

Living Strong

Program guide to sustaining our remote housing tenancies

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2.1	January 2021	Karen Taylor	Inclusion of new pets policy and final for approval

List of Attachments

Attachment	Title
A	Communities by DTFHC region
B	Suggested Session Plans
C	Tenancy Agreement Fact Sheet
D	Visitor Management Policy Fact Sheet
E	Visitor Management Poster
F	Information for people affected by antisocial behaviour Fact Sheet
G	Budget Worksheet (excel attachment)
H	Paying rent for your house Fact Sheet
I	Paying your rent and bond Poster
J	Debt management Fact Sheet
K	Public housing inspection guide Fact Sheet
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M	Looking after your home – A guide for remote housing tenants
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1. Overview

The Northern Territory Government's remote housing portfolio is managed by the Department of Territory Families, Housing and Communities (the Department) and is responsible for the provision of safe and secure housing in remote Aboriginal communities, Alice Springs town camps and Tennant Creek community living areas.

The Department delivers a broad range of housing related services under the Northern Territory Government's Remote Housing Investment Program to approximately 5230 remote homes across the Northern Territory.

The Department also receives funding under the National Partnership for Remote Housing Northern Territory Agreement (NPRHNT) 2018-2023, to manage public housing across remote Aboriginal communities, Alice Springs town camps and Tennant Creek community living areas.

Due to the lack of public housing in remote communities, many of these households live in overcrowded dwellings which places the infrastructure under additional pressure due to heavy use resulting in increased repairs and maintenance.

In the new NPRHNT agreement and the associated Implementation Plan, tenancy management support services is one of the key focus areas of the strategic approach to improving public housing conditions in remote Aboriginal communities.

The Department has committed to engaging with residents and stakeholders to integrate a preventative focus to our repairs and maintenance work and build up the evidence base of the program to focus on Health Living Practices (HLPs). For this to be achieved, changes have been made across the remote Property and Tenancy Management (PTM) program. Through the remote PTM program, the Department is responsible for providing a range of tenancy management and property maintenance programs in line with the requirements of the *Residential Tenancy Act (NT)*. This includes education and support for tenants to maintain their tenancies and their homes.

The objectives of the remote PTM are to:

- Maximise the number of suitable houses available to remote Aboriginal communities;
- Improve and maintain the standard of existing houses in remote Aboriginal communities;
- Maintain the amenity of existing houses in remote Aboriginal communities as per the *Residential Tenancy Act* and the Northern Territory public housing standards;
- Provide housing services to tenants in remote Aboriginal communities to a level equivalent to that received by public housing tenants elsewhere in the Northern Territory;
- Increase the number of households in remote Aboriginal communities able to maintain sustainable tenancies; and
- Engage and empower locally based Aboriginal business enterprises in delivering services in remote Aboriginal communities where available.

The Living Strong program is an important part of the Northern Territory Government's \$36.2 million per annum remote Property and Tenancy Management program. Living Strong, has been developed to provide additional tenancy management support services, including basic tenant support to develop knowledge and increase skills to successfully maintain a safe and healthy home and living environment to be delivered by/through community based Community Housing Officers.

The Living Strong program will engage and support tenants to understand their rights and responsibilities of their lease conditions under a Tenancy Agreement, including:

- Understanding their Tenancy Agreement;
- Managing visitors and crowding;
- Responsible pet ownership
- Managing money and resources; and

- Maintaining a safe, functional and hygienic home.

2. Improving our tenancy and property management

The Department has established the *Healthy Homes* program to guide the investment into new housing approaches that promote the Healthy Living Practices (HLPs) across our 73 remote communities and selected town camps. HLPs have already been integrated into *Our Community, Our Future, Our Homes* program through design guidelines for Room to Breathe and HomeBuild NT.

Once houses are constructed or renovated, ongoing repairs and maintenance is critical to support the longevity of the house and tenant wellbeing. A feature of the *Healthy Homes* program is the integration of preventative repairs and maintenance models that focus on and ensure the dwellings health hardware is functioning. This includes the testing and the functionality of safe electricity and water supply, toilets, showers, security, washing areas and food preparation areas. Empowering our tenants to engage in this process is vital to its success.

The remote PTM program is supported through an evidenced based approach to investment into key health hardware across our remote housing. As part of this process, the Department has integrated environmental health and public health information for our tenants, which is being delivered through the Living Strong program and Remote Housing Maintenance Services Contractor.

The changes include, but are not limited to:

- The revision of service model to prioritise the nine (9) Healthy Living Practices (HLPs).
- The development of culturally appropriate materials and resources to support service providers and Departmental staff, including housing inspection checklists.
- The revision of contracts to include HLPs performance measures.
- Increasing the capability of service providers and Departmental staff to implement new PTM approaches.
- The collection of data to inform compliance, service planning and evaluation activities.
- Culturally appropriate methods of communication and information sharing.

3. What is Living Strong?

The Living Strong is an innovative tenancy support program for Aboriginal housing in remote communities. The program will work with tenants to identify where they need support to improve their life skills, increase their ability to manage their household and ancillary property independently and support better tenancy results as part of the remote PTM program. The program provides early engagement and support for tenants to build life skills and maintain their household. It focuses on enabling people to develop up practical living skills and better coordinated property maintenance with an understanding that looking after your house and yard is an important part of looking after your family's health.

An initiative of the Department, the Living Strong program will be delivered in partnership with Regional Councils, Aboriginal Business Enterprises and Aboriginal controlled housing organisations.

4. How will Living Strong support people?

Living Strong will enhance the previous tenancy support program delivered by funded service providers and will commence from 1 July 2021 or sooner, where applicable. The program has been developed through consultation with stakeholders, including current tenants, service providers and government agencies. The strong feedback was the need to establish a tenancy support program focusing on the core living skills for tenants.

The program will aim to:

- increase knowledge and capacity of tenants to meet their tenancy obligations and responsibilities;
- improve sustainability of tenancies by supporting tenants to develop the knowledge and skills to successfully maintain a safe and healthy home and living environment;
- reduce repairs and maintenance costs and increased life of housing infrastructure; and
- improve environmental health outcomes for households in line with the nine HLPs.

5. Program Implementation

5.1. Purpose of the Guide

This guide has been prepared to provide tenancy management support service providers with information to deliver Living Strong tenancy education and support to public housing tenants in remote communities, town camps and community living areas.

5.2. Targeting our communities

In planning delivery of Living Strong, it is recommended that service providers consider community and individual needs and, where appropriate, tailor the material content and/or approach to suit.

Living Strong is part of a range of early and ongoing supports for tenants and is complemented by the work of Housing Maintenance Services Contractors and Departmental staff.

Service providers are required to deliver Living Strong in line with the terms of the Tenancy Support Services Contract and will be supported by regional Departmental staff.

For further information on the leased and other tenure related communities, please refer to **Attachment A**.

5.3. Information currency and access to resources

The Departmental policies and suggested resources provided with this guide are current as at November 2020. As policies and associated information are reviewed and or subject to change, it is recommended that service providers work closely with the Department to ensure the information is current.

Information relating to Departmental policies is available from <https://dhcd.nt.gov.au/publications-and-policies/housing-publications>.

6. Program Principles

Living Strong program principles include:

- the use of culturally appropriate strategies and principles that promote members of households voluntarily adopting healthy living practices;
- that any activities at household level are based on assessed needs of individual households;
- that all responsible household members participate in program activities to promote a shared understanding and responsibility;
- the use of action learning methods, including the use of practical demonstrations; and
- that any material and information provided to tenants should be in plain English and be delivered in a manner that is culturally and linguistically appropriate to the community in which it is being delivered.

6.1. Expected outcomes

Tenants will have the knowledge, skills and resources to successfully maintain their tenancy, including maintaining a safe, healthy home and living environment.

