

**Please check your local council website for their information about what days the bin collections are in your street.**

In general, the three main colours are:

### RED BIN LID

Non-recyclable household waste such as food, plastic bags and wrappers, foam, nappies and crockery and other non-recyclable household rubbish.

### GREEN BIN LID

Garden cuttings, leaves, cut flowers, twigs, and branches. Put these in loosely, no plastic bags please.

### YELLOW BIN LID

Plastic bottles, tubs and containers, glass bottles and jars, paper and cardboard, tin and steel cans, milk and juice cartons. No plastic bags please.

**Most local councils will offer either bulk waste collection services or tip vouchers. Please contact your local council directly for enquiries about bulk waste services.**



## ALTERATIONS TO THE PROPERTY

You will need approval before any alterations are made to the property, however, Home in Place cannot unreasonably decline a request, for example, picture hooks. It's always best to get approval first.

You will be responsible for paying for the cost of any alteration or installing any fixture.

At the end of your tenancy, you will be responsible for leaving the property in the same condition as at the start of your tenancy, except fair wear and tear. This includes making sure any alterations, additions or renovations are removed, and fixing any damage caused to the property.

You can choose whether to remove any 'fixtures' you have installed, provided you repair or compensate Home in Place for any damage caused by removing the fixture. You cannot remove any fixtures Home in Place has paid for.



**The Alterations to Properties Policy POL-025-42 sets out what alterations are, how tenants can apply for permission to make alterations and how Home in Place manages the requests. It can be downloaded from the Home in Place website at [www.homeinplace.org/publications-and-policies](http://www.homeinplace.org/publications-and-policies)**

## GENERAL MAINTENANCE

Home in Place is responsible for carrying out maintenance and repairs to your property.

Tenants are expected to keep their properties and grounds in a clean and tidy condition and are required to report damage or any items that need repair as soon as possible.

### **Maintenance issues can be reported by calling Home in Place on 1300 333 733.**

To ensure a timely response, when tenants report the incident/issue they are requested to provide staff with the following information:

- Tenant name
- Property address and current telephone numbers
- A description of the problem
- Whether the problem has been previously reported
- Times that tradespeople can gain access

Tenants are to allow reasonable access to the property for Home in Place staff or contracted tradespeople, during normal business hours, 8am – 5pm, in order to assess the condition of the property.

This same access also needs to be provided to contractors to enable them to carry out identified maintenance.

Under normal circumstances, Home in Place staff and contractors will not enter the property unless accompanied by the tenant. Where this is not possible, tenants are asked to make alternative arrangements for access to the property.

## URGENT MAINTENANCE



Problems such as gas leaks, sewer line blockages, major storm or fire damage should be reported for immediate attention.

After hours emergency maintenance should be reported to 1300 333 733.

TYPES OF REPAIRS	ACTION TIME FRAME
<p><b>URGENT REPAIR</b></p> <p><i>Example:</i>                      Power outage to whole property                      Burst water pipe or sewer in house                      Cannot lock the house</p>	<p><b>4 hours</b></p>
<p><b>PRIORITY REPAIR</b></p> <p><i>Example:</i>                      Toilets not flushing                      Minor leaks                      Grab rails loose or falling off                      Lighting issues</p>	<p><b>From 1 to 7 days</b></p>
<p><b>RESPONSIVE REPAIR</b></p> <p><i>Example:</i>                      Broken clothes line                      Blocked gutters                      Exhaust fans</p>	<p><b>21 days</b></p>



## SOME MAINTENANCE ITEMS ARE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF TENANTS

Tenants can be held responsible for:

- Damage to walls and doors by furniture, wall posters or careless picture hanging
- Damage to floor coverings, window treatments or furnishings by burns, stains, etc.
- Cost of clearing blocked drains, should they become blocked through misuse
- Electrical fuses or circuits damaged by tenant/s using faulty electrical appliances
- Eradication of household pests and vermin such as mice, cockroaches, ants and fleas that can be directly attributed to the tenant
- Upkeep of laws and garden areas, including reticulation systems
- Replacement of lost keys
- Replacement of light globes



**The cost of repairing any damage, blockage, breakage, or defect in and around the property, that is not the result of fair wear and tear, is generally the tenant's responsibility.**

## HANDY HOUSEHOLD HINTS VIDEO SERIES

The Home in Place team have created a series of videos to step you through some basic home maintenance.

