

Resident Handbook



Key contacts

Housing Choices Tasmania

General Enquiries (and non-urgent maintenance)

1300 312 447

Housing Choices Tasmania

Emergency after hours

1300 512 583

Housing Choices Tasmania

Business hours are

9am to 5pm

Monday to Friday

Tasmania Police

(non-urgent) **131 444**

Emergency Services

(Police, Fire, Ambulance)

000

National Domestic Family & Sexual Violence

Counselling Service

1800 737 732

Lifeline 13 11 14

Healthdirect 1800 022 222

If you need an interpreter

If you need an interpreter, please call **TIS National** on **131 450** and ask them to call **Housing Choices Australia** on **1300 312 447**.

You can also visit the TIS National website for translated information about the service TIS National provides.

Visit: **www.tisnational.gov.au**

Acknowledgement of Country

In the spirit of reconciliation, Housing Choices Tasmania acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout lutruwita (Tasmania), and their connections to land, sea and community.

We pay our respect to their Elders past and present, and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Contents

SECTION

1

- 4 Housing Choices & Your Tenancy**
- 5 Who are we?**
- 5 Our Teams**
- 6 Your Consent & Privacy Explained**
- 8 Rent: Your Tenant Contribution**
- 11 Rights & Responsibilities**
- 15 Inspections**
- 17 Pets**
- 18 Maintenance & Repairs**

SECTION

2

- 25 Moving House**
- 26 Moving House Checklist**
- 27 Your Utilities**
 - Water, Power & Internet

SECTION

3

- 29 Your Community**
- 30 Health & Community Services**
- 34 Children & Education**
- 35 Schools & Learning**
- 37 Transport**
- 39 Your Local Area**
- 41 Housing Choices Tasmania Community Initiatives**

SECTION

4

- 44 Trouble Shooting Common Maintenance Issues & Cleaning Tips**
- 45 Common Maintenance Issues**
- 47 Cleaning Tips**
- 50 Common Terms**

SECTION

1

Housing Choices & Your Tenancy



Who are we?

Housing Choices Tasmania (Housing Choices) is a not-for-profit housing provider that delivers social and affordable housing for people on low to moderate incomes.

We believe everyone should have the opportunity to live in a safe and secure home, in a community they feel they belong to.

Housing Choices Tasmania has offices in Hobart, Shorewell Park and Devonport and manages over 2,100 properties across the state. Our local teams work directly with residents and our communities to create secure, sustainable tenancies in neighbourhoods that support life opportunities.

Our Teams

Housing team

Our Housing Team is responsible for managing your tenancy. This includes helping you to understand and follow your lease agreement. They will also work with you to meet specific tenancy responsibilities that both parties are legally bound by as part of the Residential Tenancy Act 1997 (Tas).

TIP!

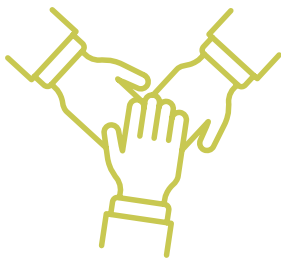
Your Housing Officer is your first point of contact for any questions about your rent or tenancy agreement.

Maintenance team

Our Maintenance Team is responsible for the repair and maintenance of our properties. This ranges from routine maintenance to emergency repairs. They also deliver our long-term planned maintenance services. We work closely with local contractors who all complete our online contractor induction program before starting work.

It's important to report any property faults or issues to us as soon as you can, in as much detail as possible, so we can arrange repairs and avoid further damage.

You can find more information on the maintenance of your property on **pages 18 to 24**.



Community Development team

The Community Development team work with support service partners and residents to deliver activities, events and programs that enhance life skills while bringing people together in their neighbourhood. Our projects aim to support your overall wellbeing by providing opportunities to work, complete training, enjoy social events, be connected with new community services, share creative talents, or learn new skills.

For more information about training and workplace pathway opportunities, please contact the Community Development team at **communitydevelopmenttas@hcau.org.au**.

Your Consent & Privacy Explained

When you become a Housing Choices Tasmania resident you will be asked to sign our Consent and Privacy Agreement. This Agreement covers two areas:

1. Communication between us (Housing Choices Tasmania) and any other person about your personal and housing details.
2. How we manage the information we hold about you in a way that protects your right to privacy and confidentiality.

You will be asked to provide permission for Housing Choices Tasmania to:

- Contact Housing Connect about any application for housing you may have lodged.
- Discuss any matters relating to your tenancy with any support agency to assist in supporting you through the period of the tenancy agreement.



- Provide your first name only and contact details to any of our contractors required to carry out maintenance works at your property.
- Pass on your personal and billing details to any utility provider whose services you are liable to pay for as a tenant.
- Pass on your non-identity personal information to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare.

Personal information held by Housing Choices Tasmania will be treated with respect and consideration of its potential sensitivity. We comply with the principles expressed by the Personal Information Protection

Act 2004 (Tas). You can locate a copy of the Housing Choices Australia Privacy Policy on our website at www.housingchoices.com.au.

Please contact your Housing Officer if you have any questions or concerns.

Centrelink Consent Form

You will also be asked to complete a Centrelink Consent Form. This form allows us to communicate with Centrelink to verify your rent, Centrepay payments and confirm your income.



Rent: Your Tenant Contribution

How is your tenant contribution calculated?

Your tenant contribution is the amount to be paid to Housing Choices for your property. In the private market, this amount is referred to as 'rent'.

Housing Choices calculates rent based on the specific circumstances of each resident. When calculating your tenant contribution, we look at two factors:

1. your total household income and/or your Centrelink benefit; and
2. the amount of Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA) you are eligible for from Centrelink.

