



# Tableland Community Housing Association Incorporated.

**Address:** 13B Herberton Rd. Atherton **email:** reception@tch.org.au

**Phone:** 4091 5356 or for an emergency only call **0497 192 135**

## Information for tenants

Welcome home!

### **Our office hours are:**

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday we are open: **9:30 am - 3:30 pm**

Friday: All contact via phone or email only between: **9:30 am - 1:30 pm**


### **About us:**

In 1987, a Crisis Accommodation Committee was formed in the Atherton Shire, to address growing concerns about homelessness. The Committee included representatives from Council and local not-for-profit organisations, who worked together to advocate for a local community housing service. In 1988, in the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless, Tableland Community Housing was formed and incorporated as an 'association', in 1989.

Since then, Tableland Community Housing Association (TCHA) has provided affordable, safe, and appropriate housing for people who cannot access the private housing market. We partner with the Department of Housing and Public Works, as a part of the one-social-housing-system.

We are responsible for providing supportive tenancy management and ensuring that our properties are well-maintained and appropriate for our tenants' needs. This information booklet will outline your responsibilities as our tenant and let you know our responsibilities as your tenancy manager. You will find helpful tips and contacts to support your tenancy, and information to inform you about what to do in the case of an emergency. Welcome to our community, we are happy to accept you as our tenant and a member of our Association.

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## 1. Responsibilities of tenant and lessor.

### **Tableland Community Housing Association must:**

- Comply with tenancy management rules detailed in our policies and by the State and National regulatory bodies.
- Set rent according to the rent setting calculator for registered community housing providers.
- Operate under the National Regulatory System for Community Housing Providers and adhere to national community housing management guidelines.
- Be respectful to tenants at all times.
- Ensure that all maintenance and repairs are addressed within reasonable timeframes and comply with entry rules.
- Understand our rights and responsibilities under the Residential Tenancy Authority <https://www.rta.qld.gov.au/>.

### **All tenants must:**

- Comply with all your rights and responsibilities, as outlined by the Residential Tenancy Authority (RTA) <https://www.rta.qld.gov.au/>
- Pay your rent on time (by the method agreed in the tenancy agreement).
- Pay for your water use as per your tenancy agreement.
- Abide by the terms of your tenancy agreement.
- Keep your property clean and tidy, both inside and out.
- Do not cause damage to the property.
- Only use your premises for legal purposes.
- Do not operate a business from the premises.
- Behave respectfully and do not disturb your neighbours' right to the peaceful enjoyment of their property.
- Seek approval for all tenants occupying the property.
- Advise us within 14 days if your circumstances change, including the income of all household members.
- Seek permission to make any alterations to the property you rent.
- Always be respectful to all staff and contractors.

*Note: The Residential Tenancies Authority (RTA) is the Queensland government statutory body that helps make renting work for everyone. They provide tenancy information and support, bond management, dispute resolution, compliance and enforcement, and education services.*

## **2. Privacy and Confidentiality**

All information regarding your tenancy is confidential. We are committed to protecting your privacy and collecting, storing, using, and disclosing personal information responsibly and transparently when we deliver housing services and conduct business.

All staff, Board members, volunteers and contractors, performing duties on behalf of Tableland Community Housing Association, observe confidentiality concerning the keeping of information about tenants. Personal information will not be collected unless the information is for a lawful purpose that is related to the association's operations. At Tableland Community Housing Association, we manage personal information under the Information Privacy Principles described in the Information Privacy Act 2009.

## **3. Keys**

Tenants will be provided with one complete set of keys for the property. If your keys are lost or stolen, you can contact a locksmith and have your locks rekeyed and replaced at your cost. If you lock your keys in your property, you can contact the office (during office hours) to borrow the security set of keys. You may consider giving a trusted friend or relative a key to your property in case you misplace your keys. If you require another set of keys, you can have extra keys cut at your own expense.

If you lose your keys on a weekend or after office hours, you must contact a locksmith directly. Do not try to break in via the windows, screens, or doors as you will be liable for all damage; it will be cheaper to just contact a locksmith.

## **4. Electricity Connection**



Telephone Ergon Energy on 131 046 to connect the electricity in your name.

### **Information on Electricity tariffs**

#### **Tariff 31-Night Rate (Super Economy)**

This is the cheapest tariff available for applicable electric hot water systems and other applicable connected equipment. This is because Ergon Energy supplies electricity when demand on the electricity network is low.

Electricity is made available for a minimum of eight hours per day at specific times, set at the discretion of Ergon Energy- usually between the hours of 10:00 pm and 7:00 am. This tariff is recommended for electric hot water systems that only need to reheat at night to meet the needs of your household. The recommended minimum size of an electric hot water system on this tariff is 250 litres.

#### Tariff 33 Controlled Supply (Economy)

This tariff is available at a reduced rate for applicable hot water systems (including solar, electric and heat pump) and other applicable permanently connected equipment. Electricity is made available for a minimum of 18 hours per day, set at the discretion of Ergon Energy. This tariff is recommended for hot water systems and other appliances that do not require electricity all day. Please note that because the energy supply hours are restricted, it is important to make sure that your electric storage water heater is large enough to meet the needs of your business.

