

# Tenants Newsletter

Welcome to our 9th newsletter

Nicole & Brendon completed one year of employment with us on the 18th July and 21st June respectively

Dreamtime Housing has now been running for 3 years on the 13th August 2023. Whilst not trading for all this time the company was created back in August 2020.

## 26th September 2023

Saw our one year anniversary of managing properties transferred through the Property Management Transfer, were properties managed by DCJ Housing were transferred to Dreamtime Housing.

This issue of our newsletter we highlight a number of items that we deal with on a regular basis that we wanted to make all tenants aware of.

- Payment of Rent and rent arrears
- Updating Household Information
- Rent Subsidy and Wages
- Commonwealth Rent Assistance
- Moving to another property
- Leaving your property
- Tenant Responsibilities
- How to report repairs

## Holidays coming up - Office Closures

Christmas Day - Monday 25th December 2023

Boxing Day - Tuesday 26th December 2023

New Year's Day - Monday 1st January 2024

Our office will be closed over the Christmas period dates to be advised.



For all enquiries please call

# 1800 570 849

and follow the prompts

Alternate number for the office

# 0439 561 501

Issue 9  
July - Sept 2023

Previous Issues can be found on  
our website





## Paying Rent and rent arrears

Tenants are reminded that rent should be paid regularly - weekly or fortnightly and that they should always be 2 weeks in front.

When payments are missed/stopped for what ever reason additional money needs to be added to next payment to make up for what was missed.

If you stop your centrepay we cannot set this back up without tenants consent. A new centrepay form needs to be completed or an email/text message sent to the office requesting deduction be restarted with how much extra for arrears.

If you are setting up your own payments, please make sure you select the correct CRN as each portfolio we manage has their own CRN.

Murdi Paaki Regional Housing - **555 134 591C**  
Warren Macquarie Local Aboriginal Land Council - **555 138 911J** WMLALC  
Aboriginal Housing Office - **555 138 910L** AHO  
Wee Waa Local Aboriginal Land Council - **555 140 001A** WWLALC  
Baradine Local Aboriginal Land Council - **555 140 085J** BLALC  
Pilliga Local Aboriginal Land Council - **555 139 998T** PLALC  
Dubbo Koorie Housing Aboriginal Corporation - **555 138 909H** DKHAC

### Other ways to pay rent

Bank Deposit - Can be over the counter at a Commonwealth bank or at a CBA ATM  
Via a deposit book, which can be used at AustPost  
Transfer Via Internet Banking

References must be left so we know who paid it. Please keep any receipts.

***If you need the bank account information please call the office as there are 7 bank accounts and staff will give you the details of the one you need.***

***If you would like a deposit book please contact the office to have one organised.***

***We often get tenants asking why their rent isn't caught back up after a couple of payments.***

If you missed a fortnights payment of \$400 and you start paying \$420 per fortnight, it will take you 20 fortnights to repay the \$400 that was missed. The \$420 paid covers rent for fortnight plus \$20 towards the debt. Not \$420 off the debt.

## Updating Household Information

All tenants are reminded that if the circumstances change in their household they are to notify the office as soon as possible.

Those on subsidies also need to request a new subsidy application. These can be downloaded at any time from our website or requested to be mailed out.

These changes could be

***Person moves in - Person moves out.*** for example family member born, family member passes away or moves into their own property.

***Change in income*** - Yourself or Family member 18+ has gained employment or ceased employment (payslips and separation certificates are needed to be provided)

Failure to report changes to the household members or income as soon as possible will mean you won't get the correct rent subsidy.

Failure to provide income information requested results in tenants being charged market rent. This is for all household members 18 and over.



It is on you the tenant to tell us this information, for you to complete the forms, provide the pay slips, lodge the forms all in a timely manner for staff to run the subsidy.

For reporting purposes we also require to know how many people are living in the properties, this helps the Aboriginal Housing Office determine the need for granny flats, etc.

If tenants require temporary accommodation, we also only need to provide this to the people we know are in the property. If our records have 4 people, we find temporary accom for 4 people.

### Rent Subsidy and Wages

If you have gained employment and are receiving wages a new subsidy needs to be completed to determine if the rent subsidy still applies to you. Depending on the combined income of the adults in the property market rent may be payable.