Your rent is subsidised by government and your community housing provider, therefore you will only pay a tenant contribution towards the market rent for the property that you lease from us. Market rent is the amount that the property you are a tenant in would rent if available to the public.

- Your tenant contribution will be set at 25% or 30% of your total assessable household income plus 100% of any eligible Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA) received from Centrelink.
- Your tenant contribution will not exceed 75% of the market rent, which is periodically and independently reviewed.

The numbers (**on page 9**) are an example only. Your tenant contribution will be calculated based on your household circumstances.

If you have any questions about how your tenant contribution has been calculated, please contact your **Housing Officer**.

Here is an example:	Single person		Couple	
	Income	Tenant contribution	Income	Tenant contribution
Fortnightly income	\$746		\$1412 ^{.40}	
25% of fortnightly income		\$186 ^{.50}		\$353 ^{.10}
Commonwealth Rent Assistance	\$151 ^{.60}	\$151 ^{.60}	\$142 ^{.80}	\$142 ^{.80}
Total payable per fortnight		\$338^{.10}		\$495^{.90}

What is Commonwealth Rent Assistance?

Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA) is a payment from the Commonwealth Government to help eligible people on lower incomes to meet the costs of renting their home.

If you are eligible for CRA as determined by Centrelink, we will calculate the amount you are entitled to and incorporate it into your tenant contribution calculation. CRA will be used towards your tenant contribution and reduces the amount you pay.

Paying your tenant contribution

You can pay your tenant contribution either weekly or fortnightly.

Whilst we prefer to utilise the automated Centrepay process due to its ease for both Housing Choices and residents, we can offer a range of ways to pay:

- through the Centrepay system (for Centrelink recipients)
- by automatic bank transfer
- by a Housing Choices Tasmania Rent Card

We do not offer direct debit services for payments, but you can organise your own automatic bank transfers into our account.

In line with your lease agreement, your tenant contribution must be one payment in advance at all times.



What we do with the tenant contribution you pay

It is important you pay your tenant contribution on time as outlined in your tenancy agreement. Your tenant contribution is used to:

- ensure that Housing Choices Tasmania can continue to operate successfully;
- pay staff wages;
- maintain the property you live in including providing property upgrades;
- pay for council and water rates, insurance, Body Corporate fees and utility bills for common areas;
- support the construction of new properties; and
- provide community and resident engagement activities.

When people don't pay their tenant contribution, it impacts on our ability to provide our service to the community.



Paying bond

We require a bond payment when you commence your lease agreement with us.

Bonds are generally set at the equivalent of four weeks' rent in advance. Bonds are held with the Tasmanian State Government's Rental Bond Authority (MyBond). Your Housing Officer will provide information on this process during your initial appointment with us and can also provide information on the No Interest Loan Scheme (NILS) if required. You can apply to have the bond payment refunded when you finish the tenancy.

Rights & Responsibilities

Successful, sustainable tenancies are developed through a positive relationship built on open communication, transparency and trust.

Your responsibilities as a resident:

- Keep the inside and outside of your property clean and tidy.
- Ask for permission before putting any hooks or fixtures up on walls or making any alterations to the property.
- Let your Housing Officer know straight away if there is any damage to the home, no matter how it happened.
- Pay the full amount of tenant contribution on time.
- Understand your lease and ask your Housing Officer if you are unsure on any of the requirements.
- Be a respectful neighbour (**see page 12** for more information).

- Follow the lease agreement terms that you are legally bound by as part of the Residential Tenancy Act 1997 (Tas).

Our responsibilities as your housing provider

- Manage your lease agreement, including letting you know if you are not meeting the requirements of your lease.
- Respond to your maintenance requests.
- Manage your tenant contributions and let you know if you're not meeting your responsibility to pay the full amount on time.
- Notify you when we are visiting to inspect your home (find more information about inspections on **page 15**)
- Follow the lease agreement terms that we are legally bound to as part of the Residential Tenancy Act 1997 (Tas).

Being a respectful neighbour

In any community there needs to be a level of tolerance between neighbours. We all have the right to live safely and be respected. Getting along with your neighbours can be challenging at times, it is important to know what steps you can take and how you can get help to resolve problems.

For Housing Choices to be able to support you to effectively manage neighbourhood problems, your neighbour's behaviour must have breached the Residential Tenancy Act 1997 (Tas).

Examples of antisocial behaviours which **breach** the Residential Tenancy Act 1997 (Tas) include:

- ☐ threats of violence
- ☐ violence, assault or harassment
- ☐ intimidation or offensive behaviour
- ☐ illicit drug use or dealing
- ☐ theft, vandalism, arson or graffiti
- ☐ verbal abuse or domestic violence
- ☐ continual trespass
- ☐ excessive noise or bad smell

It is important to report antisocial behaviour immediately to the appropriate agency if you are concerned about your own or somebody else's safety.

A complaint can then be made to Housing Choices with evidence of the incident. This can include a Police or Council report number, which will allow us to investigate your claim to see if your neighbour's behaviour is a breach of their conditions of tenancy.

We cannot investigate a complaint about your neighbour's behaviour if it **does not breach** the Residential Tenancy Act 1997 (Tas). Examples of this include:

- ☐ unpleasant, annoying or unusual behaviours that are different to your own behaviours or standards;
- ☐ noise or activity associated with daily life (children playing, televisions or radios, power tools or lawn mowers); or
- ☐ differences with your neighbours that are unrelated to your tenancy including friend, family or work disputes.

In this situation, we can support you with ways to manage the problem and steps you can take to improve your relationship with your neighbour.



Before you contact us to discuss a neighbourhood problem, we encourage you to follow these steps:



Talk with your neighbour first

Remain calm and clearly explain what the problem is, so they are aware.

Ask for alternative options or solutions that both of you could agree to.

Be reasonable and prepared to compromise to find a solution.