### **5. Entry Condition Report**

TCHA will give you an Entry condition report (Form 1a). You need to take the time to check the condition of the property at the start of the tenancy. This will help to avoid disputes about the condition of the property when you move out. You must complete the report and return a signed copy to the property owner/manager within 7 days.

The property owner/manager must give you a copy of the signed final report within 14 days. The RTA also recommends taking photos and attaching them to the report as proof of the condition of the property. Please complete the Entry Condition Report (ECR) (Form 1a) before you move in, at the start of the tenancy. Inspect the premises before moving in, complete the ECR (RTA form 1a) and return the report to the office as soon as possible.

You will be given a copy for your records, and we recommend that you store it in a safe place for future reference

### **6. Bond**

A rental bond is a security deposit you pay at the start of a tenancy and is lodged with the RTA. The bond amount is calculated at four (4) weeks rent.

The bond amount increases when your rent increases - so that it is always the equivalent of four (4) weeks rent. You will receive a notification from the RTA when your bond has been lodged.

You will get your bond back at the end of the tenancy so long as no money is owed to TCHA for rent, damages or other costs. TCHA will arrange for your bond to be returned after you exit the property. You will need to provide your contact details, forwarding address and bank account details to TCHA to receive your bond refund.

## **7. Rent**

Your rent is based on your household income and calculated using the current Community Housing Rent Calculator. Your rent payments must always stay two weeks in advance.

We encourage rent to be paid directly by the Centrepay deduction method (at no extra charge to you) or by Direct Debit with your bank, as these are reliable and efficient and ensure your rent is paid promptly and regularly. You can request a copy of your rent ledger at any time, and it will be provided within 7 days.

## **8. Rent Arrears**

Always ensure your rent is paid 2 weeks in advance of the due date.

If your rent falls behind, contact us immediately to advise us about your situation. You may be issued with a Notice to Remedy Breach (Form 11) to pay the rent arrears.

Your tenancy will be at risk if the rent arrears are not paid within 7 days. Please talk to your housing manager, if you have any issues with paying your rent or are late with your payment.

## **9. Rent Assistance**

Rent assistance is calculated by Centrelink, you must advise them when your rent changes, to receive the correct amount of rent assistance.

Please advise Centrelink promptly about any changes, by taking your Tenancy Agreement (new tenants) or a rent increase/decrease letter or rent certificate to the Centrelink office.

## **10. Rent Reviews**

Rent reviews are conducted every twelve months. You may also have your rent reviewed if your circumstances change and your household income increases or decreases.

If you need us to explain how your rent is calculated or if you have any concerns about the amount of rent you are paying, please contact us to discuss.

## **11. Changes in household members**

You need to let us know if household members leave your home or if new people come to stay with you. Rent payable for your rental property is based on your household income, your rent will either increase or decrease depending on household income.

## **12. Absences from home**

A temporary absence from your property is okay but you need to complete a temporary absence form for approval if you are to be absent for periods between 2 weeks and 3 months. Please contact the office with your contact details whilst you are away.

We need to know if you are absent from your home for the following reasons:

- To avoid possible vandalism.
- To determine if a property has not been abandoned.
- To answer any questions about why the property is vacant.
- To respond to any concerns about your well-being.

*Please note that while you are away you must continue to pay your rent.*

## **13. Employment**

You must advise the office as soon as possible after starting work, that way we can calculate your rent according to your income.

If your household income changes, please notify the office immediately and don't forget to inform Centrelink. An increase or a decrease in your income will change the rental amount payable.

If you don't let us know about changes in your income this could put your tenancy at risk.

#### **14. Approved Occupants**

Approved occupants are those persons who are members of the household who are listed on the tenancy Agreement, and whose income is included in the rent calculations applicable to the tenancy.

Tenants who have Domestic Violence Orders (DVO) in place are not permitted to reside with other parties (listed on the DVO) in the rental property or apply for them to be approved occupants, for the duration of the Order.

#### **15. Visitors**

Each tenant may have visitors stay overnight from time to time. If a tenant wishes to invite a visitor (relative, child, friend) to stay with them for a period longer than an occasional stay, the tenant must first complete *a New Household Member form at the office*.

Tenants are responsible for their visitor's behaviour. Offensive behaviour, excessive noise or disturbances of any nature by a tenant's visitors may constitute a breach of the tenancy and a notice to remedy may be issued.

Tenants who have Domestic Violence Orders (DVO) in place are not permitted to have other parties (listed on the DVO) visit them at the rental property or sleep at the property for the duration of the Order.

#### **16. Unapproved Occupants**

An unapproved occupant is a person who is living at the property for more than three days per week and is not paying rent. If the tenant continues to have unapproved occupants, this constitutes a breach of tenancy and a Notice to Remedy Breach may be issued.

#### **17. Tenancy Plan for CRS (Transitional Housing) Tenants**

Transitional housing is not long-term housing. The purpose of transitional housing is to help tenants stabilise their circumstances, so they can move on to more appropriate, long-term housing, in the private market or social housing.