Tenants will:

1. Know and understand what a Tenancy Agreement is and their rights and responsibilities under the Agreement.
2. Understand and apply the rules about visitors, including but not limited to knowing:
 - a. their rights to have visitors;
 - b. how many visitors are allowed and for how long visitors can stay;
 - c. that visitors are subject to tenancy rules;
 - d. that visitors are required to respect the rights of neighbours; and
 - e. how to deal with unwanted visitors.
3. Understand the need to:
 - a. Keep track of their money;
 - b. Make priorities about spending their money; and
 - c. Plan ahead and make a budget.
4. Have the knowledge and skills to:
 - a. Promote safety in the home and avoid hazardous behaviours and situations, including but not limited to:
 - i. dealing with household chemicals and dangerous materials;
 - ii. reporting electrical faults or water leaks; and
 - iii. Identify safety risks in the home, such as power points, cords and chargers.
 - b. Undertake living practices so as to:
 - i. maintain good domestic and environmental hygiene;
 - ii. protect the health and safety of all members of the household;
 - iii. improve household nutrition through safely storing food and the safe preparation and cooking of food;
 - iv. identify and report damage or repairs; and
 - v. maintain safe ways to use household amenities (what not to flush down the toilet and why, don't remove taps/showers heads, don't remove door handles and windows, don't break power points).
 - c. Safely and confidently:
 - i. keep the yard neat and tidy and free of rubbish and garden waste;
 - ii. reduce disease causing agents inside the home and in the yard, such as pests (like cockroaches, ants and rats) dust, waste (including waste water) and dangerous materials; and
 - iii. undertake basic maintenance tasks such as changing light bulbs, tap washers etc.

6.2. Healthy Living Practices

The Healthy Living Practices (HLPs) link the health hardware of the household with what happens in the home. There is a focus on nine HLPs which are:

1. Washing people;
2. Washing clothes and bedding;
3. Removing wastewater safely;
4. Improving nutrition;
5. Reducing the impact of crowding;
6. Reducing the impact of animals, insects and vermin;
7. Reducing the impact of dust;
8. Improved temperature control; and
9. Reducing minor trauma¹.

¹ Health Habitat, The Health Story, accessed <http://www.housingforhealth.com/about/the-health-story/>
DEPARTMENT OF TERRITORY FAMILIES, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES

6.3. Program Material

Material for the Living Strong program is provided in three parts:

1. Suggested Session Plans (six) (Attachment B);
2. Fact sheets and guides (including online resources) collated for each Tenancy Information Pack; and
3. Money manager and budget planning tools (Excel spreadsheets).

Suggested resources are samples of materials, some of which are used in urban and remote locations. It is the responsibility of the Service Provider to ensure that it is delivered in a manner that is culturally and linguistically appropriate to the community in which it is being delivered.

Suggested concept materials:

Renting in community in various languages (NT)

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL7ebY-LcWG4TDNJkklWJ4-DuLOqB57UgH>

Rheumatic heart disease (RHD) resource – ‘Looking after your house’

<https://www.rhdaustralia.org.au/resources/keeping-your-house-clean-flipchart>

WA Based model – Deadly tenants, Deadly Homes in English and language

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLTaknl3NG-Jm_2JypWav6RvRbhjbxzGUo

My Tenancy My Home - Tenant Matrix Ngaanyatjarra WA

<http://www.test.housing.wa.gov.au/stepportal/Forms/AHS%20My%20Tenancy%20Matrix%20-%20Ngaanyatjarra%20Version.pdf>

Communities by region

Darwin (Arafura Region) Phone: 8995 5122	Nhulunbuy (Arnhem Region) Phone: 8987 0533	Katherine (Big Rivers Region) Phone: 8973 8513
Belyuen Gunbalanya Maningrida Milikapiti Minjilang Nama Outstation Nauiyu Nganmarriyanga (Palumpa) Peppimenarti Pirlangimpi Wadeye Warruwi Wudapuli Outstation Wurrumiyanga (Nguui)	Angurugu Galiwin'ku Gapuwiyak Gunyangara Milingimbi Milyakburra Ramingining Umbakumba Yirrkala	Amanbidji Barunga Beswick Binjari Bulla Bulman Daguragu Eva Valley (Manyalluk) Jilkminggan Lajamanu Kalkarindji Kybrook Farm Minyerri Ngukurr Numbulwar Pigeon Hole Rittarangu Robinson River Weemol Yarralin
Tennant Creek (Barkly Region) Phone: 8962 4497	Alice Springs (Central Australia Region) Phone: 8951 5344	
Ali Curung Alpururulam Ampilatwatja Canteen Creek Imangara Tara Tennant Creek Community Living Areas Wutunugurra	Alice Springs Town Camps Amoonguna Areyonga Atitjere Engawala Finke Haasts Bluff Imanpa Kaltukatjara Kintore Laramba Mount Liebig Mutitjulu Ntaria (Hermannsburg) Nturiya Nyirripi Papunya Pmara Jutunta Santa Teresa Titjikala Wallace Rockhole Willowra Wilora Yuelamu Yuendumu	

Session 1 – Tenancy Agreements, Pets, Managing Visitors and Managing Money

Learning outcomes	Suggested Resources
<p>Tenants understand that a Tenancy Agreement is a legal document and that different parts of the Agreement set out different rights and responsibilities for both the tenant and the person or organisation that owns the house (the landlord).</p> <p>By signing a Tenancy Agreement it means that you agree to do the things within the agreement like looking after your house, paying bond and rent and making sure your visitors follow the rules.</p> <p>Tenants understand that Department staff and interpreters are available to assist.</p>	<p>Fact Sheet – Tenancy Agreement (Attachment C)</p> <p>Tenancy Information Pack</p> <p>Audio – videos in relevant languages</p> <p>Housing Authority WA-Deadly Tenants, Deadly Homes – Rights and Responsibilities</p> <p>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qTFjOHvMox8&list=PLTaknl3NG-Jm_2JypWav6RvRbhjbzxGUo&index=15</p>
<p>Territory Families, Housing and Communities recognises the benefits to families and individuals by keeping animals as pets.</p> <p>This includes the importance of assistance animals to persons with disabilities.</p> <p>As a pet owner there a number of responsibilities you need to know to keep your pet healthy.</p> <p>All animals must be kept in a manner that ensures the ongoing welfare and safety of the animal.</p> <p>To safely keep your pet at the premises you may have to make changes to the premises. The CEO (Housing) must approve any changes to the premises before you start any work and you will need to pay for the changes.</p>	<p>Fact Sheet – Keeping pets in public housing (Attachment Q) Audio – videos in relevant languages</p>
<p>Tenants can have visitors.</p> <p>Understanding how long visitors can stay. The requirement is to advise the Department if longer than 14 days.</p> <p>Visitors have to follow the same rules as tenants.</p> <p>Tenants are responsible for making sure visitors follow the rules.</p> <p>The Department can help if tenants are having trouble with visitors.</p>	<p>Visitor Management Policy and Poster (Attachments D and E)</p> <p>Fact Sheet – Information for people affected by antisocial behaviour (Attachment F) NT Government advertisement (YouTube video)</p> <p>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ThSShTU7VLA</p> <p>Audio – videos in relevant languages</p> <p>NT Government Website -Visitors in Public Housing</p>
<p>Tenants need to advise the Department within 28 days if the people living in the house changes – when someone moves in or out of the house.</p>	<p>https://nt.gov.au/property/public-housing/tenants-your-rights-and-responsibilities/visitors-in-public-housing</p>