Do not retaliate or engage in illegal activity to try and solve the problem.



Report the incident

If you don't feel safe, or if antisocial behaviour has occurred, call the appropriate agency for support:

Call **Tasmania Police** on **131 444** (non-emergency)

Call **Emergency Services** on **000**.

Call **your local council** for matters related to pet management e.g. constantly barking or dogs not being contained (you can find local council details on **pages 39-40**).



Keep written records

Write down each incident.

Stick to the facts when describing the event, include where, when, and who was involved at the time.

Note how it affected you and what actions you took in response at the time e.g. reported incident to Council or Police.



Inspections

Routine Inspections

Your Housing Officer will organise a visit to your home "at least" every six months for a routine property inspection and wellbeing check in.

We use this visit to check that your property is being looked after to an acceptable standard. You can also use this opportunity to discuss any maintenance, personal or tenancy issues you have.

We will let you know the day and a time frame for your upcoming routine inspection two weeks before the inspection is due to take place. In some instances, follow up inspections will be required (this will always be discussed with you by your Housing Officer who will provide appropriate timeframes). We prefer residents to be at their property for inspections but understand that this may not be possible in all cases.

Please note that if we are unable to work with you to arrange an inspection time, we may utilise our Right of Entry capacity under the Residential Tenancy Act 1997 (Tas).

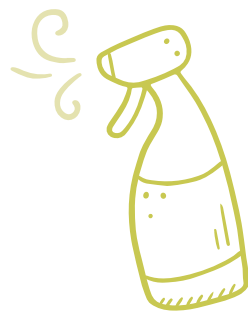


Property Condition Survey

Every three years, we survey each of our properties. You will receive a letter in the mail to let you know when the Property Condition Survey is scheduled. A Housing Choices Maintenance Officer will attend your property and take around 45 minutes to complete the Survey. It is important that any pets are contained so that our Maintenance Officer can access the property safely. The purpose of the Survey is to update our records on the physical condition of your property and create a long-term maintenance plan.

Cleaning Checklist

Are you getting ready for your routine inspection? Follow this handy inspection cleaning checklist as a guide:



Kitchen

- ☐ Clean stove top, inside oven, oven racks, griller and drip trays
- ☐ Clean bench tops, sink and fronts of cupboards
- ☐ Clean filters in range hood

Bathroom

- ☐ Clean hand basins, toilets, shower screens, bath and shower
- ☐ Clean tiles throughout bathroom
- ☐ Clean any mildew on ceiling and walls

Exhaust Fans

- ☐ Clean fan covers

Walls & Doors

- ☐ Clean any marks on walls
- ☐ Clean any dirt from skirting boards
- ☐ Dust and clean all windowsills and clean mildew from windows & frames

Floors

- ☐ Vacuum carpets throughout
- ☐ Wash all vinyl floors throughout property

External

- ☐ Clean driveways and other outdoor concrete of oil and grease
- ☐ Mow lawns, trim lawn edges & remove weeds from garden and remove all clippings from property
- ☐ Remove all discarded items and rubbish in yard from property

Heating

- ☐ Clean filters to heat pumps
- ☐ Clean grill and vents to Pureheat heaters



Pets

Housing Choices understands the importance of the companionship of pets, and will grant approval to keep small domestic pets, subject to council by-laws. Before you get a new pet, you must gain approval from your Housing Officer.

When approving a pet to live at your property, we look at many factors including:

- whether the property is a suitable size for the type or size of the pet;
- the fencing at the property, and if it is a suitable type and height for the pet; and
- the size of the yard at the property and whether it is suitable for the pet.

You will need to make sure the pet is registered with the relevant local council, micro-chipped and that all local government regulations concerning the ownership of the pet are followed. For more information about pet ownership and regulations in your area, please contact your local council.

Residents that have permission to keep a pet will have a specific, signed agreement that outlines the requirements for keeping pets.

Housing Choices retains the right as the landlord, to determine whether a resident can keep pets under their lease, please contact your Housing Officer or call **1300 312 447**.



Maintenance & Repairs

Repair Timeframes

From time to time, issues or faults will occur in your property. It's important to report these to us as soon as possible so we can arrange repairs and avoid further damage.

When you are reporting an issue or fault to us, give as much detail as you can. Please state the exact nature of the problem. The more we know about the problem, the easier it will be for us to arrange and complete repairs.

Once an issue has been reported to us, the time we take to action repairs will depend on the significance and severity of the problem. As a guide the following timeframes are what you might expect:

Emergency Repairs – Within 24 Hours



Emergency repairs will be carried out within one day or on the same day if required. This includes breakdowns or faults of the gas, electricity or water supply to your property including:

- burst water main or hot water cylinder
- a roof leak impacting the inside of your property (if safe to do so)
- an electrical fault
- a blocked toilet, sink or shower
- any damage or fault that makes your property unsafe

Priority Repairs – Within Seven Days



We aim to attend to priority repairs before they turn into a more significant problem. These repairs will be actioned within seven days of your request. Examples include:

- a slow leak of the toilet or taps
- repairs to heating/cooling appliances
- a cracked window or shower screen
- flickering lights

General Repairs – Within 14 Days



Are repairs that are required to fix minor faults or issues that do not fit into the 'emergency' or 'priority' categories. These repairs will be actioned within 14 days of request.

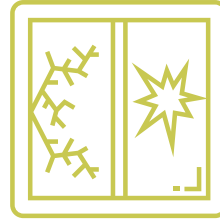
TIP!

If your toilet, sink or shower is blocked, try to unblock using a plunger or drain cleaner first. If the blockage is the result of wipes, cooking oils/fats or hair in your toilet or drain, repair charges may be passed on.

More information on troubleshooting common maintenance issues is available on **page 45**.