You can find them on the Home in Place website.



[WWW.HOMEINPLACE.ORG/REPAIRS-AND-MAINTENANCE](http://WWW.HOMEINPLACE.ORG/REPAIRS-AND-MAINTENANCE)



# SECTION 4

# Get involved



## TENANT REFERENCE GROUPS AND OUR VOICE TENANT PANEL

Tenant Reference Groups provide a local forum for tenants and Home in Place staff to discuss key aspects of our service. Members of these groups meet quarterly and discuss a range of issues that impact their lives. Discussions from each Tenant Reference Group feed into the deliberations of an overarching Tenant Inclusion Panel which in turn reports to the Home in Place Board. This ensures the views of tenants are able to influence company policy and decision making at the highest levels.

Developing local opportunities for tenant 'voice' is an important aspect of our overall tenant engagement strategy and benefits service users communicating their experience of the services to the providers.

Benefits can include:

- Services more closely aligned to tenant needs
- Direct feedback on issues of quality of service
- Costs savings from efficiencies identified by tenants
- Better tenant relations and opportunities for tenant empowerment

The TRGs also link to the **Our Voice Panel**, which reports directly to the Board and meets the requirements of the National Registration Scheme.

To find out more or register your interest in joining the Tenant Reference Group in your area, contact your local Community Participation Officer.

## VOLUNTEERING

Home in Place encourages tenants and staff in volunteering opportunities. Our tenants can volunteer at our events and activities or can talk to us about referral pathways to other types of volunteerism. You can find out more by talking to your local Community Participation Officer.

## SUSTAINABILITY AND GARDENS

Home in Place is committed to social, economic, and environmental sustainability and have aligned our 2030 Strategic Plan with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The SDGs are the blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all.

**Home in Place works with its tenants help them participate in building resilient, sustainable, and inclusive communities. We have introduced community gardens in social housing complexes across the country and continue to support these gardens.**

Community gardens not only provide tenants with access to fresh fruit and vegetables but create a platform for social inclusion and address good health and wellbeing on a number of levels.

Home in Place also uses the community garden forums to engage tenants on other sustainability issues providing information on the environment, energy and water efficiency and savings, and responsible waste management.

To find out more on our sustainability initiatives keep an eye on our social media pages and the Home in Place website, or contact your local Community Participation Officer.



## TENANT INCENTIVE SCHEME

The Tenant Incentive Scheme recognises tenants who are excelling in five categories. Winners are announced on a quarterly basis and are presented with a certificate and \$50 voucher. Nominations for this award can come from Home in Place staff or from within the tenant group.

### CATEGORY 1. STAR TENANT AWARD

Awarded to tenants who look after their properties to a very high standard, and in some cases, look after the common areas at their complexes. Additionally these tenants are up-to-date or in advance on their rent.

### CATEGORY 2. MOST IMPROVED TENANT AWARD

Awarded to tenants who have demonstrated significant improvement in property care, engagement and/or improved financial sustainability.

### CATEGORY 3. COMMUNITY AND SUSTAINABILITY CONTRIBUTION AWARD

Awarded to tenants who have created or contributed significant improvement to local environment, recycling, gardening and/or common areas, or have undertaken a clear role supporting their community.

### CATEGORY 4. PERSONAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Awarded to tenants who have worked hard to achieve a significant personal goal or accomplishment.

### CATEGORY 5. HOME IN PLACE TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT AWARD

Awarded to tenants who have completed a learning program or training course, or gained employment.

## GROW A STAR

Grow a Star is an innovative, youth mentoring and scholarship program that enables young people and their families to pursue a hobby, a passion or ambition.

Do you know a young person who could do with some support through the Grow a Star program? If so, nominate them today! Applicants must be 5-18 years old, engaged in education, training, or employment and able to demonstrate a need for assistance.