Learning outcomes	Suggested Resources
<p>Money is needed for a range of essential items, including rent and food, as well as extras, like phones.</p> <p>Understanding what are essential items (priorities) and what are 'extra or nice to have' items.</p> <p>Discuss the types of things that money is needed for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rent and bond • Food • Power • Transport • School • Shampoo/Conditioner • Cleaning products • White goods (fridge, washing machine) and furniture • Clothes • Old debts/loans • Phones • TV/DVD • Entertainment • Medicine 	<p>Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC) Money Smart website – www.moneysmart.gov.au Budget planner. The planner helps to work out where your money is going.</p> <p>Audio – videos in relevant languages</p> <p>Money management program</p>
<p>It is important to plan ahead to manage your money.</p> <p>What is a budget?</p> <p>Household costs to be shared between everyone living in the house.</p>	<p>Budget Worksheet (Attachment G)</p> <p>Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC) Money Smart website – www.moneysmart.gov.au</p> <p>Audio – videos in relevant languages</p> <p>Financial literacy program – check with IBA or local orgs</p>
<p>You are required to pay a Bond – what is a bond, what happens to it while you are living in the house and when you move out.</p> <p>How often rent needs to be paid.</p> <p>What to do if you are having trouble paying rent.</p> <p>Rent is used by the Department to help look after remote houses.</p>	<p>Fact Sheet – Paying rent for your house (Attachment H)</p> <p>Paying your rent and bond poster (Attachment I)</p> <p>Fact Sheet – Debt management (Attachment J)</p> <p>Audio – videos in relevant languages</p> <p>https://nt.gov.au/property/public-housing/paying-your-rent-in-public-housing/paying-bond-and-other-charges</p>

Session 2 – Looking after your house focusing (HLPs)

Learning outcomes	Suggested Resources
<p>Looking after your house is an important part of looking after your family's health. Different areas of the house that need to be cleaned and how often:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kitchen (see Session 3) • Laundry, bathroom and toilet (see Session 4) • Floors • Walls • Windows and louvres • Fans • Light switches and power points 	<p>Fact Sheet – Public housing inspection guide (Attachment K)</p> <p>Audio – videos in relevant languages</p> <p>Practical demonstration</p> <p>https://nt.gov.au/property/public-housing/looking-after-your-home/look-after-your-public-housing-home</p> <p>Rheumatic heart disease (RHD) resource – 'Looking after your house'</p> <p>https://www.rhdaustralia.org.au/resources/keeping-your-house-clean-flipchart</p> <p>Housing Authority WA-Deadly Tenants, Deadly Homes</p> <p>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9dFRuNhsp_o&list=PLTaknl3NG-Jm_2JypWav6RvRbhjbxzGUo&index=17</p>
<p>Most cleaning can be done with white vinegar and bi-carb soda which are cheap to buy and safe to use.</p> <p>Cleaning cloths – use one cleaning cloth in the kitchen, a different one in the bathroom and a different one on the floor and walls so you don't spread germs. Using different coloured cloths will help people remember where each cloth can be used.</p> <p>Cleaning products can be poisonous and can make people very sick. Store in safe and secure place so that young children cannot get to them.</p>	<p>Fact sheet – Recipes for a spotless healthy home (Attachment L)</p> <p>Practical demonstration</p> <p>Rheumatic heart disease (RHD) resource – 'Looking after your house'</p> <p>https://www.rhdaustralia.org.au/resources/keeping-your-house-clean-flipchart</p> <p>Ask local store to stock vinegar and bi-carb soda, eucalyptus and tea tree oil, spray bottles and labels (and any other cleaning material referred to in the session).</p> <p>Audio – videos in relevant languages</p>

Session 3 – Looking after your kitchen (HLPs)

Learning outcomes	Suggested Resources
Different areas of the kitchen that need to be cleaned and how often: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Benches• Cupboards• Stove and oven• Sink• Fridge	Looking after your home guide (Attachment M) Practical demonstration Audio – videos in relevant languages https://nt.gov.au/property/public-housing/looking-after-your-home/look-after-your-public-housing-home/looking-after-your-kitchen Rheumatic heart disease (RHD) resource – ‘Looking after your house’ https://www.rhdaustralia.org.au/resources/keeping-your-house-clean-flipchart
The kitchen needs to be kept clean, particularly after a meal is prepared. Food in cupboards should be kept in closed containers or sealed bags.	Cleaning material House or class room with kitchen facility with practical demonstration. Food for lunch.

Session 4 – Looking after your laundry, bathroom and toilet (HLPs)

Learning outcomes	Suggested Resources
<p>Different areas of the laundry, bathroom and toilet that need to be cleaned and how often:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benches and cupboards • Basins and tubs • Shower and bath • Washing machine • Floors • Toilet • Drains to be kept clear 	<p>Looking after your home guide (Attachment M)</p> <p>Practical demonstration</p> <p>Rheumatic heart disease (RHD) resource – ‘Looking after your house’ https://www.rhdaustralia.org.au/resources/keeping-your-house-clean-flipchart</p>
<p>The laundry needs to be kept clean, particularly to make sure water can drain away.</p>	<p>Cleaning material.</p> <p>Practical demonstration</p>
<p>The bathroom and toilet need to be kept clean to help stop mould growing and germs from spreading.</p> <p>Reminder – to use different cleaning cloths for different areas of the house to stop germs spreading.</p> <p>Toilet</p> <p>How to clean toilets</p> <p>What not to flush</p> <p>Hoses must not be used to clean the inside of the house because they cause damage to power points, floors, tiles and walls.</p> <p>Keep drains clear.</p>	<p>Cleaning material.</p> <p>Practical demonstration</p>

Session 5 – Looking after your yard and pest control (HLPs)

Learning outcomes	Suggested Resources
<p>Looking after your house includes looking after your yard and pest control.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grass – keep the grass short and mow it regularly. Pull out weeds and put them in the bin. • Only plant bushes, flowers or shrubs that you can take care of and water your garden and plants in the evening. • Make sure garden taps are turned off when not in use and water is not left running for animals. Water for animals should be left in shallow dishes. • Keep plants, timber or firewood two metres from the house to help stop white ant damage. • Keep your yard free of rubbish and put the bin out on ‘bin day’ so it can be emptied. • Make sure people don’t swing on the clothes line or hang anything heavy on it. • Make sure people don’t climb or cut holes in the fences. 	<p>Practical demonstration</p> <p>Mower</p> <p>Gardening tool and personal protective equipment</p> <p>Audio – videos in relevant languages</p> <p>Rheumatic heart disease (RHD) resource – ‘Looking after your house’ https://www.rhdaustralia.org.au/resources/keeping-your-house-clean-flipchart</p> <p>Housing Authority WA-Deadly Tenants, Deadly Homes –Everyone cleans up house and yard https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLTaknl3NG-Jm_2JypWav6RvRbhjbxzGUo</p>
<p>Under your Tenancy Agreement you need to advise the Department if you notice termites or ginger ants that might damage your house or if you are having trouble with too many bugs and pests as your house may need to be sprayed/treated.</p> <p>Tips for controlling pests:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep food in cupboards in plastic boxes with lids or plastic bags • Don’t keep, eat or cook food in the bedrooms • Keep cats, dogs and other pets outside of the house. You can use tick and flea collars and washes to kill ticks and fleas. • Use cockroach baits or bombs before the problem gets too big (keep away from children). Tea tree or eucalyptus oil can also help keep bugs away. • Put rubbish in the bin and make sure bins are cleaned and emptied regularly (at least weekly). This will keep flies and maggots out of bins. • Keep doors closed and make sure fly screens do not have holes. Call Housing on 1800 104 076 or talk to your local Housing staff to report pests. 	<p>Audio – videos in relevant languages</p>

Session 6 – Preventative Repairs and Maintenance (HLPs)

Learning outcomes	Suggested Resources
<p>Tenants are responsible for looking after their home and keeping it in good working order.</p> <p>Cleaning your home and yard will help keep your home in good working order.</p> <p>You can also look after your home by undertaking basic repairs and maintenance (identify what these are) and reporting any problems to Housing.</p> <p>Not having damage repaired can lead to bigger problems.</p>	<p>Repairs and maintenance poster (Attachment N)</p> <p>Audio – videos in relevant languages</p> <p>Rheumatic heart disease (RHD) resource – ‘Looking after your house’ https://www.rhdaustralia.org.au/resources/keeping-your-house-clean-flipchart</p>
<p>Tenants need to let Housing know if their house needs repairs and maintenance.</p> <p>How to let Housing know if something needs to be repaired.</p> <p>Housing will organise for someone to fix damaged or broken items. The amount of time it takes to undertake the repairs will depend on how urgent it is.</p> <p>If damage is deliberate, Housing will fix it to make sure nobody gets hurt but you will have to pay back the cost of repairs.</p> <p>You must not make changes to your house or yard, including adding any new door locks, without asking Housing first.</p> <p>Talk to Housing staff if you want to make any changes to your house or yard.</p>	<p>Fact Sheets</p> <p>Repairs and maintenance poster (Attachment N)</p> <p>Safer, healthier homes (Attachment O)</p> <p>Fact Sheet – Repairs and maintenance for your home (Attachment P)</p> <p>Sticker with the relevant contact details in each home. Sticker to be placed in consistent location in each home; suggested inside power box.</p>
<p>You can also look after your home by undertaking basic repairs and maintenance.</p> <p>Tenants learn how to complete some basic repairs, such as replacing a tap washer to repair a leaking tap and changing a light bulb.</p> <p>Tenants learn how to test a smoke alarm.</p>	<p>On site session</p> <p>Items to undertake repairs, such as light bulbs, tap washers, tools etc.</p> <p>Smoke alarm for testing.</p>

Tenancy Agreement

This fact sheet describes what a Tenancy Agreement is and how you can get more information.