At the start of the tenancy, we will work with the tenant to develop a Tenancy Plan. The Tenancy Plan is a written document that helps the Transitional Housing tenant and Tableland Community Housing to identify their barriers to accessing and sustaining long-term housing; note support services being received or consider if there is an opportunity to receive some support. The plan will identify the best long-term housing option and document how the tenant can work towards that, and any tenancy-related issues that need to be worked on with Tableland Community Housing. The Tenancy Plan will be reviewed every

6 months and updated throughout the tenancy. Tenants who refuse a long-term social housing offer, while they are living in a transitional Community Rent Scheme property, and don't have a valid reason, may be asked to find alternate accommodation.

Tenants who have a prior housing debt or bond loan debt must make regular repayments, either through Easy Pay or directly to the post office. We can help set up Easy Pay payments or arrange for a payment card to be sent to you.

### **18. Transfers and Mutual Exchanges**

Any legitimate transfer requests or mutual exchanges between tenants will be considered. Please talk to our friendly staff if you wish to transfer and make a mutual exchange with another tenant. A Transfer Request Form will need to be completed.

### **19. Parking**

Vehicles are to be parked in the carport/garage and not on the lawns, footpaths, garden areas or common areas in units or duplexes. Ensure your visitor's vehicles do not block other tenants' or neighbours' parking areas and driveways. Unregistered or abandoned vehicles must not be left on the property.

### **20. Respecting your neighbours**

You and your neighbours are entitled to quiet enjoyment of your properties. Your behaviour, your children's and your guest's behaviour are your responsibility. Anti-social behaviour, such as loud music, abusive language, harassing your neighbours, wilful damage to property or other disturbances are considered unacceptable. A breach notice may be issued if any of the above occurs. Ongoing disturbances will put your tenancy at risk.

### **21. Emergency repairs**

An emergency repair is considered anything that poses a threat to health and life safety. We aim to address emergency repairs within 24 hours.

#### **Some examples are:**

- A failure or breakdown of electricity or water supply to the premises.
- Direct damage from a destructive storm, fire or flood.
- A roof leak whereby water is coming into the house.
- A burst water pipe or a serious water service leak.
- An electrical fault that is life-threatening
- A blocked or broken toilet system.
- Flooding or serious flood damage.
- A fault/damage that is likely to cause injury or which makes the premises unsafe or insecure (for example broken stairs).

## **Procedure for emergency repairs**

### **Water and or electricity**

For water related issues call Tableland Regional Council on 1300 362 242.

For power related issues call ERGON on 132 296.

**Major Leak or Burst Water Pipe:** turn off the water at the mains and then contact us (in office hours) or the plumber stated on your lease (if outside office hours). If the leak is on council land call: 1300 362 242.

**Blocked and or overflowing toilet:** do not use the toilet. Contact the office during office hours or the plumber stated on your lease (outside office hours). Call the office and leave a message advising what has occurred.

### **A destructive storm: flooding, damaged roof, rising flood waters or fallen trees**

Call the State Emergency Service (SES) for Flood & Storm Assistance on 132 500.

If your house is flooding, leave your home (only if safe to do so) and move to higher ground. If you are trapped or it is not safe to leave the property, call 000 (triple zero).

### **Fire: If the fire cannot be smothered and put out without risk to self.**

- alert people by raising the alarm to evacuate the house.
- contain the fire by closing doors as you make your escape.
- Once out of your home, stay out. Never go back into a burning property.
- Evacuate to the safe meeting point. When safe call 000 (triple zero).

### **Fire Safety in Your Home**

Prevention is the safest way to avoid a fire, and most household fires can be avoided with proper care.

- a) Never leave candles or oil burners burning when unattended
- b) Be cautious when cooking with oil, never leave pots unattended or mix oil with water and always turn the handles in so they can't be knocked down or pulled off by children.
- c) Always leave space to allow air to flow around televisions, portable heaters, computers and other electrical devices. If your electrical equipment gets hot it may cause a fire.
- d) Do not use double adaptors to piggyback several electrical items on one power point - this could cause a fire.
- e) Do not put extension cords under carpets or on top of beds.
- f) Never put newspapers or other combustible materials on top of cooktops or hang curtains near cooktops.

- g) Keep fabrics away from heaters and do not drape fabric over lamps.
- h) Clean smoke alarms regularly by vacuuming to remove dust/insects.
- i) Always have a fire blanket readily accessible in the kitchen.

**Safehome** is a Queensland Fire & Rescue Service (QFES) program offered to assist householders in conducting a safety and fire awareness inspection of their home. This free service can be arranged by phoning 1300 369 003.

If an emergency occurs outside office hours always call our emergency number **0497 192 135**. If your Housing Manager cannot be reached, refer the problem to the repairer nominated in your tenancy agreement. Please also leave a message on our telephone message bank (**4091 5356**) and advise what has happened. If the nominated repairer cannot be contacted, you can arrange for a suitably qualified person to carry out the repair, to a total value of up to 2 (two) weeks' rent. Tenants who call and arrange for repairs after hours, other than for emergency repairs, may be charged for the cost of the after-hours call-out fee. If the situation is not listed as an emergency repair, it is considered a routine repair.