You can find out more on the Grow a Star website [www.growastar.org](http://www.growastar.org)



## TENANT EVENTS

Throughout the year Home in Place runs a number of tenant events. These will be advertised in our newsletter, on our website, via our social media accounts or you may receive a text message telling you about an upcoming event.

We encourage you to join events and activities when you can, and welcome volunteers should you wish to help us deliver activities for tenants and the community. You can do this by contacting your local Community Participation Officer.

# SECTION 5

# Providing feedback



## COMPLAINTS

Home in Place is committed to ensuring all tenants and applicants have fair and equitable access to its services.

If you are not happy with our service, standards, practices, or policies, you have the right to make a complaint. Home in Place welcomes complaints and views them as a way to improve our services.

The following information is important to remember about our complaints system:

- Complaints can be lodged in person, over the phone, by email to [complimentsandcomplaints@homeinplace.org](mailto:complimentsandcomplaints@homeinplace.org) or via our website [www.homeinplace.org/complaints](http://www.homeinplace.org/complaints)
- Home in Place will acknowledge your complaint in writing as soon as practicable.
- Complaints will be investigated as quickly as possible in accordance with company policies and procedures.
- You have the right to use an advocate or a friend to assist you throughout the process.
- Complaints received will be recorded in an appropriate manner.
- The complaints process will be communicated to applicants and tenants in appropriate formats.
- Home in Place will respond to all complaints in a confidential, effective, and timely manner.

If you are not satisfied with the outcome, Home in Place will provide you with contact information for external agencies that may be able to assist you. This may include, making an application to the New South Wales Registrar of Community Housing, New South Wales Civil and Administrative Tribunal.

## HOW DO I MAKE A COMPLAINT AND WHAT HAPPENS?

To make a complaint:

1. Obtain a copy of the Complaint Form from your local branch, Head Office or by downloading a copy from the Home in Place website at [www.homeinplace.org/complaints](http://www.homeinplace.org/complaints)
2. Make sure you include as much information as possible about your complaint. Anonymous complaints are only investigated in special circumstances.
3. Lodge the Complaint Form to our Complaints Officer via email at [complimentsandcomplaints@homeinplace.org](mailto:complimentsandcomplaints@homeinplace.org) or with your Tenancy Relations Officer. Alternatively, complaints may be lodged in person at any of our branches or over the phone.

We will send you a letter to let you know we received your complaint and will start investigating it. We may need to contact you if we need more information.

All complaints will be reviewed and all information available at the time of complaint will be considered. Following the investigation, a formal response will be forwarded to you in writing.

Please note, to protect the rights and privacy of tenants and staff, we may not be able to tell you the result of the investigation if it involves others.



**For more information, please refer to the Complaint Handling Policy POL-012 and Complaint Handling Procedure PROC-012-01 on the Home in Place website at [www.homeinplace.org/publications-and-policies](http://www.homeinplace.org/publications-and-policies) or contact Home in Place.**

## COMPLAINTS ABOUT NEIGHBOURS OR ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

Home in Place takes all complaints about antisocial or disruptive behaviour seriously and will investigate each incident in a fair and reasonable manner.

Home in Place can only act when satisfied that the antisocial/disruptive behaviour has occurred, and the complaint relates to a tenancy issue.

It may be helpful to keep a diary of incidents. An **incident diary form** is available for you to download from the Home in Place website at [www.homeinplace.org/complaints](http://www.homeinplace.org/complaints) or you may obtain a copy of the form by contacting Home in Place.

When an incident is confirmed appropriate action will be taken.

Home in Place can only investigate allegations if the alleged behaviour may be a breach of a tenancy agreement.

Some complaints must first be reported to the relevant authority.

### **Behaviour that can be reported to the local council includes:**

- Noise complaints
- Excessive dog barking
- Dangerous or roaming animals
- Cars blocking footpaths

Home in Place cannot investigate alleged criminal/illegal behaviour and this type of alleged activity should be reported to the police.