The Public Housing Tenancy Agreement is a legal document which tells you your rights and responsibilities about the property (house and land around the house).

A Tenancy Agreement is signed by the tenant and the landlord (TFHC is the landlord for remote housing in Northern Territory communities).

Signing a Tenancy Agreement means that you agree to do certain things like looking after your visitors, paying bond and rent and looking after your house.

The landlord also agrees to do certain things, like conducting repairs and maintenance.

If you need advice on your rights and responsibilities as the Tenant, please call Northern Territory Consumer Affairs on (08) 8999 1999 or 1800 019 319.

Your Housing Officer can also help you or can arrange an Interpreter.

Where can I get more information?

For more information contact your local Housing office:

Arafura Region

Building 4 Cas Com Centre
13 Scaturchio Street, Casuarina NT
8995 5122

Casuarina

MET Building, 13 Scaturchio Street, Casuarina
8999 8814

Palmerston

Highway House, Palmerston
8999 4767

Darwin

RCG Centre, 47 Mitchell Street Darwin City.
8999 8814

Alice Springs

Alice Plaza, First floor, Todd Mall
8951 5344

Nhulunbuy

Nhulunbuy Training Centre, Chesterfield Circuit, Nhulunbuy
8987 0533

Katherine

NT Government Centre, Ground floor, First Street, Katherine
8973 5813

Tennant Creek

NT Government Centre, Peko Road, Tennant Creek
8962 4497

Or visit the website: nt.gov.au.

Visitor Management Policy

Territory Families, Housing and Communities has a Visitor Management Policy to help tenants manage their visitors.

How long can visitors stay?

Visitors can stay for up to two weeks (14 days) with your permission. If your visitor/s is going to stay for longer than two weeks you must apply to the Department for permission.

How do I apply for a visitor to stay?

You need to fill out a Visitor Extended Stay application form, to tell us who is staying with you and how long they will be staying.

The form is available from your local housing office, and on the Department website. The Department will assess your application and inform you of the outcome. Visit your local housing office if you need help to fill out the form.

How many visitors can stay with me at one time?

This will depend on the number of people already living with you, and the number of bedrooms there are in your home.

What help can I get to manage my visitors?

If you need help managing your visitors, you can call NT Police on 131 444 or contact your local housing office or call your Public Housing Safety Officer on 1800 685 743.

Refer to page 2 for a list of Department office contacts and locations.

The Department can also help you to manage your visitors. This may include the Department speaking directly with your visitors, issuing a letter asking visitors to move on, assessing the number of people in your house to decide if it is overcrowded, or refer you to support services.

Will my application be approved?

Department staff have the discretion to consider requests for visitors to stay longer than two weeks (14 days). The Department understands that sometimes visitors need to stay longer for cultural, sporting, medical or family reasons.

The Department will decline longer term visitors if their presence will cause overcrowding, they cannot provide evidence of having a permanent home elsewhere, or they are a former tenant or recognised occupant of a Department tenancy which has been terminated and/or repossessed by the Department within the last two years.

What happens if my visitors cause overcrowding or antisocial behaviour?

If overcrowding is a concern, the Department may ask visitors to leave. If visitors refuse to leave, the Department may use legal options to enforce the policy.

If visitors are causing antisocial behaviour, you may ask your visitors to leave, call NT Police on 131 444 for assistance, or call your local housing office or Public Housing Safety Officer on 1800 685 743.

The Department can also issue visitors with a Notice of Direction to stop the behaviour or take other legal action.

The Notice of Direction may direct the person not to engage, or to stop engaging, in antisocial behaviour. If the person is not a tenant of the premise, the notice may include a Notice of Direction to leave.

If you have visitors who cause overcrowding, the Department may ask your visitors to leave or may issue a Trespass Notice with your cooperation and consent.

The Department may also issue a Notice to Remedy a breach of your tenancy agreement which you could then show your visitors. You can use this notice to tell visitors they can no longer stay on the property.

Does this policy apply to tenants living in remote areas?

Yes. The policy is applicable to all public housing tenants and visitors to public housing in the Northern Territory.

Where can I get more information?

To find out more, contact your local housing office:

Greater Darwin	Building 5 Cas Com Centre, 13 Scaturchio Street, Casuarina NT	8999 8814
Nhulunbuy	Shop 2 Arnhem House, Endeavour Square, Nhulunbuy NT	8987 0533
Arafura Region	Building 4 Cas Com Centre, 13 Scaturchio Street, Casuarina NT	8995 5122
Tennant Creek	NT Government Centre, Peko Road, Tennant Creek NT	8962 4497
Katherine	NT Government Centre, First Street, Katherine NT	8973 8513
Palmerston	Highway House, Chung Wah Terrace, Palmerston NT	8999 4767
Alice Springs	Level 1, Alice Plaza, 36 Todd Mall, Alice Springs NT	8951 5344



Change to Visitor Management

Do you live in public housing?

Are visitors coming to stay with you?

Visitors can now stay for 2 weeks (14 days)



If visitors are staying longer you need to ask Housing or your local tenancy contractor for permission.

To find out more please go to www.dlghcd.nt.gov.au
OR contact your local Housing office on 1800 104 076

Information for people affected by antisocial behaviour

Territory Families, Housing and Communities takes community safety in and around public housing seriously.

The Department promotes community safety and works closely with the Northern Territory Police, and other government agencies to manage antisocial behaviour.

What is antisocial behaviour?

Antisocial behaviour is when another person's behaviour causes a nuisance or interferes with the reasonable peace and privacy of others. Examples of antisocial behaviour includes:

- Excessive noise from a television, radio or party
- Moderate damage to property that is intentionally caused
- Verbal abuse
- Vandalism
- Abusive, aggressive and/or frightening behaviour directed at others
- Threats to the health or safety of a person
- Physical assaults and violent acts
- Extensive or intentional property damage.

When to make a complaint about antisocial behaviour

In emergencies always dial 000 and ask for police assistance. Emergencies include life threatening or physically violent behaviour.

You can make a complaint to the Department after an incident of antisocial behaviour, in or around public housing premises, by calling 1800 685 743 Monday to Friday from 8am to 4pm.

You can call the Northern Territory Police Assistance Line on 131 444, to ask for Police Officers or Public Housing Safety Officers to attend the premises. Please let the call taker know that the incident is happening at a public housing premises. This will help the call taker dispatch the appropriate officers, depending on what may be happening.

What information do I need to provide with my complaint?

If you are affected by antisocial behaviour you are encouraged to keep a record of incidents.

You should record the following details of any incident:

- The date and time
- A description about the incident
- How long it lasted
- How it impacted on your peace and privacy
- Whether it made you feel scared, intimidated or any other fearful feelings.

What does the department do once a complaint is received?

All complaints of antisocial behaviour are investigated by the Department.

In some circumstances the complaint may be referred to the police. Referrals to police will occur when the complaint is related to criminal activity, or legally required because of mandatory reporting purposes.