It's important you report maintenance issues to us as soon as possible. Contact your Housing Officer or call **1300 312 447**.

To report a maintenance issue outside of business hours, call **1300 512 583**.



Windows

As the resident, you are responsible for any broken windows caused by deliberate or careless behaviour by yourself, other household members or visitors to your property.

When glass is broken you must notify Housing Choices Tasmania immediately.

Housing Choices Tasmania will organise the glass replacement.

You may be eligible for a Tenant Damage Repayment Plan, which will allow you to pay off the debt in instalments.



Smoking in Properties

It's important that everyone enjoys their property, in the way they wish to enjoy it. However, smoking inside your property causes damage which can be extremely costly to repair. In most cases, these costs will be passed on to the resident.

When people choose to smoke inside a property, over time nicotine will coat painted surfaces with a thin brown film. Before repainting, all surfaces need to be washed, and coated with a sealer to prevent the brown colour leaching into new paintwork. The cigarette smoke also causes an unpleasant smell which soaks into all areas that have been exposed to it, potentially impacting on future occupants.

As such, it is a condition of all Housing Choices leases that residents or visitors must **NOT** smoke inside their property.

Smoke Alarms



A small fire can grow to take over an entire room in two to three minutes. A smoke alarm provides early warning and time to escape.

The Residential Tenancy Act 1997 (Tas) requires all property owners to install and maintain smoke alarms in rented residential properties. Your property is equipped with smoke alarms in line with the relevant regulations.

During your time in your property, you will need to:

- Test that your smoke alarm is functioning effectively. You can do this by pressing the test button on the smoke alarm with a broom handle, to see if the alarm makes a beeping sound. The Tasmanian Fire Service recommend testing this monthly.
- Discuss when you need to change the battery in your smoke alarm with your Housing Officer.
- Vacuum your smoke alarm every six months to remove any dust and debris that is caught in the vents.

If your smoke alarms are not working effectively, or at all contact your Housing Officer or call **1300 312 447** to report the issue.

Pests and Rodents

To avoid pest infestation, it is important to keep your property clean and tidy. Common household pests include flies, cockroaches, spiders, ants, and rodents like mice or rats. A pest infestation can start small but quickly become out of control, so it is important to play your part to prevent it.

Bins



Insects and rodents love food scraps and household bins provide them with an easy food source. Empty your bins regularly or as they become full. Use a bin liner or plastic bag to avoid leaks onto your flooring. When selecting a bin, make sure it closes fully and has a tight lid. This will help to stop insects and rodents from accessing your rubbish.

Clean your bins with warm soapy water regularly or as needed to remove any sticky leaks or buildup as this can attract pests.

Pet food



Pet food can also attract insects and rodents. Leaving pet food sitting is a common cause of infestation. If your pet prefers to eat slowly, consider feeding them multiple times a day, rather than leaving food out. If you have an open bag of pet food store it inside a container so that it cannot be reached by pests. Opened cans or rolls of pet food should be stored in your fridge.

General clean and tidy



Insects and rodents thrive in a dirty or damp environment so keeping your home clean and tidy is very important. Dust, food crumbs and spills provide a food source for pests and should be cleaned regularly, including:

- Clean your kitchen benches with spray and wipe and a damp cloth.
- Mop up any spills as soon as they occur.
- Vacuum food crumbs from the floor, chairs, or lounge.
- Dust all surfaces regularly.
- Consider decluttering to reduce spaces for pests to live.



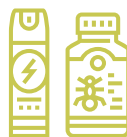
Gardens

Mice and rats commonly come into the home from the garden. To avoid pests in your garden, trim back overgrown bushes, regularly mow and edge lawns and keep your garden clear of household rubbish.



Wheelie bins

Put your wheelie bins out for collection as often as you can, even if they aren't full. Having household waste sitting for long periods creates unpleasant smells which attracts pests. Clean your wheelie bins with warm soapy water when they start to smell unpleasant.



If infestation happens

In the event of an infestation, your local supermarket or hardware shop is likely to have a solution. Sprays and treatments are available for flies, cockroaches, spiders, ants and other insects. Follow the instructions on the packaging for best results.

For mice and rats, baits and traps are available and will usually solve the problem. Be careful when using bait around children or animals, and be sure to follow the instructions on the packaging.

If issues continue, please contact your **Housing Officer**. If an infestation is found to be a result of general living conditions, you may be charged for professional pest control eradication.



Mould & Damp

The Tasmanian climate can be cold and wet, the perfect combination for condensation and mould.

Condensation starts as moisture in the air, which clings to surfaces like walls, ceilings, windows and mirrors. Over time, condensation can develop into mould. It is important that you play your part to prevent mould, as it can cause respiratory illness and damage to your property.

Important ways to stop mould:

- Open windows as much as possible, especially when cooking, washing or drying clothes.
- Electric clothes dryers must be installed close to a ventilation point such as an open window or door.
- Open your curtains or blinds everyday – sunlight is the enemy of condensation and mould.
- Wipe condensation off walls, windows and windowsills as it occurs to keep them dry.
- Use the exhaust fan every time you bathe or shower, and leave it running until the steam goes.
- Clean your exhaust fans and heat pump filters regularly.
- Keep your home at a constant temperature, rather than heating in bursts when it is cold or wet outside.
- Hang washing outside to dry.
- Make sure shoes and clothes are dry before putting them away.
- Move furniture away from walls to allow air to circulate around the house.

If mould does appear in your property, treat it as soon as possible.

Spray white vinegar onto the mouldy surface and leave it for an hour. Then wipe the area clean with water and allow the surface to dry - be sure to throw out the cloth afterwards! Any smell should clear within a few hours. While it's safe to use on most surfaces, vinegar is unlikely to be effective at cleaning mould off soft surfaces.