If you are on market rent and your circumstances change, for example you lost your job you maybe eligible for a subsidy. Let the office know.

If you are getting regular casual work with varying weekly wages, to determine your rent charged you will need to provide 4-8 weeks of payslips. An average of the wages is taken by adding up all the gross wages and dividing it by the number of weeks the payslips are provided for.

For example.

Tony works casually as a cleaner and hours change each week.

Tony lets the office know by providing his payslips for 8 weeks

He completes a subsidy application and his average wage for the 8 weeks is used to determine his subsidised rent. He pays rent based on the subsidy ran for these 8 weeks.

In 8 weeks time he provides more payslips and it is run again. During this time he may have earned more money so his average is higher and his subsidy may be cancelled or his wages were lower and he gets more of a subsidy.

Subsidies are not run each week to determine your rent for those that have varying income.

We will run a subsidy review again in **April 2024** and **October 2024**.

**Rent Payable will equal the lesser of:**

**A** 25-30% of Gross Household Income + 15% Family Tax Benefit + 100% CRA

or

**B Market Rent**

For more information on the AHO rent policy  
<https://www.aho.nsw.gov.au/rent>

### Commonwealth Rent Assistance

Tenants receiving Centrelink benefits are entitled to rent assistance whilst renting a property managed by Dreamtime Housing.

If you are not sure your are receiving this benefit or the correct amount check with Centrelink. You may need to request a Rent Certificate that our staff will need to sign before you send it back to Centrelink.

This extra benefit is paid to the tenant not to Dreamtime Housing.





## MOVING TO ANOTHER PROPERTY

Tenants wanting to move for whatever reason will need to complete an Application for Housing which can be found online at

[www.facs.nsw.gov.au/housing/help/applying-assistance/assistance](http://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/housing/help/applying-assistance/assistance)

You can apply for housing assistance in NSW either online or by phone.

To apply online go to the website above and start your form. The online form is the quickest and simplest way to apply for housing assistance. You just need an email account.

You can also apply over the phone.

Call the Housing Contact Centre on **1800 422 322**, Monday to Friday: between 9am and 5pm to complete your form

**Note:** If you have already applied for housing assistance, you can access your information by registering with MyHousing Online Services and/or downloading the MyHousing mobile app on your smart phone today.

If you have been approved to be listed on the NSW Housing Register and your circumstances have changed, you can complete the Change of Circumstances online form.

### What you will need

In general, you must be at least 18 years of age however, there are circumstances where clients aged 16 or over but under 18 years of age will be considered.

For more information please see the Eligibility for Social Housing policy.

In order to submit your application, you will need to provide evidence to demonstrate that you and your household meet the general eligibility criteria for housing assistance. To assess your eligibility for housing assistance, you must provide evidence for yourself and each person on your application aged 18 years and over.

If you and your partner are under 18 years of age you must also provide this evidence.

To apply and be eligible for housing assistance you must provide evidence of:

- identity, and
- all sources of income and assets that show your household is within the income eligibility limits, and
- New South Wales (NSW) residency or an established need to live in NSW, and
- citizenship or permanent residency of Australia, and
- any land or property you or anyone on your application own, or part own, and
- your ability to sustain a successful tenancy, without support or with appropriate support in place if applicable, and
- repayments of any former debts to a social housing provider if applicable, and
- an ongoing medical condition or disability that impacts on the type of housing you or a member of your household need and evidence to support what is required.



## Moving to another property continued

Information about the type of evidence needed to assess your application is in the Evidence Requirements Information Sheet which can be found online.

Wait times for a property cannot be provided. It all depends on your position on the waiting list and the availability of properties. We do not have access to this list to see where tenants are placed and only contact when we need a new tenant for a vacant property.

If you want to know where your application is ring the Housing Contact Centre 1800 422 322

We are contracted to the AHO and must follow their process of filling vacant properties, which is to go to the Housing Pathways List.

Being on this list also means other Aboriginal Housing Organisations in this area or the area you want to move to, may be provided your name for one of their vacant properties.

It also means if you want to relocate to another area for example Sydney, Newcastle you can change your allocation zone and not be limited to the communities which Dreamtime Housing manage properties in.