If the Department can evidence the antisocial behaviour incident occurred, further action may result in any of the following:

- Demerit points issued to the public housing tenancy
- Issue of a notice to the household to enter into an Acceptable Behaviour Agreement
- Immediate termination of the tenancy agreement due to serious breaches.

Where can I find more information?

For further information you can contact a local Housing office or visit www.dlghcd.nt.gov.au

Greater Darwin (08) 8999 8814

Palmerston (08) 8999 4767

Arafura Region (08) 8995 5122

Alice Springs (08) 8951 5344

Katherine (08) 8973 8513

Tennant Creek (08) 8962 4497

Nhulunbuy (08) 8987 0533

Budget Worksheet

INCOME
\$1,500.00

Enter income in the cell to the left

EXPENSES
\$500.00

BALANCE
\$1,000.00

EXPENCES	AMOUNT
Food	\$100.00
Rent	\$100.00
Power	\$100.00
Phone	\$100.00
<i>Add other items and amounts as needed</i>	

Paying Rent for Your House

Paying rent is an essential part of your tenancy agreement with Territory Families, Housing and Communities. Tenants who pay their rent on time avoid having a rent debt.

The Department will let you know your rent amount, including if you are eligible for a rental rebate.

How to pay your rent

The Department offers services where you can set up automatic payments for your rent. These services do not cost anything to set up. The Department can help you set up the following services:

Rent Deduction Scheme – if you are receiving a pension from Centrelink, you can sign up to the Rent Deduction Scheme. Centrelink will then pay your rent to the Department direct from your pension.

Income Management Deductions – you can pay your rent from your income managed money. Centrelink will pay your rent to the Department direct from your income management.

Direct Debit Request – the Department can help you set up regular rent payments from your bank account. The Department will receive your rent direct from the bank account you nominate.

You can also make your regular rent payments through the following:

Post Billpay – You can pay your regular rent in person at any post office. You will need to reference your rent account number.

In person – You can pay your regular rent in person at your local Housing office.

Direct deductions to the Department - You can set up your own money transfers from your bank account. If you need help, you can speak to your financial institution to do this.

You can make direct payments to:

Account name: Territory Families, Housing and Communities

BSB: 085 461

Account number: 512 610 006

Reference: Please include your rent account number for all transfers.

Missing a rent payment

The Department will let you know if you are behind in your rent.

Talk to the Department before you stop paying rent or change the amount you pay. Also talk to the Department as soon as possible if you are unable to pay your rent.

It is important that you and the Department work together to avoid you getting behind in your rent.

What do I do if I move?

You should talk to your local Housing office about your rent if you plan to move out of public housing.

Where can I find more information?

Contact your local Housing office or visit dlghcd.nt.gov.au

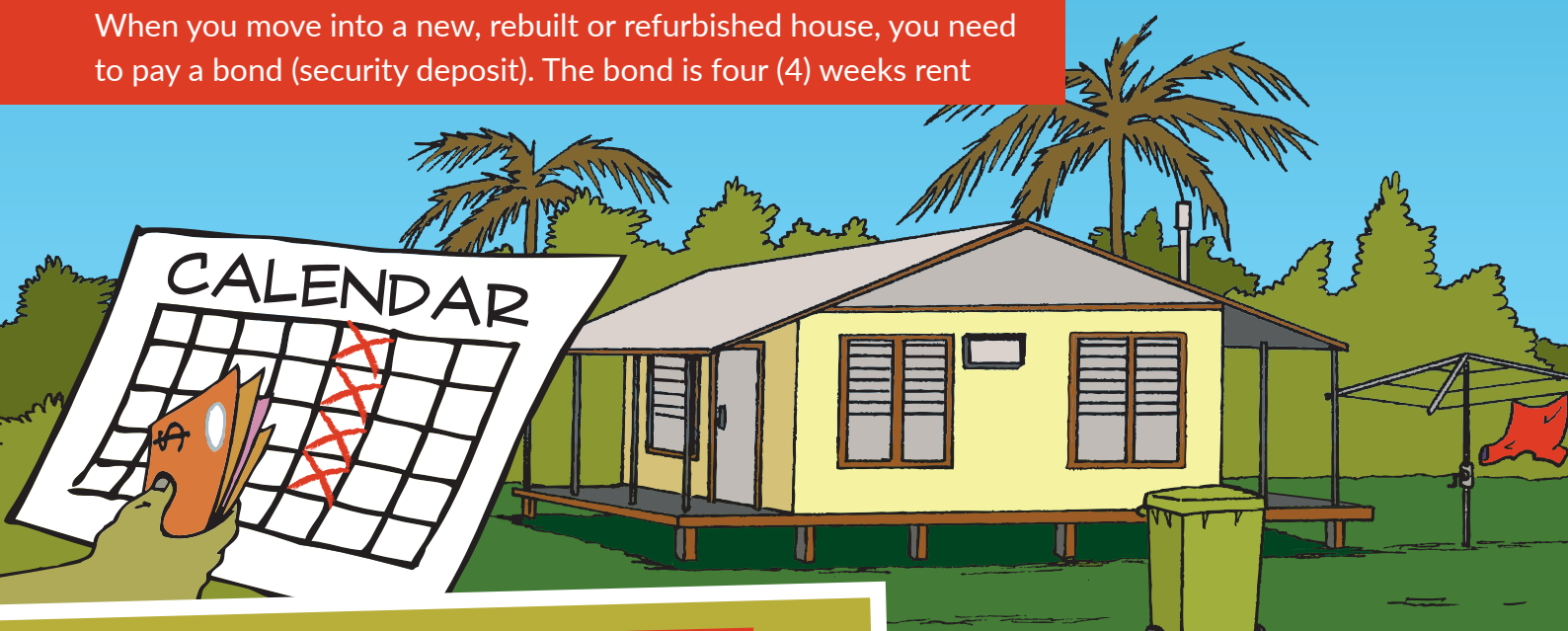
Paying your rent and bond

The rent you pay goes back into housing.

Your Housing Officer will talk to you about how much rent you have to pay.

About your bond and rent:

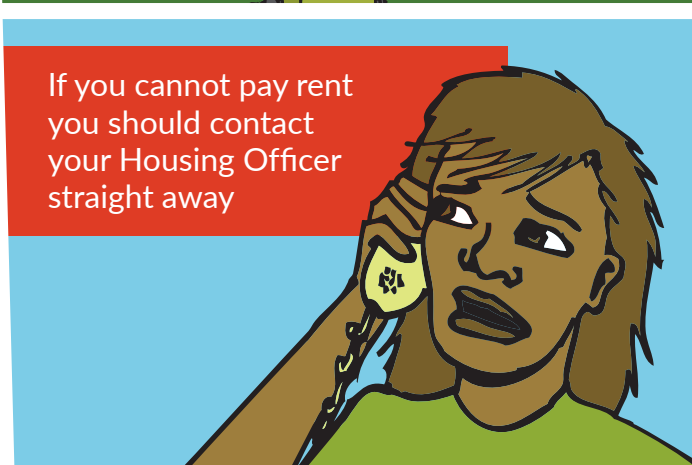
When you move into a new, rebuilt or refurbished house, you need to pay a bond (security deposit). The bond is four (4) weeks rent



Rent must be paid on time and you can get rent taken out of your wages or payments automatically. This makes paying rent easy



If you cannot pay rent you should contact your Housing Officer straight away



Debt Management

Keeping rent and bond up to date is important for a tenant. It is very serious if you cannot pay your rent or bond. If you do not pay your rent you will get an immediate debt with Territory Families, Housing and Communities.

Debt

There are several reasons you may owe the Department money. The Department gives you one month to pay any of the following before it becomes a debt:

- Charges from excess water use
- Damage to property or maintenance charges
- Costs ordered by a tribunal/court.

You should contact your local Housing office as soon as you are aware of a debt with the Department. You may be able to plan repayments with the Department to repay this debt.

The Department can make referrals to support services if you need financial counselling.

Rental arrears

Rental arrears means you are behind paying your rent. The Department will send you an arrears advice letter if your rent is seven (7) days overdue. If your rent is still not paid seven (7) days after this first letter, you will receive a final arrears advice letter.