There are plenty of products available at the supermarket which will kill mould as well. Check the area daily after treatment and repeat if the mould returns.

If you have ongoing issues or need more information to tackle mould, please contact your **Housing Officer** or call **1300 312 447** to report the issue.



SECTION

2

Moving House



Moving House Checklist

Moving house can be a stressful time. It's important to update your address with key organisations to make sure they are still able to contact you.

Australia Post offer a mail redirection service which can redirect your mail to your new address for up to a year. For more information, please visit your local post office or www.auspost.com.au.

We've put together a list below to help guide your address updates. Please keep in mind that some may not apply for you, or you might have additional updates to make.

Service Tasmania

- ☐ Vehicle Registration
- ☐ Driver's Licence
- ☐ White Card & WorkSafe licencing
- ☐ Seniors Card
- ☐ Firearm Licence
- ☐ Working with Vulnerable People
- ☐ Australian Electoral Commission
- ☐ Tasmanian Cervical Screening Register
- ☐ Libraries Tasmania
- ☐ Fishing Licence
- ☐ Boat Licence

Government & Legal

- ☐ Centrelink
- ☐ Medicare
- ☐ Department of Veteran's Affairs
- ☐ Donate Life
- ☐ Pet Registration

Financial

- ☐ Bank
- ☐ Personal loan provider
- ☐ Superannuation Fund
- ☐ Hire purchase provider
- ☐ Insurance provider
- ☐ PayPal

Health

- ☐ General Practitioner (GP)
- ☐ Health Specialists

General

- ☐ Family & Friends
- ☐ School or Educational Institution
- ☐ Childcare Provider
- ☐ Employer
- ☐ Online retailers

TIP!

Service Tasmania can assist with updating your address for the Tasmanian issued items. For more information, visit your local Service Centre, call **1300 135 513** or www.service.tas.gov.au.

Your Utilities - Water, Power and Internet



Water

TasWater conducts water meter readings every three months. Housing Choices owned properties are responsible for any water usage charges during this time. Housing Choices will issue an invoice to you, including a copy of the TasWater invoice clearly highlighting the water usage charges to be paid. Payment is made to Housing Choices and can be paid upfront or via a payment plan.

You do not need to register with TasWater for this service. If you have any questions, please contact your Housing Officer for further information.



Electricity

Until recently, Aurora Energy was the only energy retailer in Tasmania. There are now a number of options available with varying connection fees and, supply and usage charges. You may want to compare rates using an online tool such as www.canstarblue.com.au or contact suppliers to discuss rates and if any concession discounts are available. You are responsible for connecting electricity to your property before moving in. You are also responsible for any connection costs and ongoing supply and usage costs.

A meter read or estimate will be carried out every three months. Your electricity supplier will issue an invoice directly to you, based on your usage over this period.

When you vacate your property, the electricity must stay connected until a vacate inspection has been completed.



Phone & Internet

If you need a home phone or internet services, you will need to have the National Broadband Network (NBN) connected to your property.



Who do I talk to about organising an NBN Connection?

You will need to contact a Service Provider of your own choice to organise the NBN to be connected at the property.

There are a range of service providers for this. You might be familiar with Telstra, iiNet or Optus. You can compare services available and pricing by using an online tool such as www.canstarblue.com.au, or contact the providers directly.

Under the terms of your lease, you are responsible for any connection fees and charges for services to the property. How often you receive bills will depend on your service provider and plan and some may even offer prepaid services.

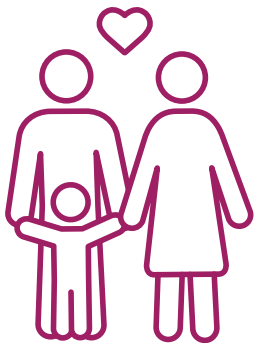
If you're moving into a brand new property that no-one has lived in before, there will be an additional NBN New Development Installation Fee. This fee is usually around \$300 and is charged by your service provider as part of your regular billing. This amount needs to be paid by you. Once payment has been made, Housing Choices will reimburse you for this amount.

SECTION

3

Your Community





Health & Community Services

Tasmania has a network of public health hospitals, clinics and health centres. Many hospital services and clinics are run on a referral basis, however from time to time you may need urgent or emergency care.

It's important to seek medical assistance or advice from the correct place. This will save you time and preserve emergency care for those at need.

For minor ailments, you can access your local pharmacy, after-hours medical centre or GP.

For non-life-threatening conditions, you can seek advice from HealthDirect by calling **1800 022 222**. This is a free service, staffed by health professionals and is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

You can also access information online at **www.healthdirect.gov.au**.



In a life-threatening medical emergency, call 000.



If you are having a mental health crisis and your life is in danger, call 000.



Lifeline offers 24/7 crisis support by calling 13 11 14.



Major Hospitals

The four major hospitals all have Emergency Departments available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Royal Hobart Hospital

48 Liverpool Street
Hobart 7000

Phone: **6166 8308**

Launceston General Hospital

274-280 Charles Street
Launceston 7250

Phone: **6777 6777**

North West Regional Hospital

23 Brickport Road,
Burnie 7320

Phone: **6493 6000**

Mersey Community Hospital

Torquay Road,
Latrobe 7307

Phone: **6478 5500**

Remember:

In a life-threatening emergency, you should always **call 000**.

Teaching your kids to call 000

The Tasmanian Department of Health encourages you to teach your kids about the emergency number for Australia and to explain when to call it. Let them know that they can call **000** to get help from **Fire, Police or Ambulance**. The emergency numbers they've seen on tv shows may be different, like 911 in the United States or 999 in the UK.

Aged Care

As we age, additional support often becomes necessary. For some, this may be in-home assistance. For others, it may be more appropriate to enter an aged care home. This process can be daunting, but help is available.