## **22. Routine repairs**

A routine repair is anything that is not considered to pose a threat to health and life safety. Examples include a slow leaking tap, a toilet that has a faulty flush valve or an internal door with one loose hinge. All repairs will be addressed as soon as possible depending on the availability of tradespeople.

### **Reporting Routine (Non-Urgent) Repairs and Maintenance**

Contact the office by visiting, phoning or by email, and provide clear details about the repair required. Report any damage or fault quickly, so maintenance/repairs can be organised promptly. In some cases, we may wish to inspect the problem to see what is required before the contractor is contacted.

All job orders are to be issued by the housing managers and tenants cannot add extra work or jobs to orders. Unauthorised work may become the financial responsibility of the tenant if the work has not been authorised. The Housing managers will assess the urgency of the works and decide if they are urgent, priority or routine/non-urgent maintenance work. Any urgent repairs will be attended to as soon as possible after they have been reported. Please do not attempt to do any repairs yourself.

### **Faulty Electrical Appliances or power outage**

If your power supply goes off, check to see if your safety switch on the power board has been tripped to the OFF position. The power outage may be caused by a faulty appliance.

Before you call our office or an electrician after hours, please follow this procedure:

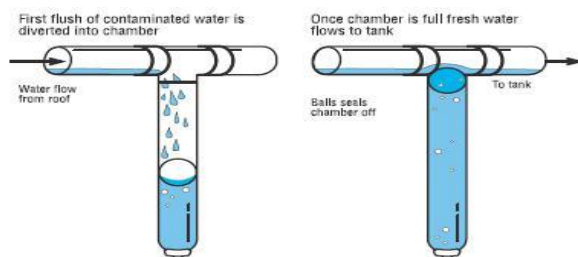
- a) Unplug all the appliances including the refrigerator, toaster etc.
- b) Reset the safety switch back to the ON position.
- c) Plug in one appliance at a time to check each appliance. Operate the appliance and check if the switch has tripped.
- d) If the appliance is faulty, it will trip the safety switch to the OFF position.
- e) If this occurs, remove the faulty appliance and then plug in all the remaining appliances and reset the safety switch. This should fix the problem.
- f) If this doesn't resolve the problem, call Ergon Energy to check if there are any problems in your area.
- g) If Ergon Energy reports no faults, call our office during opening hours.
- h) If out of hours, call the electrician listed on your lease for after-hour emergencies.

Please contact our office if any of this information is not clear.

**Note: Tenants will be charged for the cost of calling out an electrician, if the fault is determined to have been caused by a tenant's faulty appliance.**

### 23. Water Tanks

Some Long-Term Community Housing properties have water tanks, and these have a first flush diverter fitted to the downpipe. This helps maintain a clean rainwater supply because the dirt on the roof is flushed into the diverter pipe before the water goes into the tank. The filter needs cleaning regularly, to clean remove the screw cap/drip outlet and clean the plastic filter located inside the PVC pipe.



Water tank first flush diverter maintenance

## **24. Garage Door Safety**

If you have a remote-controlled garage door at your property, there are a few things for you to understand.

- a) The door should only be operated when free of obstructions.
- b) The door needs to be washed regularly to remove dirt, so when you wash your car, remember to wash the garage door too.
- c) Ensure the tracks are kept clean and free of dust and dirt.
- d) If the door becomes excessively noisy or reverses direction during the closing action (returning to the open position) report to the office, as it needs attention.
- e) The safety reverse system should be tested during our housing inspection. With the door fully open, a 50mm thick piece of wood is placed on the floor in the centre of the door. The transmitter or wall switch is pushed to close the door. The door must reverse when it strikes the wood. If the door does not reverse, contact the office to have it repaired.
- f) Only a qualified individual should adjust or repair the garage door opener or the door.

## **25. Contents Insurance**

Tenants are responsible for insuring their personal contents such as furniture, electrical goods, computers, televisions, and other personal effects. If there is a fire or flood on the premises, these items are not covered by the landlord's insurance.

## **26. Water use**

Tenants are responsible for water charges if this is noted on their tenancy agreement. The following helpful tips may save water and money.

- a) Report any leaking taps, leaking toilets, pipes or leaky garden irrigation systems as soon as you notice the leak. A small drip from a worn washer can waste more than 200 litres of water per day.
- b) Short showers save water-showers use 10-20 litres of water every minute.
- c) Turn off the tap when brushing your teeth (or shaving). A tap left running while brushing your teeth wastes 5 litres.
- d) Don't leave the hose running while you wash the car, use a bucket & sponge.
- e) Put the plug in the sink when rinsing dishes or washing vegetables.
- f) Sweep paths and driveways rather than hosing them.
- g) Wash in cold water and use the washing machine when you have a full load only.

## **27. Caring For the Property**

As a tenant, it is your responsibility to keep the property clean and in good condition. If something is damaged or broken, you must contact our office, as soon as possible to discuss how it will be fixed. TCHA is responsible for ensuring the property is fit to live in and in a good state of repair, including carrying out general repairs and maintenance during your tenancy. We must also make sure the property complies with any health and safety laws. Minimum housing standards, which clarify repair and maintenance obligations and introduce compliance mechanisms to enforce these standards commenced on 01 September 2024.