### **Examples of behaviour that must be reported to the police includes:**

- threats with weapons
- domestic violence
- suspected illegal drug activity
- stalking
- theft
- a neighbour being either physically or verbally harassed by another neighbour

## COMPLAINTS ABOUT NEIGHBOURS OR ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR CONTINUED.

Where there is a dispute between neighbours, Home in Place will not normally get involved except where required to under the relevant tenancy legislation. Dispute resolution services, for example, Community Justice Centres in NSW may be able to assist with these types of disputes.

Home in Place investigates all complaints of antisocial and disruptive behaviour thoroughly and fairly, giving tenants the opportunity to respond. Tenants can have a support person or advocate help them with this process.

Tenants who have been the subject of a complaint must be given a reasonable chance to address their behaviour. Home in Place may take a range of actions to help the tenant address the behaviour and maintain their tenancy, including referral to a support service, closely monitoring the tenancy or action in the Tribunal.

More information is available from the Policies page on our website or by contacting Home in Place.



**For more information, please refer to the Management of Antisocial Behaviour Policy POL-025-04 on the Home in Place website at [www.homeinplace.org/publications-and-policies](http://www.homeinplace.org/publications-and-policies) or contact Home in Place.**

## INTERNAL REVIEWS AND APPEALS

If you are a Home in Place tenant or applicant for housing and are dissatisfied with a decision, you may be able to seek to have that decision reviewed.

The following is information about Home in Place's internal review and appeal process:

1. Appeals must be lodged in writing
2. Appeals will be acknowledged
3. Appeals will be managed confidentially unless Home in Place is required by law or contractual obligations to report a matter
4. You have the right to use an advocate or friend during the appeal process
5. If you are not satisfied with the outcome, Home in Place will provide contact details of external agencies that may be able to assist you
6. The issues raised will be reviewed
7. Appeals will be managed in a timely manner
8. If you are still dissatisfied some matters may be appealable to the Housing Appeals Committee (NSW).

**More information on the Housing Appeals Committee (NSW) can be found at [www.hac.nsw.gov.au](http://www.hac.nsw.gov.au).**

Tenants who wish to make a complaint about their community housing provider may contact the National Regulatory System for Community Housing Registrar via the online form at

[www.nrsch.gov.au/contact\\_us](http://www.nrsch.gov.au/contact_us).

# SECTION 6

# Tips and Assistance

## EMERGENCY CONTACTS



<b>Police, Fire or Ambulance</b>	<b>000</b>
<b>SES</b>	<b>132 500</b>
<b>Crime Stoppers NSW</b>	<b>1800 333 000</b>

## WHERE CAN I GET HELP?

For free independent advice on tenancy matters, tenants can contact:

- NSW Fair Trading on 13 32 20 or visit their website at [www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au](http://www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au)
- Tenants Advice and Advocacy Service (TAAS) for your nearest service contact [www.tenants.org.au](http://www.tenants.org.au) or 1800 251 101.

## CYBER SECURITY AND ONLINE SAFETY

Tips for improving your cyber security and online safety:

1. **Avoid clicking hyperlinks**, especially if they claim to be from a financial institution. Most scammers will use links and impersonate banking emails. If the first thing a link asks for is your username and password it is the first warning flag something is not right.
2. Ensure your **computer is patched and updated** as often as possible.
3. Always use an **antivirus program**, Microsoft Windows has Defender built in, but we also recommend Webroot, Kaspersky or ESET.
4. Scams, competitions, giveaways. **If they sound too good to be true then double check the source** is correct and the email you have received the offer from is legitimate. Hackers often use these giveaways to capture your email address, passwords and other personal information.
5. Enable **two factor or multifactor logins** wherever possible, especially on your Facebook and email accounts. These systems use either SMS, phone call or an app to deliver you a special one-time pin or code to enter when logging in. This adds an additional layer of verification to your account.

## SUPPORT SERVICES AND HELPLINES

There are many organisations available to support your needs.

We have listed some here, although if you would like help connecting to a service, you can call Home in Place on 1300 333 733 to speak with one of our tenancy support team.