To access these services and apply for an assessment, visit **My Aged Care** or call **1800 200 422** for information about residential aged care services in your area.



Finding Support Services

Are you in need of assistance, but not sure where to start?

Find Help Tas is a free, online directory which lists over 900 health and wellbeing services for Tasmanians.

www.findhelptas.org.au

If you are on the Central Coast, **Central Connect** aims to connect residents with local services to improve wellbeing.

www.connectingcare.com.au

Finding Your Way is an online directory providing easy access to information for people with a disability and their parents and carers on housing, justice, assistance and technology, family, education, sport and recreation, health and employment.

www.findingyourway.com.au

Neighbourhood Houses

There are 35 Neighbourhood Houses in Tasmania. They are places where people can come together, connect, learn new skills and support their community.

Each Neighbourhood House has a wide range of activities and programs, which might include:

- Driver education
- Community gardens
- Playgroup and preschool
- Cooking lessons & kitchen
- First aid classes
- Food co-ops

Find your local Neighbourhood House at **www.nht.org.au**.





Children & Education

Child and Family Learning Centres

The first five years of children's lives are vital to their learning and development. Child and Family Learning Centres support families and carers with children from pregnancy to age five, with a range of free services.

You can join in on fun at play time, access a range of health services, meet new people and receive help to support your child to thrive. Centres offer safe outdoor and indoor play spaces and opportunities to build connections within your local community.

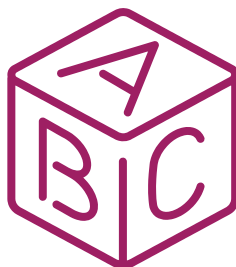
Find more information about your local Centre by calling **1800 816 057**.

Childcare

If you are looking into what childcare options are available near you visit www.startingblocks.gov.au. You can search for childcare in your local area, learn more about childcare quality ratings and get tips on what to look for when getting started.

Some other types of care, like occasional care or in-home care can be found online at www.careforkids.com.au/child-care/tas.

Depending on where you live in Tasmania, childcare options might vary, and places can have long waiting periods. Services encourage you to plan ahead, keep in touch and leave your contact details so they can let you know when there are vacancies.



Schools & Learning

It's School Time

Starting at a new school can be a big change for your family. There are lots of ways you can get school ready and learn more about the choices available in your catchment area.

In Tasmania there are nearly 300 government, independent and privately funded schools. Each have different enrolment processes and fees.

Government schools provide education for the majority of children aged 5 to 18 years. Enrolment is based on your location, and which school catchment area you are located in. In most cases, fees will be significantly less for people who have lower income or receive government assistance. You can find your local school at www.decyp.tas.gov.au/about-us/school-directory/.

You can learn more about getting ready for school and choosing the right school for your family at www.findingyourway.com.au/education/getting-ready-for-school/choosing-a-school.

Help to Cover School Costs

The Student Assistance Scheme (STAS) supports low-income parents to cover the costs of school fees for students from kindergarten through to year 12. Grandparents or sole carers may also be eligible for STAS. You can find more information about eligibility and the online form to apply at www.decyp.tas.gov.au/parents-carers/parent-fact-sheets/fees-levies/.

Families who are not eligible for STAS, but who are experiencing financial hardship can talk to their school about payment arrangements or other financial assistance options.

Completing College

To help more students to complete Year 12, all Tasmanian secondary and district schools now offer Years 11 and 12. This is alongside the eight colleges in the state, which gives students the choice to continue their senior levels at their current school or transition to a college.



After Year 12

There's a range of pathways for students to continue their learning, develop new skills and become workforce ready. These learning opportunities are also encouraged for adults and have various support people who can help you along the way.

TasTafe currently offers a range of free courses (no fees or study costs). To find the right course for you, visit www.tastafe.tas.edu.au/ or call **1300 655 307** within business hours to chat about any questions you have before enrolling.

The University of Tasmania has a range of on campus and online study options. Find out about pathways to university at www.utas.edu.au.



Libraries

Tasmania has over 46 public libraries, which are all free to access. Member services include free access to print or online versions of books, audio books, magazines, encyclopedias, a 24/7 eLibrary and more.

Libraries Tasmania also offers:

- Computers and internet access
- Reading, writing and maths help for Tasmanians
- Lifelong learning
- Events, exhibitions and activities

To locate your local library, visit www.libraries.tas.gov.au/.



Transport

Community Transport Tasmania

Community Transport Services Tasmania Inc. (CTST) provides affordable transport throughout the state for people 65 years & over (50 years for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples). The service offers personal and group transport options.

Personal transport is a door-to-door service, and can be used for medical appointments, shopping or social events and outings.

Group transport is a commuter service and is a wonderful way to meet new friends and catch up for a chat along the way to your appointments or activities.

To register for this service, call **My Aged Care** on **1800 200 422**.

Disability transport is also available for anyone under the age of 65 (under 50 for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples) by phoning CTST directly on **1800 781 033**.

Wherever it is you need to go, volunteer and paid drivers assist you to have a comfortable and safe journey.



Area Connect

Area Connect aims to improve your connection to community by offering transport for employment, training and non-emergency medical or personal care.

To register for the service or find out more, call **1300 651 948**, visit **www.areaconnect.org.au** or email **info@areaconnect.org.au**.

Metro Bus Service

Metro Tasmania operates public bus services in Hobart, Launceston, and Burnie.

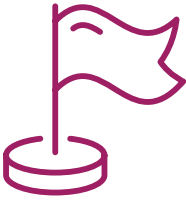
You can pay for your fare with cash when you board the bus, or use a prepaid Metro Greencard. Apply for, top up, and replace lost or stolen Greencards quickly and easily online at www.metrotas.com.au or at a Metro shop.