### **Making Alterations or Improvements**

Tenants cannot make alterations or make structural changes to the property without permission from TCHA.

This includes.

- a) Putting in hooks, blue-tac or sticky tape on the walls, ceilings or doors
- b) Installing shelving or built-in robes
- c) Planting trees or shrubs and making new garden beds or sand pits.
- d) Concreting, installing rocks and pebbles or garden edging.
- e) Painting or wallpapering
- f) Installing air-conditioning, dishwashers or other fixed items
- g) Adding of structure to outside of building e.g. shade awning
- h) Installing irrigation systems
- i) Installing wood-burning stoves
- j) Any other alteration not listed here

If tenants wish to alter anything on the property, they can complete the alterations form and apply to have the alteration installed or undertaken. Please note that there are some specific conditions outlined on the application form. Alterations forms are available at our office.

### **Preventing Damage to the Property**

A tenant is responsible for any intentional negligent or malicious damage to the premises, either by themselves, their pets or invited guests. If you, your pets, or your guests have caused damage to the property, we can arrange to have the repair done and you can pay off the account by instalments. All repairs will need to be carried out by licenced tradespeople.

Tenants are not authorised to repair their own damage unless they pay for this to be done by a licenced tradesperson, or they are a licenced tradesperson themselves. Tenants can call the office as soon as any damage occurs to the property to arrange the repair.

### **Toilet use and maintenance**

- a) Do not use toilet ducks or other toilet fresheners in the toilet bowl, as they can be flushed down the toilet accidentally or by unsupervised children. This may cause a serious blockage in the sewer pipe.
- b) Tissues, while they resemble toilet paper, do not dissolve in water the way that toilet paper does and should not be flushed. Similarly, do not flush so-called 'flushable wipes' down the toilets, they will block up the system.
- c) Never flush paper towels, tampons or sanitary pads down the toilet.
- d) Do not use excessive toilet paper. Always supervise children when they are learning to use the toilet and show them how much toilet paper is required.
- e) If you need to use more toilet paper than usual, flush the toilet in the process.

Unblocking the sewer pipe requires the use of specialised drain cameras etc. The cost of removing blockages is expensive and will be charged to the tenant if the plumber deems the blockage was caused by the tenant.

### **Protecting Vinyl Flooring**

Vinyl flooring can have a long life and withstand years of use, but it can be permanently damaged if it is not cared for properly. To prevent damage to the vinyl flooring, always use trolleys or protect the floor by laying a barrier underneath the furniture to avoid scuffing and or tearing the vinyl.

Furniture with metal legs can leave deep indentations and rust stains. Some rolling casters can also do damage. We suggest you use floor protectors and or caster cups on furniture to reduce indentation. These can be purchased at the hardware shop. Tenants will be charged for all repair costs if the vinyl is damaged during the tenancy however tenants will not be charged for fair wear and tear.

### **Gardens**

Tenants are encouraged to grow flowers and shrubs in garden pots only. If you wish to plant trees or shrubs you will need to apply for approval to do this. Always talk to your housing manager to receive an application form. Tenants who alter the house or garden or plant trees, without written permission, will be charged for any restoration required.

### **Pay TV and Internet connections**

Prior permission is required for new Foxtel pay TV satellite installations. If there is a satellite dish already installed at the premises, you can pay Austar for a reconnection without seeking permission. All new pay TV and internet connections will be installed at the tenant's cost.

### **Smoking**

No Smoking is allowed inside units, houses, or common areas. This condition is noted in the Special Terms section of your tenancy agreement. A no-smoking rule in the premises reduces the risk of accidental fires and the risk of harm to adjoining neighbours.

There is a high cost involved in cleaning and refurbishing a unit where occupants have smoked, and this cost will be passed on to tenants who do not comply with the smoking ban. This includes repainting the interior and replacing damaged carpets, vinyl and curtains. Tenants will be breaching their tenancy agreement, and this is reasonable grounds to end their tenancy.

### **Pets**

Pets are allowed to reside with tenants, if pets are included on your tenancy agreement. Community Rent Scheme tenants will need approval from the owner of their property. Tenants must apply to keep a pet on the premises and be approved by TCHA, before bringing an animal onto the property. As a tenant, it is your responsibility to ensure the pet is allowed, under local government laws.

If you have an approved pet, your pet must not interfere with the reasonable peace, comfort and privacy of neighbours. If pets have been allowed, a professional flea treatment must be carried out and paid for by the tenant, when the premises are vacated. If your lease states NO PETS, that is what it means. Having a pet in this case is a breach of your lease and you will be asked to remedy the breach.

### **Rats, cockroaches and mice**

TCHA will treat your property for pests before you move in. It is your responsibility to conduct pest control in your home, at least every six months. Traps and bait can be bought from supermarkets and hardware shops. To lessen the likelihood of vermin on your property you should ensure that food is always stored in sealed containers and put away in cupboards or in the fridge.