These letters are to help you to manage your rent payments. You will also find a summary of your rent account in these letters.

You need to contact your local Housing office if you are unable to make your regular rent payments. This includes if you expect to have difficulties. The Department may be able to refer you to support services to help.

Repaying a debt

The Department recognises making one repayment for a total debt is not always possible.

An Agreement to Pay is a financial agreement between you and the Department. This agreement allows you to make regular repayments over time until you repay all your debt.

The Department will provide you with a first Agreement to Pay. If you do not make a payment as per the agreement, the Department will consider this a default. You may be able to enter a second and final Agreement to Pay after a referral to financial counselling.

The Department may take legal action if you continue to default. Legal action may be sought through the Northern Territory Civil and Administrative Tribunal to recover the debt.

Repayment amount

The Department will calculate your repayments so you are not at risk of housing stress. Housing stress may occur if you pay over 30 per cent of your household income to housing-related costs.

Your repayment amount must not be less than \$10 per week. You can speak to your local Housing office about your individual repayment amount.

Applying for public housing

You are still eligible for public housing if you have an outstanding debt to the Department.

Debt resulting from domestic or family violence

Exemptions may apply if the debt was incurred as a result of domestic or family violence. Please speak to your local Housing office for more information.

Where can I find more information?

For further information contact your local Housing office or visit dlghcd.nt.gov.au.

Greater Darwin	(08) 8999 8814
Palmerston	(08) 8999 4767
Arafura Region	(08) 8995 5122
Alice Springs	(08) 8951 5344
Katherine	(08) 8973 8513
Tennant Creek	(08) 8962 4497
Nhulunbuy	(08) 8987 0533

Preparing for your next inspection

The information below can help you prepare for your next inspection.



Walls, floors, doors, cupboards and wardrobes

Check walls, floors, doors, cupboards and wardrobes are not in an unreasonably dirty condition.

TIP 1: Remove marks and dirt with a damp cloth when you see it. This will make preparing for an inspection quicker.



Bathrooms, toilets and laundry

Sweep then mop all tiled areas. Scrub the toilet with a toilet brush and disinfectant. Clean taps, benches and laundry tub with a cloth.

TIP 4: Clean toilet bowls with flat Coke or Pepsi to get them looking shiny and clean. To dissolve lime scale, apply the flat Pepsi or Coke and leave to soak overnight.



Kitchen stove, grill and oven

Clean the areas on and around the kitchen stove, grill and oven. Include hot plates, drip trays and areas behind the stove.

TIP 2: A cheap and easy way to remove oil, grease and fats is with $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of white vinegar mixed with 1 cup of water. Spray mixture and wipe off with a cloth.



Ceiling fans and exhaust fans

Clean ceiling fan blades often with a damp cloth. Remove covers on exhaust fans before cleaning.

TIP 5: After the first clean, cover fan blades with stockings, also known as pantyhose. When you have to clean the fans again, wash the stockings in a washing machine and put them back on the fan blades.



Light fittings, power points, switches and controls

Dust and wipe down light fittings, power points, switches and controls.

TIP 3: Use the mixture of white vinegar and water from Tip 2 to clean light fittings, power points, switches and controls. Spray mixture and wipe off with a cloth.



Windows

Clean window sills, tracks, fly screens and glass from dirt and dust build up. Start with inside of windows before moving outside.

TIP 6: Add $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon of liquid soap to the cleaning mixture described in Tip 2, for a stronger solution for windows.



Cobwebs

Remove cobwebs on ceilings, walls, around windows and doors.

Also check inside and outside your house or unit for cobwebs.

TIP 7: The easiest way to remove cobwebs is with a duster or clean broom. This will save you time when it comes to reaching for cobwebs on the ceiling. You can usually buy these from your local store.



External areas

Keep all areas outside the house clear of rubbish. Keep any plants, gardens and fences tidy.

TIP 8: Keep grass tidy; garden beds and plants trimmed. Getting rid of any items that you will not use again will make your yard appear uncluttered and well maintained.

Cleaning DO's



Cleaning cloths

To make sure germs are not spread around the house, always use different cleaning cloths for the kitchen, bathroom, floor and walls.



General cleaning products

Make sure harmful, poisonous products are kept high and out of reach of children.



White vinegar and bi-carb soda

Mixing white vinegar or bi-carb soda with water are good cleaning options compared to harsh chemicals.

They are cheap to buy and safe to use.



Get everyone to help

Give every person one task to do. This will make cleaning quicker, so you can get back to more fun things in life.



Report any damages

If you see any damage, let the Department know right away by calling the maintenance call centre on 1800 104 076.

Where can I find more information?

For further information contact your local Housing office or visit dlghcd.nt.gov.au.

Greater Darwin	(08) 8999 8814
Palmerston	(08) 8999 4767
Arafura Region	(08) 8995 5122
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Recipes for a spotless, healthy home

Everyday All Purpose Cleaner

- 1 cup vinegar
- 1 cup water

Fill a spray bottle with half water and half white vinegar. Spray on any surface (except wood) and wipe off. Leave for 5 minutes on soap scum.

Gutsy All Purpose Cleaner

- ½ cup bicarbonate soda
- Vinegar
- Eucalyptus oil

Place bicarb soda into a recycled glass jar. Mix in enough vinegar to make a paste. Add a few drops of eucalyptus oil. Wipe mixture onto surfaces to be cleaned and wipe off with a soft cloth. If the paste dries out over time, simply add more vinegar.

The Gutsy All Purpose Cleaner makes a great stain remover and can be left on stains overnight before washing.

Oven Cleaner

- Bicarbonate soda
- Vinegar

Sprinkle a little bicarbonate soda over oven surface. Spray vinegar over bicarbonate soda (watch it sizzle!) then leave overnight. Wipe off with a cloth dampened with water. Wipe over one final time with vinegar on your cloth.

Mould Remover

- Vinegar
- Salt

Mix equal parts of vinegar and salt into a spray bottle. Spray onto mouldy surface, leave for a few minutes and then wipe off using a soft cloth.

Window Cleaner

- 1 part vinegar
- 4 parts water

Mix vinegar and water into a spray bottle. Spray onto windows and wipe off with window squeegee or a soft cloth.

Drain and Toilet Cleaner

- 1 cup bicarbonate soda
- 1 cup vinegar

Put vinegar into a spray bottle. Sprinkle bicarb soda into toilet bowl and spray vinegar on top. Watch it react. Leave it for 10 minutes then clean with a toilet brush and flush. To finish, put a few drops of tea tree oil on a cloth and wipe around the bowl and seat to provide some antibacterial protection.

© Australian Museum

<https://australianmuseum.net.au>

Looking After Your House

As a tenant you need to look after your house to keep it safe, clean and healthy.

To keep your house clean:

- Sweep and mop the floors regularly
- Dust away spider webs
- Wash the windows and louvres regularly
- Put rubbish in the bin and make sure bins in the house are cleaned and emptied regularly
- Wipe the fans regularly with a damp cloth
- Wipe dirty marks off walls, doors and cupboards
- Dust light switches and power points with a dry cloth.

Pest control

To keep bugs and pests like cockroaches, flies, ants, ticks, and fleas away:

- Keep your home clean and your yard tidy
- You can keep food in cupboards in plastic boxes with lids or plastic bags
- Don't keep, eat or cook food in the bedrooms
- Use cockroach baits or bombs before the problem gets too big. Tea tree or eucalyptus oil can also help keep bugs away
- Keep doors closed and make sure fly screens do not have holes
- You can use tick and flea collars and washes to help kill ticks and fleas on your pets
- Put rubbish in the bin and make sure bins are cleaned and emptied regularly. This will help keep flies and maggots out of your bins
- Tell your Housing Officer if you have problems with too many bugs and pests as your house may need to be sprayed.