Metro Shops and depots are available in four locations state-wide, to assist you with any enquiries relating to timetables, services, lost property or compliments and complaints. This information is also available by calling **132 201**.

Metro shops are located at:

- **Ground floor at 40 Elizabeth Street, Hobart**
- **Opposite Stop A, Metro depot, 212 Main Road, Moonah**
- **Depot Office at 168 Wellington Street, Launceston**
- **Depot Office at 28 Strahan Street, Burnie**





Your Local Area

Local Councils

Local government areas, or councils, provide important services to the community. In Tasmania, there are 29 local councils. Each council has a Mayor who is elected, and is joined by councilors or aldermen. Some of their services include:

- planning and development
- road maintenance
- community events and programs
- parks and recreation
- waste management

Housing Choices Tasmania operates across many local government areas, which we have listed.

Wynyard & Somerset
Waratah-Wynyard Council
 6443 8333
www.warwyn.tas.gov.au

Smithton & Stanley
Circular Head Council
 6452 4800
www.circularhead.tas.gov.au

Burnie & Surrounds
Burnie City Council
 6430 5700
www.burnie.tas.gov.au

Ulverstone
Central Coast Council
 6429 8900
www.centralcoast.tas.gov.au

Latrobe
Latrobe City Council
 6426 4444
www.latrobe.tas.gov.au

Newnham, Mowbray, Prospect & Kings Meadows
Launceston City Council
 6323 3000
www.launceston.tas.gov.au

George Town

George Town Council

6382 8800

www.georgetown.tas.gov.au

Queens Walk & Brisbane St Complexes

Hobart CBD & surrounds

City of Hobart

6238 2711

www.hobartcity.com.au

Bellerive, Mornington & Oakdowns

Clarence City Council

6217 9500

www.ccc.tas.gov.au

Moonah, Glenorchy & Rosetta

Glenorchy City Council

6216 6800

www.gcc.tas.gov.au

Huonville & surrounds

Huon Valley Council

6264 0300

www.huonvalley.tas.gov.au

Kingston & surrounds

Kingborough Council

6211 8200

www.kingborough.tas.gov.au



Parks & Recreation

Around Tasmania, local councils provide and maintain parks and reserves for community use. Most of these outdoor spaces have play equipment for children, and some have barbeque areas, public toilets and drinking water available.

To find out about parks in your local area, get in touch with your local council. Or your Housing Officer may also be able to share some local secrets with you!



Waste Collection

In Tasmania, each local council has different rules around waste management. This includes what bins are provided for household waste, recycling and green waste, and how often bins are collected. You can find your local council's contact number and their website that you can visit for more information on [pages 39-40](#). Some councils offer hard waste collections once per year, for getting rid of items that are too big for regular bin collections.

TIP!

To find out what days your bins will be collected, you can chat with a neighbour or keep an eye on the street for other bins.

Your local council can also provide this information for you.

Housing Choices Tasmania Community Initiatives

Tasmanian Residents Advisory Committee (TRAC)

The Tasmanian Residents Advisory Committee meets four times a year and provides Housing Choices with resident feedback on policy, procedures and general matters. It's an important way for us to understand the needs of our residents, and a great way for you to help improve the services we offer.

Each meeting lasts for around an hour and a half. The meetings are usually on the north west coast, however we can provide a meeting room and video conferencing equipment for members in the south.

If you would like to discuss becoming a TRAC member, please contact our Community Development team.



Your Future Scholarships

Are you:

- ☐ a Housing Choices Tasmania resident or child of a resident?
- ☐ aged between 15 and 25 years?
- ☐ enrolled in training or studies?

We want to help you reach your goals. Your Future Sponsorship provides up to \$1,000 to help cover out-of-pocket educational costs. If you are studying or training at TasTAFE, a Support School, College or University you could apply.

All residents can receive help with their application, contact the Community Development team for more information.

Birthday Club

Have you heard about our Birthday Club?

Every member receives a birthday card each year, and we also have a draw each month where one lucky winner receives a \$20 voucher.



Keeping up to date



Home Stories

Home Stories is a free newsletter which is mailed to residents every three months. It's a great source of up to date information and tips, resident stories, community events and activities, as well as puzzles and competitions.



Facebook

Join us on Facebook so you never miss out on things like:

- invites to social events
- introductions to support services including Neighbourhood Houses or Child Learning Centres
- training & upskilling opportunities
- support opportunities with people who can help you find a job that suits you
- providing financial support to help cover the costs of training or studies
- sharing your creative talents and hobbies through our competitions

www.facebook.com/HChoicesTAS

Contact the Community Development Team



1300 312 737



communitydevelopmenttas@hcau.org.au

SECTION

4

**Trouble Shooting
Common
Maintenance Issues
& Cleaning Tips**



Common Maintenance Issues

Many issues can be quickly remedied without a visit from our Maintenance team. Try out these quick steps before calling your Housing Officer or **1300 312 447**.

Electricity

If your electricity switches off unexpectedly, check your meter board as the fuse wire could be broken or a circuit breaker switch could have flicked off.

You can check network outages to your area by calling **TasNetworks** on **132 004** or visiting **www.tasnetworks.com.au/outages**.



Above: your fuse box regulates the electricity in your property.

Hot Water Cylinder

If your water pressure drops or you hear a banging sound in your pipes, this could be an air lock. To fix this, lift the pressure relief valve for five seconds. We recommended doing this every three months. If the problem continues, call your **Housing Officer** or **1300 312 447** to report the issue.



Above: The pressure relief valve can be found on your hot water cylinder.

Water Meter

If you notice any water leaks, turn off the water meter tap and call your **Housing Officer** or **1300 312 447** to report the issue.



Above: Your water meter is located at the front of your property, towards the left or right boundary.