Please do not leave food or leftovers on benches or elsewhere in the home. All dirty dishes should be washed, dried and put away immediately after use and all benches wiped down. To deter cockroaches and rodents, spray a 30/70 vinegar and water mix over benchtops, along skirting boards and under tables and furniture.

Keep waste to a minimum indoors and contain all waste inside closed bins. Remove waste from the property regularly and place in bins provided. Check the TRC website for a calendar of their collection service.

## **28. Property Inspections**

We will inspect the property after a month, and then we will do regular inspections throughout your tenancy. You can expect to have around 4 (four) inspections throughout the year. You will be notified with an Entry Notice (Form 9) at least 7 days before any inspection. These inspections allow us to check the smoke alarms, hot water system and the overall condition of the property. We also check that the property and inclusions (yard etc) are clean and tidy, as this is part of your tenancy agreement.

## **29. Cleaning Checklist**

Please ensure the house and yard are clean and tidy to prevent damage and unnecessary wear and tear to the property.

- Stove top, oven trays and oven cleaned regularly to prevent rust forming.
- Oil and dirt behind and beside the stove cleaned after use.
- Benchtops, tiles, and sink are to be cleaned as required, at least weekly.
- Wipe clean the front of kitchen cupboards as required at least monthly.
- Clean inside kitchen cupboards and shelves as required, or every 3 months.
- Clean bathroom sink, shower recess, tiles, and bath at least every week.
- Clean and wipe out the laundry sink and splashback after use.
- Clean the walls and ceiling and remove mould and any marks as required.
- All floors to be mopped or vacuumed, at least weekly or as required.
- Spider webs to be removed (internal and external) routinely as required.
- Light fittings, fans and switches to be cleaned and dusted monthly.
- Toilet to be cleaned inside and out at least weekly or as required.
- Skirting and architraves are to be cleaned weekly.
- Window screens, windows, tracks and doors cleaned as required.
- Mow lawns, and garden edges, weed the garden, fortnightly or as required.
- Hose off external walls, carport, veranda and paths as required.
- Remove any rubbish from the yard and adjoining verge, as required.

### **30. Prepare for the Cyclone and Storm season**

Report any cyclone damage to the office as soon as possible. Before a cyclone, prepare an Emergency Kit (and keep it somewhere handy in the home) including:

- Portable radio and torch with full batteries
- Candles and waterproof matches
- Reasonable stocks of fresh water, canned food, can opener and self-contained cooking gear.
- First Aid Kit and essential medications
- Emergency contact numbers: SES, Police, Fire, Ambulance and TRC.

#### **Severe Storm or Cyclone Warning**

- Listen to your local radio or television station for information and advice.
- If not using the car, fill it with fuel and park it somewhere safe and secure.
- Store all loose items inside.
- Lock up your pets at home.
- Gather some tools that might come in handy for emergency repairs such as a hammer, nails, rope, saw and tarpaulins.
- Batten down the house where practical. Secure doors, tape windows.
- Then remain indoors.
- In the event of lightning, disconnect electrical appliances.
- Freeze water for alternative refrigeration in case of power failure.
- Prepare an Evacuation Kit. This should include your emergency kit.
- Pack personal valuables, important documents, family mementos and photo albums into a waterproof bag, then secure in a suitcase to avoid damage.
- Pack essential spare clothing (warm tough clothes and covered footwear) into a waterproof bag.

#### **Evacuation**

- Take heed of any warnings or advice given by police or emergency service personnel.
- Switch off electricity, gas and water. Be careful not to touch any wet switches.
- Lock up your home. Remember your evacuation kit.
- If you leave your home before any official evacuation, be sure to let a neighbour, friend, family member or emergency service personnel know when and where you are going.

## **Cyclone Strikes**

- Continue listening to your portable radio.
- Stay inside, clear of windows, and move to the safest, strongest part of the house - usually the bathroom, cellar, internal toilet or passageway.
- If your home starts to break up, protect yourself using strong tables or beds, mattresses, blankets or tarpaulins.
- Beware the calm 'eye' of the storm

## **After the Cyclone**

- Listen to your portable radio.
- Do not venture outside until advised officially that it is safe. A cyclone can turn back across the same path.
- If you must evacuate, do not go home until advised that it is safe. Then use the recommended route and remain calm.
- Avoid making unnecessary phone calls, and do not make demands upon emergency services unless there is a serious problem, such as injuries or lost roof.
- Beware of fallen power lines and trees, damaged buildings, sharp debris and flooded water courses.
- Do not turn on power or gas if damaged, until checked by the authorities. Again, do not touch wet electricity switches.
- Do not go sightseeing - leave the road clear for emergency service vehicles.
- Contact our office to report necessary repairs.

## **31. Ending a tenancy**

Your lease is a periodic lease, and this means it is easier to end a tenancy. You are not bound to a set time e.g. 6 months. If you receive a public housing allocation or want to move to private rental or relocate to another area, two weeks' notice in writing – RTA Form 13 Notice of Intention to Leave - is sufficient.

## **Cleaning up and Moving Out**

Make sure you leave the property in a clean and tidy state. Use the cleaning checklist as a guide. Carpets and vinyl floors are to be cleaned by professionals nominated by our office. The cost will be taken out of your bond if we need to contract cleaners or tradesmen to do cleaning or repairs to the property after you vacate. You may have to make extra payments if the repairs and cleaning exceed the bond value. So you will save yourself added expenses, if you leave the house and garden in good condition.