**Translating and Interpreting Service** 13 14 50 [tisonline.nsw.gov.au](https://tisonline.nsw.gov.au)

**Legal Aid NSW** 1300 888 529 [legalaid.nsw.gov.au](https://www.legalaid.nsw.gov.au)

**National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)** 1800 800 110 [ndis.gov.au](https://www.ndis.gov.au)

**Disability Council NSW** 8879 9175 [facs.nsw.gov.au/disability-council](https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/disability-council)

**Multicultural NSW** 8255 6767 [multicultural.nsw.gov.au](https://www.multicultural.nsw.gov.au)

**Police Assistance Line** To report a crime 131 444 [police.nsw.gov.au](https://www.police.nsw.gov.au)

**Domestic Violence Line** Counselling and referrals for women  
1800 656 463

**Child Protection Helpline** To report suspicion of a child at risk 132 111

**Salvation Army** Supporting those in hardship 13 72 58 [salvationarmy.org.au](https://www.salvationarmy.org.au)

**Lifeline Australia** 24-hour crisis and suicide prevention 13 11 14  
[lifeline.org.au](https://www.lifeline.org.au)

**1800RESPECT** Counselling for sexual assault and family violence  
1800 737 732 [1800respect.org.au](https://www.1800respect.org.au)

**Ageing and Disability Abuse Helpline** A helpline to report suspected abuse to older people and those with disabilities 1800 628 221  
[ageingdisabilitycommission.nsw.gov.au](https://www.ageingdisabilitycommission.nsw.gov.au)

**Ask Izzy** Find services you need, now and nearby [askizzy.org.au](https://www.askizzy.org.au)

**Centrelink** Social security payments and services to Australians 132 300  
[centrelink.gov.au](https://www.centrelink.gov.au)

**Energy and Water Ombudsman** Free and independent dispute resolution service for energy, gas, and some water services NSW 1800 246 545  
[ewon.com.au](https://www.ewon.com.au)





## POLICIES

Throughout this handbook, we have referenced various policies. These, and many others, are available on the Home in Place website or by contacting Home in Place.

[www.homeinplace.org/publications-and-policies](http://www.homeinplace.org/publications-and-policies)



**ABSENCE FROM PROPERTY POLICY** this policy sets out Home in Place's approach to managing absences from properties and ensuring properties are not left vacant for long period of time.

**ACCESS TO PROPERTY POLICY** this policy defines the circumstances in which Home in Place will seek to enter a property, the type of access and the frequency of access.

**ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR** this policy defines Home in Place's position on the management of antisocial behaviour within the Home in Place portfolio.

**APPEALS** this policy sets out Home in Place's Appeal and Internal Review processes for tenants and applicants for housing assistance.

**ARREARS & DEBT MANAGEMENT POLICY** this policy defines Home in Place's approach to the management of debt incurred by tenants and former tenants.

**DOMESTIC & FAMILY VIOLENCE POLICY** this policy defines how Home in Place will respond to and support tenants or applicants experiencing domestic and family violence.

**ENDING TENANCY POLICY** this policy explains the process undertaken when a tenant or Home in Place ends a tenancy.

**OCCUPANCY OF PROPERTY POLICY** this policy defines Home in Place's approach to occupancy of properties, including tenant occupancy, additional occupants, and visitors.

**PRIVACY POLICY** this policy outlines Home in Place's approach to the collection, management, storage, disclosure, and reporting of personal information in accordance with the Australian Privacy Principles.

**RENTAL BONDS POLICY** this policy identifies that Home in Place requires rental bonds to be paid when renting a property and explains how Home in Place will manage the collection of rental bonds.

**STARTING A TENANCY POLICY** this policy explains the Home in Place process for starting a tenancy.

**SUCCESSION OF TENANCY POLICY** this policy outlines the circumstances in which Home in Place may agree to transfer a social housing tenancy to another household member.

**TENANT CHARGES POLICY** this policy explains how Home in Place will identify and manage liability for damage or services to a property.

**HOUSING TRANSFER POLICY** this policy explains how Home in Place will manage applications for transfer by current social housing tenants.

# MY NOTES

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