Heat Pump

If your heat pump is not working, try these steps:

1. Turn off the outside heat pump unit at the isolation switch.
2. Turn off the remote.
3. Turn off the circuit breaker in the meter box.

4. Wait for 10 minutes before restarting.
5. Point the remote to the head pump unit and turn it back on. This can take time, do not press any other buttons while waiting for heat pump to turn back on.

If the issue is related to the remote control, you may need to replace the batteries in the remote control. If the problem continues, call your **Housing Officer** or **1300 312 447** to report the issue.



Above: the isolation switch for your heat pump can be located on the exterior of your property, next to the outside heat pump unit.

Cleaning Tips

Keeping your property clean and tidy throughout the year will make life easier at inspection time. Here are our go-to products for those favourite (and not-so-favourite) jobs!



Ovens

Ovens should be cleaned every six months. Oven Cleaner can be found in the cleaning aisle of your local supermarket and is very effective. Spray the product liberally inside your oven and wait 5-15 minutes, the grime will be wiped off with ease. For more stubborn build up, leave the product overnight to soak.

TIP!



Put the oven racks in a garbage bag, spray with cleaner, tie up and leave overnight. Simply rinse them off in the morning.

Windowsills

Keeping your windowsills clean and dry will help to keep condensation and mould at bay.

1. Wipe the windowsills with a dry microfiber cloth to remove any loose dust.
2. In a spray bottle, mix a few drops of dishwashing liquid with warm water.
3. Spritz a microfibre cloth with your solution until it's dampened.

Note: It's important to apply your cleaner to the cloth — and not the windowsills themselves — if you have wooden window frames. Oversaturating wood can damage the finish or paint. Worse yet, too much liquid could cause the wood to warp.

4. Gently wipe the windowsill and the frame. For heavier smudges, apply a little bit of pressure with your fingertips.
5. Wipe your windowsills down with a dry microfibre cloth.

Now that the windowsills are clean, maintain by dusting weekly or every two weeks as part of your routine house cleaning.

Window Tracks

If the dirt or dust in your window tracks is loose, you can use a vacuum cleaner attachment or a small crevice tool to clean it out.

For packed on grit you may need to take the following steps:

1. Use a vacuum cleaner with a crevice tool attachment to clear out any loose soil, dust bunnies or expired insects.
2. Use a disposable wipe to remove soil build up from the centre of the track.
3. Wrap a disposable wipe around a plastic putty knife and angle knife to clean the crevices and corners.
4. Wipe the track dry with a clean microfibre cloth.
5. Repeat as necessary until all the dirt is removed.



Prefer no chemicals?

Here's an alternative chemical free cleaning method.

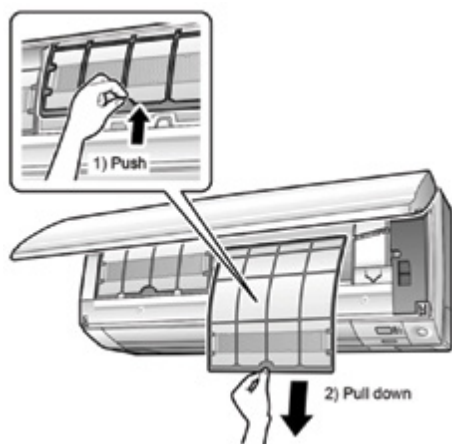
Baking soda effectively cleans, deodorises, brightens, and cuts through grease and grime.

Vinegar is also a great cleaning staple excellent for tough grime in bathrooms and showers. You can spray white vinegar onto surfaces to sit for 30 minutes, then rinse away with warm water.

Heat Pump

Your heat pump filter needs to be cleaned every two weeks, to make sure your heat pump is running efficiently. This will help to reduce your electricity costs.

1. Pull out the air filters.
2. Open the front panel.
3. At the centre of each air filter, push a little upwards and then pull it down.



Wash the air filters with water or clean them with your vacuum cleaner.



If the dust does not come off easily, wash the air filters with a natural detergent and lukewarm water, then dry them in the shade.

Put the air filters back in the machine and close the front panel.

To close the front panel, press the panel at both sides and in the middle.



TIP!

Operating manuals are available from the Housing Choices office.

Common Terms

During your time with Housing Choices, you will come across terms and phrases that you may not have heard before. We have listed some of the most common below.

Tenancy: To occupy or live in a property legally through a lease agreement.

Occupant: A person who resides at the property and is approved by the housing provider, but who does not have legal entitlement to the tenancy in the form of a lease agreement.

Lease: A legal contract that shows the rental responsibilities and agreement made between the housing provider and the tenant.

Breach letter: A warning letter to let you know that there is something you are doing that is outside the terms of your lease.

Vacate: To give up possession or occupancy of a property (to leave a property).

Maintenance request: A formal way for you to report an issue or damage on the property that needs repairing or maintenance.

Rent arrears: Rent that has not been paid on the due date and is owed to the housing provider.

Resident: A person (and their occupants) who has signed onto a lease agreement to live somewhere permanently or on a long-term basis.

Notice to vacate: A formal letter showing that the housing provider is looking to end the rental agreement and that the tenant will need to arrange to leave the property.

PCS: A Property Condition Survey completed every three years by the Maintenance Team to check and monitor the physical condition of your property.

Your Housing Officer

Name:

Contact Number:





**HOUSING
CHOICES**
TASMANIA

Hobart

Level 7, 39 Murray Street
Hobart TAS 7000

Devonport

5 Steele Street
Devonport TAS 7310


Shorewell Plaza

11A Wiseman Street
Shorewell Park TAS 7320

General Enquiries

 1300 312 447

Maintenance

 1300 512 583

 hctinfo@hcaw.org.au

 housingchoices.org.au