### **Final inspection & Exit Condition Report**

Arrange a time with the office for a final inspection; completion of the exit condition report and return of all the keys (including any you have had cut).

You will be charged rent until the date of the final inspection and/or return of keys. If the handover date is in the middle of a rent period, you will need to make a final rent payment covering the days you are living in the place. When you move out, you should give your forwarding address to the office, so the bond refund can be organised.

### **Redirecting Your Mail**

Don't miss any of your mail. You will need to redirect it to your new address. Visit Australia Post, complete and lodge an *Application to Redirect Mail*.

### **Getting Your Bond Refunded**

Once an agreement has been made as to the bond refund amount, you will need to sign a Refund of Rental Bond – Form 4. You can take this form to Australia Post to get a cash refund or post it to: RTA at GPO Box 390, Brisbane QLD 4001.

### **Goods left behind**

It is the tenant's responsibility to remove all belongings from the property by the handover day. If a tenant leaves behind personal documents, we will attempt to return them to the tenant within seven days. If we cannot contact the tenant, the papers will be delivered to the nearest Office of the Public Trustee within seven days. If the tenant leaves behind other goods, under specific conditions, we can sell them or dispose of them.

- A) If they are worth less than \$1500
- B) If storing them would be unsafe, reduce their value or;
- C) If the cost of moving and storing the property is more than the proceeds received from selling the property.

If the property left behind is valued at more than \$1500 in value, we will store the property for at least one month and then follow our procedure for selling it by auction of disposal. After the auction, we can retain the funds from the sale, up to the equivalent amount of the reasonable costs of removing, storing, and selling the goods. Any money exceeding these costs will be directed to the Office of the Public Trustee. We may also apply to the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal (QCAT) to have the sale proceeds applied to rent or other money owing to the to TCHA. If the tenant asks in writing for the things to be returned to them before the sale, we will do so. The tenant will have to pay for the reasonable costs of moving and storing the property. If there is a dispute about any goods that the tenant leaves behind, the tenant can apply directly to QCAT.

### **32. Tenant Feedback**

The Board and staff like to receive feedback from tenants about the positive and negative aspects of the service. You can share your thoughts and experiences with us in person, by phone, by mail or through the annual Tenant Survey.

### **33. Tenant Representative**

A tenant's representative is a tenant who represents the wider views of tenants living in Tableland Community Housing Association properties & provides important feedback from tenants to the organisation. A tenant representative aims to reach a wide and diverse range of tenants to ensure that everybody has a chance to participate. The organisation can give you details for contacting the current tenant representative, their details will be provided in the quarterly tenant newsletters.

#### **A tenant representative may do some of the following:**

- Document the priorities and views of the tenants living in the TCHA properties, by arranging meetings or coffee mornings or by putting an article in the newsletter.
- Provide feedback to other tenants regarding matters of concern to an individual, group or organisation.
- Bring common issues raised by the tenants to a tenant meeting or raise them with the CEO or the Board.
- Arrange to meet with the Housing Manager and CEO to discuss key issues for tenants every three months.
- Provide the CEO and/or Board with ideas about how the service can be improved.

You can contact the Tenant Representative by sending a letter marked "Private & Confidential" to **P.O. Box 917, Atherton QLD 4883** or call the office to arrange a meeting.

### **34. Complaints, Grievances & Appeals**

There are two types of complaints.

1. Complaints about the service.
2. Complaints about other tenants.

#### **Complaints about the service**

The staff and Board aim to continually improve our service. Complaints or grievances received will be promptly acknowledged and investigated.

All complaints will be taken seriously, and all parties will be treated with respect during the investigation and resolution process.

Complaints about our service may be made anonymously however anonymous complaints are very difficult to follow up on and it is not possible to receive feedback about the outcome of any complaint or grievance submitted.

### **Steps to resolve your complaint about our service**

- Step 1.** Talk to the staff directly. Many concerns can be resolved quickly and easily by speaking with staff.
- Step 2.** Act quickly. Please tell us about the problem as soon as possible. The earlier you tell us, the sooner we can act.
- Step 3.** Make your complaint clear. Provide as much information as possible, including how we can contact you, details of the issue you are unhappy about; the outcome you are seeking and any supporting information or important dates that might assist us.

We suggest that you lodge a written complaint about our service to TCHA. This can either be in the form of a letter or on a Complaint Form. This form is available at the office or from our website. Please post the complaint to: **Chief Executive Officer, TCHA, P.O. Box 917, Atherton Qld 4883** or hand deliver to the office.

If your complaint is about the CEO, address your complaint to the TCHA Board directly. The Board will meet within 5 working days of receipt of the written complaint/grievance, or as soon as practical after receiving the notice.

Please post the complaint to **Attention: Private & Confidential, The Board, TCHA, P.O. Box 917, Atherton Qld 4883** or hand deliver to the office.