## Leaving your property

Tenants who no longer wish to live in their property need to let Dreamtime Housing know that they are leaving by giving at least 14 days notice. Dreamtime Housing staff will meet with the tenant to complete an outgoing inspection and discuss damages that will be charged back to the tenant.

You cannot move other people in to take over the property, we see this as sub leasing the property. If we hear this has occurred we will investigate and if found to be correct terminate the lease of the tenant who should be living in the property.

## Abandoned properties

Dreamtime Housing will investigate suspected abandoned properties to ensure financial impacts on tenants and Dreamtime Housing are minimised and that its properties are not vacant.

When determining if a property is abandoned, Dreamtime Housing will consider the following:

- Non-payment of rent
- Evidence that the tenant is not maintaining the property (overgrown lawns, mail in the mailbox)
- Reports from neighbours that no one is living at the property and/or they saw the tenant moving out
- Water and electricity meter readings
- No response from the tenant to phone calls, letters and/or notes left at the property by Dreamtime Housing
- Photographs showing the property has been vacated such as no furniture or signs of someone living there
- Police confirmation after a Welfare Check has been conducted

In cases where it is discovered or suspected that a tenant may be deceased in the property, Dreamtime Housing will immediately contact NSW Police and not enter the property until it is safe to do so as advised by the relevant authorities.

Tenants are charged rent until we either receive the keys back to the property or in the case of an abandoned property when we have taken the matter to NCAT and they officially cancel the lease.





## Tenant Responsibilities

### Tenant Damages

Tenants must not cause or allow damage to the property, either intentionally or through lack of care or attention, including by other occupants or invited guests.

If the tenant causes or allows damage to the property, the landlord or agent can ask the tenant to arrange to repair the damage or to pay for the costs of the repairs if they are done by the landlord.

Below are some examples of damages that are charged back to the tenant. We will be asking for more information when your report repairs to determine if it is tenant damage.

### Holes in walls & doors

Dreamtime Housing will not be patching holes in walls or replacing internal doors where the damage is caused by you or a household member punching or kicking the walls or doors. If it is DV related evidence is required from support services, an AVO etc.

### Lost or misplaced keys

At the commencement of a tenancy all tenants are provided with a full set of keys to the premises.

Any additional key sets, lost keys or incidents where a tenant is locked out of their residence will be a tenant cost. You may change the lock yourself if you have lost the key or you may call the office and we send a handyman out. Travel costs for some communities is added and will also be charged to the tenant.

### Broken Windows and Glass Doors

Dreamtime Housing will replace broken windows and/or glass doors during a tenancy. If the window and/or glass doors were broken by the tenant or someone the tenant is responsible for, including children and visitors, the tenant will be charged for the cost of repairs, even in an accident (mowing the lawn, bouncing balls)

In some cases the window may need to be boarded up until the glass can be replaced.

If you or someone in your household didn't break the window, the damage needs to be reported to the police and an event number provided to the office. For example you know someone threw something at the window from the street or you had a break in.

If you hire someone to maintain your yard and they break a window or glass door then they are responsible to repair the damages

### Broken Doors on ovens

If tenants break the glass doors to their ovens they will be charged for the replacement door, but in some cases doors can't be replaced and full stoves need to be purchased. Please be careful as replacing ovens is not cheap

### Light Globes & Heat Lamps

Replacement of light globes throughout the house is the responsibility of the tenant. This includes the heat lamps in the bathroom,

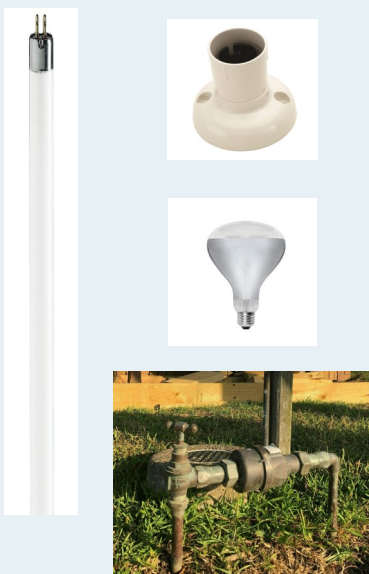
There are many different types of globes used in properties, some may need a starter to be purchased as well

If the bulb cannot go into the fitting (also known as batten holder) because it is damaged we replace the fitting, you still need to supply the light globe.