Looking after your yard

- Keep the grass short and mow it regularly. Pull out weeds and put them in the bin
- Only plant bushes, flowers or shrubs that you can take care of and water your garden and plants in the evening
- Keep plants, timber or firewood two (2) metres from the house to help stop white ant damage
- Make sure people don't climb or cut holes in the fences
- Make sure garden taps are turned off when not in use and water is not left running for animals. Water for animals should be left in shallow dishes
- Keep your yard free of rubbish and put the bin out on 'bin day' so it can be emptied
- Make sure people don't swing on the clothes line or hang anything heavy on it
- Talk to your Housing Officer or local council if you need help removing car bodies or large items like old fridges.

Reporting repairs and maintenance

All repairs and maintenance need to be reported straight away. Report things like:

- Dripping taps or taps that are tight to turn
- Stove elements that are not working
- Fans that are not working properly
- Power points that are not working

Things that are dangerous or unhealthy will be fixed as soon as possible. Report things like:

- Blocked toilets, drains, sewerage leaks or sewerage coming up pipes
- Leaking water mains and pipes
- Exposed electrical wires
- Gas leaks

Looking after your laundry

- Keep the tub clean and wipe it out regularly
- Make sure no rubbish goes down the tub drain. The drain is for water only
- Remove hair and any other rubbish from the drain
- Make sure the floor drain is not covered up
- Remove any dirt, hair or rubbish from inside the washing machine after each use
- Make sure the hose for the washing machine is in the hole in the tub or in the tub so the dirty water can drain away
- Open the windows and door in the laundry when using the washing machine to help stop mould growing
- Mop or wipe up any water on the floor straight away
- Looking after your bathroom and toilet
- Wipe the bath and shower wall regularly. You can use white vinegar or bathroom cleaner to remove mould
- Clean around the taps regularly
- Use one cleaning cloth in the bathroom, a different one for the toilet and a different one on the floors and walls. This will help stop germs spreading
- Sweep and mop the floors regularly
- Remove hair and other rubbish from the drains
- Open the windows and doors when the bathroom and toilet are not being used to help stop mould growing
- Scrub the toilet with a toilet brush and disinfectant, white vinegar or toilet cleaner to keep it clean
- Don't flush nappies, cloths, toys or other objects down the toilet.

Looking after your kitchen

- Wipe the benches every day and after you have prepared food
- Wipe out the sink regularly
- Wipe the cupboards and shelving inside and out with a damp cloth regularly
- Sweep and mop the floor regularly
- Clean the oven and stove including the hot plates, drip trays and behind the stove. Use an oven cleaner to remove grease from inside the oven
- Only use saucepans or cooking trays for the oven and stove to help stop food or oil spilling
- Keep food in cupboards in plastic boxes with lids or plastic bags to help keep bugs and pests like cockroaches, flies, ants and rats away
- Never let anyone sit or put anything heavy on the oven door

Cleaning your house

You can buy products made to clean things such as ovens, windows, showers, bathrooms and floors. These products can be poisonous and must be kept out of reach of children. To help with cleaning:

- White vinegar and bicarb soda make good cleaning products. They are cheap to buy and safe to use
- Use toilet cleaner and disinfectant regularly. You can also use vinegar on a cloth to wipe around the toilet seat and cistern
- Use one cleaning cloth in the kitchen, a different one in the bathroom and a different one on the floors and walls. This will help stop germs spreading
- Use a small amount of white vinegar in a bucket of warm water to mop the floors
- A few drops of eucalyptus oil on cotton wool or an absorbent cloth placed on a bench will help keep flies away
- 10 mls or 40 drops of eucalyptus or tea tree oil mixed with one (1) litre of water can be sprayed around the house to help keep fleas and ticks out

Where can I find more information?

For further information contact your local Housing office or visit dlghcd.nt.gov.au.

Greater Darwin (08) 8999 8814

Palmerston (08) 8999 4767

Arafura Region (08) 8995 5122

Alice Springs (08) 8951 5344

Katherine (08) 8973 8513

Tennant Creek (08) 8962 4497

Nhulunbuy (08) 8987 0533

Repairs and maintenance

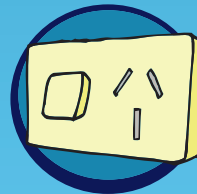
To keep houses good it is important that they are repaired and maintained often.

As soon as something is broken or stops working properly, tell your Housing Officer or Shire Service Manager.

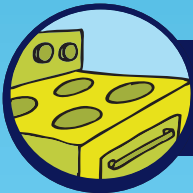
Report things like:



dripping taps or taps that are hard to turn on



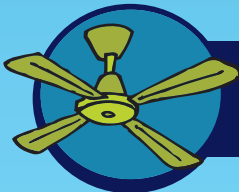
power points that are not working



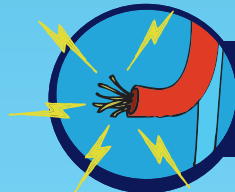
stove hotplates that are not working



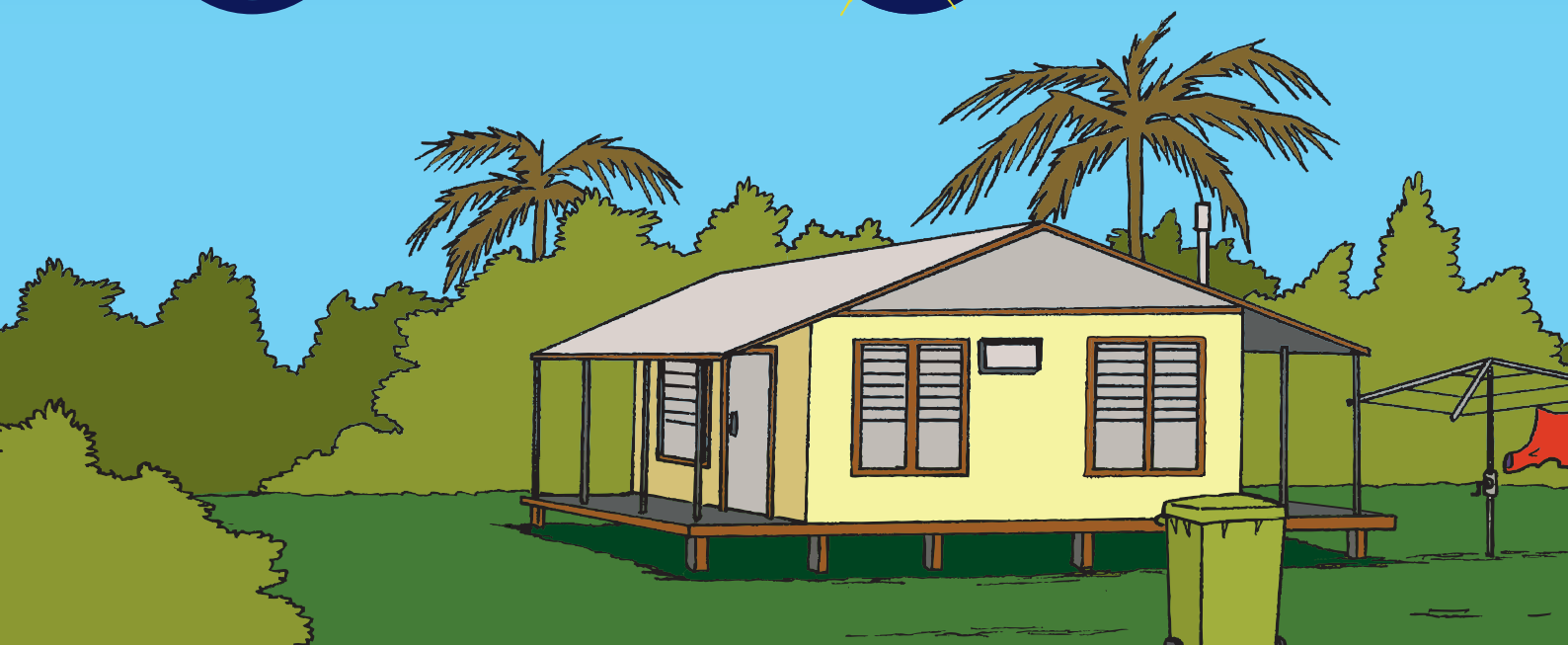
blocked toilets, drains or sewerage leaks



fans that are not working properly



electrical wires sticking out



Safer, healthier homes

The Australian and Northern Territory governments are working together on a better housing system for remote communities so people can live in safer, healthier houses.