Complaints will be addressed as soon as practicable and a written report to all parties will be provided (within 7 days) after the investigation has been completed. Each complaint will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. The outcome of the complaint will be communicated to the complainant in writing. If the tenant is not happy with the outcome they may appeal the process. An Appeal form is available at the office. A tenant may also request external mediation to resolve the complaint with any of the agencies listed below.

- An independent mediator
- The Tenants Union of Qld
- The Residential Tenancies Authority, Dispute Resolution Service
- The Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal
- Human Rights Commission or Anti-discrimination Commission or
- The Queensland Ombudsman

## **Complaints about other tenants**

We will investigate complaints about other tenants however you will need to assess who to contact first before calling us. The following complaints must first be reported to the relevant authority. They may work with us to resolve the matter.

### **Contact the Queensland Police Service**

- for immediate safety concerns, triple zero (000)
- for suspected illegal activity
- if a neighbour is physically or verbally abusive to you
- if illegal substances are being used
- for incidents such as excessive noise or wild or rowdy parties

### **Contact Tableland Regional Council for:**

- excessive dog barking
- dangerous or roaming dogs
- cars blocking the footpath or roadway

## **Steps to resolve your complaint about another tenant**

**Step 1.** Identify who to call first.

**Step 2.** Act quickly. Provide all the details as soon as possible. The earlier you make contact the sooner an agency or TCHA can assist.

**Step 3.** Make your complaint clear. Provide as much information as possible, including how you can be contacted, details of the issue concerning you, the outcome you are seeking, and any supporting information or important dates that might assist in resolving your complaint.

Please call us after you have contacted the relevant agency. We will work with the other agencies to resolve the complaint or directly with the tenant, if required. All complaints will be taken seriously, and all parties will be treated with respect during the investigation and resolution process.

The RTA mediation service can help resolve general disputes such as those involving noise, children or pets, that may occur as part of everyday living. The Department of Justice Dispute Resolution Service can work with you and your neighbours to reach mutually agreed solutions. We will not normally become involved in these types of disputes unless the behaviour begins to escalate or negatively impacts other tenants, people or property.

We encourage you to proactively resolve issues, either informally or through mediation services.

### **35. Tenancy Advice Services**

1. Residential Tenancies Authority (RTA): 1300 366 311
2. QLD Statewide Tenant Advice & Referral Service (QSTARS): 1300 744 263

You can get free tenancy advice from the Residential Tenancies Authority (RTA) if you are having any housing problems. Tenants can be assisted with tenancy disputes including dispute resolution representation through advocacy and assistance with QCAT matters. RTA's Tenancy Dispute Resolution web address: <https://www.rta.qld.gov.au/online-tenancy-dispute-resolution>

### **Useful Emergency & Community Contacts**

<b>SERVICE</b>	<b>PHONE</b>
<b>Ambulance, Fire and Police</b>	<b>000</b>
<b>ECHO (Eacham Community Help Organisation)</b>	<b>4096 6634</b>
<b>Better Together (Atherton Community Centre)</b>	<b>4091 3850</b>
<b>Ravenshoe Community Centre</b>	<b>4097 6726</b>
<b>Home Assist</b>	<b>4091 4512</b>
<b>My Aged Care</b>	<b>1800 200 422</b>
<b>Meals on Wheels</b>	<b>4091 1686</b>

These Community Centres may offer a range of services including emergency relief, referrals to other agencies, life skill courses, meals, bus services, aged care services, youth services and assistance at home.

### **Domestic Violence 24-hour helplines**

<b>DV CONNECT Women</b>	<b>1800 811 811</b>
<b>DV CONNECT Men</b>	<b>1800 600 636</b>

<b>Elder Abuse hotline</b>	<b>1300 651 192</b>
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<b>Women's Centre FNQ</b>	<b>4091 5100</b>
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The Women's Centre FNQ offers information, referral and confidential support for women and children including legal advice, information on Domestic Violence issues and procedures for Domestic Violence Protection Orders.

**Lifeline****13 11 14**

Lifeline offers a telephone crisis counselling service for people experiencing depression, thoughts of suicide and self-harm and life skills advice for coping with everyday problems.

**Men's Help Line (24 hours)****1300 789 978**

This helpline is for men with family and relationship concerns.

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**Mulungu Health Service - Midin Clinic****4091 8400****31-33 Robert Street Atherton QLD 4883**

Mulungu Health Service is a community-based service for Indigenous people of the Atherton Tableland and surrounding areas.

**Services:**

- Health checks & telehealth appointments
  - Doctor consultations
  - Immunisations
  - Sexual health
  - Minor surgery
  - Mental health; Counselling & Support Services
  - Mums & bubs; Family Support Services
  - Care coordination & supplementary services
  - Referral to Allied Health
  - Referral to specialists
  - Care plans (diabetes & chronic disease)
- 

**Mamu Health Service****41 Grigg St, Ravenshoe QLD 4888****4043 5200****Services:**

- Wound Care
- Minor Procedures
- Case Conferencing
- Acute Care
- Immunisations
- Hearing Health
- Mental Health Care Plans & Referrals
- Sexual Health Screening & Education
- Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Health Checks
- Chronic Disease Care Plans & Referrals