### Broken Water Meters

If you break the water meter in your front yard. You will be charged the cost of having the plumber attend to repair. You may have accidentally ran it over with your car or hit it with your mower.

If a friend accidentally runs it over they can call a plumber and pay for the cost to repair it.





### Blocked Drains/Toilet

If the drain or toilet is blocked by an item that should have not gone down it, we may charge you for sending the plumber out.

Sanitary products, toys, nappies, baby wipes do not go down drains. If the drains have been cleared and then any of these items causes another blockage the tenant will be charged for getting the plumber out.

### Pest Control

Pest control is also the tenants responsibility in some cases. Please see the table below for common pests and who is responsible.

Pest control needs to be kept on top of, not dealing it when you first notice signs of mice and cockroaches can cause damage to electrical wiring within the walls of the home, damage to wiring in stoves etc.

Pests and vermin	Landlord' responsibility	Tenant's responsibility
<b>Ants</b>	If present at the start of the tenancy	If present during the tenancy
<b>Bees and wasps</b>	If present in a wall cavity or similar if present at the start of the tenancy	If present during the tenancy
<b>Birds</b>	Remove and seal off any entry points	N/A
<b>Cockroaches, bedbugs, fleas and spiders</b>	If present at the start of the tenancy	If present during the tenancy
<b>Mice and rats</b>	If present at the start of the tenancy	If present during the tenancy
<b>Possums</b>	Remove and seal off any entry points	N/A
<b>Snakes</b>	If present at the start of the tenancy If caused by the landlord breaching the conditions of the agreement –eg landlord left piles of rubbish in garden	If present during the tenancy
<b>Termites / White Ants</b>	At the start and throughout the tenancy	N/A

### Damage to clotheslines

If your clothesline is damaged by children swinging off the arms, someone has run it over the cost of the repairs or replacement will be charged back to the tenant. Dreamtime Housing will replace when it is worn from wear and tear.

### Window screens and Screen Doors

If tenants want mesh replaced in screen doors and windows and the mesh has been ripped or cut, damaged by dogs, this is charged back to the tenant.

These are just a few examples of repairs that we see regular come through the office. We may have paid for it in the past as information wasn't provided on how it became broken, but we cannot continue repairing and replacing items damaged by tenants or family members without being reimbursed for it.

The property owners are also asking about tenant damages in the reports we provide them and they are asking that we charge tenants the cost of repairs and replacement.





## Yard Care

It is a condition in your lease that tenants will look after the property, which includes mowing the lawns, trimming trees, taking away rubbish, not leaving rubbish to accumulate.

Keeping your yard tidy also helps with keeping away pests like mice and cockroaches.

## Supplying of skip bin

It is on the tenant to organise removing rubbish from properties. We will **not** be providing tenants with skip bins.

Information has been sent to tenants on tipping vouchers, bulk rubbish collection etc for some communities.

## Complaints about yards

Individual tenants will be receiving property care letters as staff notice the state of the properties or as complaints are received.

Complaints are coming in from the local councils and direct from the Aboriginal Housing Office, as well as neighbouring properties.

Tenants who do not clean up their yards in the given time frame will be taken to the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal for a Specific Performance Order.

## Mould

Depending on how the mould came about will determine who needs to clean it.

If mould developed from a build-up of moisture because the landlord failed to repair a defective window in a reasonable time, or the property didn't have adequate ventilation – then the landlord is responsible and must fix the problem. If there is a structural issue with the property and mould becomes present then it is the landlords responsibility

if the mould developed during the tenancy because the tenants allowed a build-up of moisture by never opening any windows or not using ventilation fans in the bathroom – then the tenant is responsible.

## What can I do to prevent mould?

There are a number of steps tenants can take that will prevent mould from appearing and growing. Their aim should be to reduce the level of humidity in their home. Below we have included some of those steps they can take.