To keep houses safe it is important that they regularly maintained and repaired.

Territory Families, Housing and Communities is responsible for repairs and maintenance of houses in remote communities.

In most communities, the Department will have an arrangement with another organisation to deliver repairs and maintenance services. Where possible, job opportunities will be made available to local people.

Housing officers

Housing officers are based in most communities. The Department aims to employ people from local communities wherever possible.

The housing officers are the first contact for any housing matters and can help you to report any repairs and maintenance issues. They will also conduct inspections of remote public houses and can support you to be a good tenant.

Property inspections

Your house will be inspected four times a year. Inspections allow the department to find out what repairs and maintenance need to be carried out immediately and other non-urgent repairs that can be completed over time.

Inspections also let the Department know that you are looking after your house as agreed when you signed your tenancy agreement.

Reporting repairs and maintenance

Repairs and maintenance should be reported to your housing officer or the Department.

If something breaks or stops working you should report it straight away. Some things will be fixed more quickly than others.

Things that are dangerous will be repaired as quickly as possible, including:

- blocked toilets, drains, sewerage leaks
- sewerage coming up pipes
- leaking water mains and pipes
- exposed electrical wires
- gas leaks.

You should also report things like:

- dripping taps or taps that are tight to turn on
- stove elements that are not working
- fans that are not working properly
- power points that are not working.

The sooner you report the problem to your housing officer, the sooner it can be fixed.

Reporting damage and misuse

You need to report any damage that has been done to your house, no matter who did the damage. In some cases you may have to pay for the damage if it was done intentionally or by misuse.

Where can I get more information?

For more information about repairs and maintenance talk to your housing officer or contact the Department:

Phone: 1800 104 076

Email: housingservices.dhsg@nt.gov.au

Online: www.dlghcd.nt.gov.au

Repairs and Maintenance

It is important the Territory Families, Housing and Communities maintains and repairs all public housing to help keep premises safe and secure. If something breaks or stops working, you need to report it to the Department immediately.

What should I report?

You should report any maintenance issue that is dangerous or unhealthy. Examples include:

- Blocked toilets or drains
- Leaking sewerage or sewerage coming up pipes
- Leaking water from taps or pipes
- Exposed electrical wires
- Gas leaks
- Dripping taps or taps that are tight to turn on or off
- Broken locks or door handles
- Stove elements that are not working
- Fans that are not working properly
- Power points that are not working.

What happens after I report a maintenance issue to the Department?

The Department will organise a contractor to fix the problem. The contractor will then contact you to organise a suitable time to come to your home.

It is important you keep your appointment time. If you cannot keep your appointment, you need to let the Department know as soon as possible. The Department will then let the contractor know and reschedule the appointment for you.

When will the contractor contact me?

The Department will assess how to treat your maintenance issue. This will determine when a contractor will contact you. A contractor will contact you based on the following:

- Immediate maintenance – response time within four (4) hours.
- Urgent maintenance – response time is within two (2) business days. Remote housing response time is within five (5) business days.
- Routine maintenance – response time is within ten (10) business days. Remote housing response time is within 25 business days.

Who pays for repairs and maintenance?

The Department will pay for any repairs and maintenance that is part of the normal wear and tear of living in a home.

You may need to pay for any intentional or negligent damage caused by you or another household member. This includes damage caused by visitors you allow to be at your home. If you don't report damage and additional damage occurs as a result of not reporting, you may be charged.

Remote Housing maintenance?

Community Housing Officers and Housing Maintenance Officers are available in some remote communities in the Northern Territory. Maintenance issues can be reported to them or call the remote Housing hotline on 1800 104 076.

The Housing Maintenance Officers will do general repairs to your home or will organise a contractor to fix any repairs requiring a qualified tradesperson.

Where can I find more information?

For further information contact your local Housing office or visit dlghcd.nt.gov.au.

Greater Darwin	(08) 8999 8814
Palmerston	(08) 8999 4767
Arafura Region	(08) 8995 5122
Alice Springs	(08) 8951 5344
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Tennant Creek	(08) 8962 4497
Nhulunbuy	(08) 8987 0533

Keeping animals

Territory Families, Housing and Communities recognises the benefits to families and individuals by keeping animals as pets. This includes the importance of assistance animals to persons with disabilities.

This fact sheet provides information for anyone who is looking to keep pets and/or assistance animals in a Housing premises. This does not include housing programs managed by agents on behalf of the Chief Executive Officer (Housing), such as affordable housing.

Notifying Housing

You must notify your local Housing office if you want to keep a pet or assistance animal at the premises by completing an Intention to keep a pet form.

The CEO (Housing) has 14 days to consider your notice. During this time, you cannot keep your pet at the premises. If the CEO (Housing) does not object to your pet, you will be notified in writing and you will be allowed to keep your pet at the premises.

If the CEO (Housing) objects to the pet, you will be notified in writing including the reason for the objection. The CEO (Housing) will apply to the Northern Territory Civil and Administrative Tribunal to decide if the objection is reasonable and you will be notified of the outcome.

Pet owner responsibilities

As a pet owner there are a number of responsibilities you need to know to keep your pet healthy.

All animals must be kept in a manner that ensures the ongoing welfare and safety of the animal.

Restraining your pet

Animals kept on the premises must not stop access to the premises for appointments such as property inspections or repairs and maintenance work. This may mean you need to restrain your pet.

Alterations to premises and damage caused by animals

You are responsible for any damage your animal causes to the premises, including any costs for repairing the damage. This includes making sure your pet does not continue to cause damage to the premises.

To safely keep your pet at the premises you may have to make changes to the premises. The CEO (Housing) must approve any changes to the premises before you start any work and you will need to pay for the changes.

Body corporate rules

Some complexes have body corporate rules that you must follow. Where a premises has body corporate rules does not allow animals, you will not be able to keep a pet at the premises.

Another example of body corporate rules is removing and cleaning your pet's waste or mess from common areas. Ask your local Housing office for more information about body corporate rules that apply to your premises.

Council Bylaws

In some regions, there are local Council Bylaws you will need to follow. This includes registering your pet and keeping certain types or number of pets.

All pets and assistance animals living at the premises must be registered to you. You must also ensure you have certification to own the particular type of animal. Generally, certification applies to animals such as snakes, reptiles and native animals.

You can find more information about your local Council Bylaws by visiting their website or local office.

Nuisance or dangerous pet behaviour

Your pet must not cause a nuisance to others such as constant barking for no apparent reason. Dangerous behaviour from your pet is also not acceptable.

All complaints about nuisance or dangerous pets should be made directly to the local Council.

If your pet is causing a nuisance or danger to residents, this may be referred to the local Council, Animal Welfare Inspectors, or Police.

Burying your pet

You must not bury a pet or assistance animal that has passed away at your premises, without written approval from the CEO (Housing). The CEO (Housing) will consider any requests to bury a pet or assistance animal, including consideration for any local Council Bylaws and environmental health laws.

Breeding pets

You must have written consent from the CEO (Housing) to breed or keep animals for commercial purposes.

Where can I find more information?

To find out more, visit the website nt.gov.au or contact your local Housing office:

Greater Darwin	Building 5 Cas Com Centre, 13 Scaturchio Street, Casuarina NT	(08) 8999 8814
Nhulunbuy	Nhulunbuy, Chesterfield Circuit, Nhulunbuy NT	(08) 8987 0533
Arafura Region	Building 4 Cas Com Centre, 13 Scaturchio Street, Casuarina NT	(08) 8995 5122
Tennant Creek	NT Government Centre, Peko Road, Tennant Creek NT	(08) 8962 4497
Katherine	NT Government Centre, First Street, Katherine NT	(08) 8973 8513
Palmerston	Highway House, Chung Wah Terrace, Palmerston NT	(08) 8999 4767
Alice Springs	Level 1, Alice Plaza, 36 Todd Mall, Alice Springs NT	(08) 8951 5344