- Opening blinds and curtains during the day to let sunlight in,
- Making sure windows, skylights and doors are left open to allow fresh air in,
- Always using the exhaust fan in the bathroom, laundry and kitchen and also open any doors or windows to get rid of steam,
- Cleaning/wiping down tiles and get rid of soap scum as mould feeds on,
- Cleaning/wiping away build up of moisture on windows and walls and trying to keep the inside of their home as dry as possible,
- Ensuring to dry clothes after washing and before they are put away,
- Opening and airing out wardrobes and cupboards regularly,
- Using moisture absorbers in wardrobes and closed-off rooms and spaces,
- Avoiding indoor plants like ferns that need moist air. Choosing low-water varieties like succulents for around the house,
- Avoiding fish tanks as they add moisture to the air, especially tropical fish tanks,
- Fixing/reporting leaking taps and pipes, especially in closed areas like cabinets, and
- Investing in a dehumidifier as they help remove the moisture from the air.

More information can be found on the Fair Trading Website.



### How to report a repair

Tenants are to call the office on **1800 570 849** or the office mobile on **0439 561 501** as soon as they notice the repairs are required.

Reporting early in the day may mean a trade can attend to it the same day.

Provide as much information as possible; location, how it was broken etc  
Provide a contact number which will be passed onto the tradesperson

A work order is then sent to the tradesperson and they will attend when they can.

Some repairs do need to get completed quicker than others for example, External doors are not locking, no hot water, major water leaks, sewerage issues and electrical issues.

There are some repairs that are not urgent and tradespeople will get to you when they can, for example internal doors have come off the hinges, doors on kitchen cupboard have come off hinges. **These are not urgent.**

These are the types of jobs that also don't need to be reported after hours and weekends.

Some trades are leaving calling cards if they attend and no one is home, please call them back and reschedule your job.

More information will be sent to tenants on repair timeframes very shortly.

### After hours and weekends

After hours tenants can call 0458 525 270 or 0439 561 501 to report urgent repairs only. Please leave a detailed message and return phone number if call is not answered.

Urgent repairs are

- Burst water service or a serious water service leak
- A blocked or broken toilet
- A series roof leak
- An electrical fault
- Flooding or series flood damage
- Serious storm or fire damage (tenant is to call 000 to report fire)
- A failure or breakdown of the gas, electricity or water supply to the property
- A failure or breakdown of the hot water service
- A failure or breakdown of the stove or oven
- A failure or breakdown or heater or air conditioner
- A fault or damage which makes the property unsafe or insecure

### REGULAR CLEANING

It is the tenant's responsibility to keep the house clean and tidy.

Every so often taken the cover off the exhaust fan and wash it. Keeping this free of dust will help the exhaust work correctly

Filters in split system can also be removed and wash/dried before going back into machine.





**Murra Mia AC**

2/207 Brisbane Street  
Dubbo NSW 2830

**Phone : 02 -6881 5700**

**From 1 July 2023, the Western Aboriginal Tenants Advice and Advocacy Service (WATAAS) will be operated by Murra Mia Tenant Advice and Advocacy Service.**

We have worked closely with Murra Mia to make the transition as smooth as possible for our clients and community. Please be assured that WATAAS will continue to operate and you can still reach the team through the same number: (02) 6881 5700.

The WATAAS office has moved just down the road to 2/207 Brisbane Street, Dubbo.

It's been an honour to auspice this important service for community for the past 7 years, helping countless families to find a safe, comfortable home and stay there. We're proud of the impact that our many WATAAS team members have made over the years.

Taken from <https://www.alsnswact.org.au/wataas-murra-mia>

Murra Mia Western NSW Aboriginal Tenants Service is a FREE tenant advocacy service for Aboriginal renters in Western NSW.

They specialise in providing legal advice, mediation and advocacy with and on behalf of clients and their landlords to improve tenancy outcomes.

They can also assist tenants with NSW Civil and Administration Tribunal (NCAT) if required.

Tenants may contact Murra Mia for support with their tenancy at any time.

You don't need to wait to your get a termination letter.



**We encourage you to provide us with feedback and ideas on what you would like us to include in future editions of the newsletter.**

**Please text or email us on:**  
[admin@dreamtimehousing.com.au](mailto:admin@dreamtimehousing.com.au)  
0458 525 270