



Tenant Information Booklet

Welcome to Community Action – Housing Services

This Tenant Kit has been designed to provide you with information about our service, your tenancy with Community Action – Housing Services and other useful information.

Our Contact Detail

Address: 22 Nash Street, Gympie QLD 4570.
Phone: 5482 8959
Fax: 5483 7602
Email: housing@communityactiongympie.com.au

The Housing Services office is open to tenants and the public:

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday 9am til 12.30pm
By phone Monday to Friday 9am – 5pm

Outside these hours, messages can be left on the answering machine. Please feel free to contact our staff if you require any information or assistance regarding your tenancy or maintenance issues.

Reception/Administration Officer
Housing Worker
Housing Worker
Tenancy Support Worker
Finance Officer
Finance Officer
Manager
Chief Executive Officer

Katrina Martini
Pamela Parkinson
Jenny Simmons
Emma Bramley
Shelley Ngaira
Kelly McCabe
Michelle Hine
Judy Brauer

What is Community Housing?

Community housing is social housing delivered by registered providers, including local governments, churches and other community organisations. These providers deliver social housing assistance under a number of programs including:

- Long term community housing and affordable housing
- Transitional housing through the Community Rent Scheme, Community-managed Studio Units and Same House Different Landlord programs.

Some providers deliver assistance across all these programs while others provide specialised services (for example long term community housing for older people connected to an aged care facility).

The Department of Housing and Public Works requires providers to meet certain standards in delivering housing assistance under the *Housing Act 2003* and through funding agreements. Tenants of registered community housing providers can expect the same level of service from their provider as they would receive from the department in public housing.

All the programs of Community Action – Housing Services are funded by the Department of Housing and Public Works.

Community Action – Housing Services

Community Action – Housing Services is a community managed multi-program housing association situated in Gympie.

Community Action – Housing Services was formed in 1988 in the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless and was originally incorporated as the Gympie Widgee Housing Action Group.

The first funded program was the Housing Referral Service (now Tenancy Advice & Advocacy Service) in 1989, followed by the Community Rent Scheme in 1991, Long Term Community Housing program in 1992 and Community Managed Studio Units in 2006.

Community Rent Scheme

Providing transitional (medium term) subsidised accommodation for persons in need.

Long Term Housing

Providing a range of affordable, accessible & appropriate longer term housing solutions.

Community Managed Studio Units

A mixture of long term and transitional accommodation units.

Your Tenancy with Community Action – Housing Services

1. Tenancy Agreement/Lease

Community Action follows the guidelines of the Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008 and each tenant is issued with an RTA Tenancy Agreement.

The term of the Tenancy Agreement is usually 'Periodic' which means there is a commencement date but no fixed ending date.

It is important that you read this agreement carefully and if you are not sure about any aspect of the agreement, ask Community Action staff to explain it to you. You will receive a copy of all signed documentation for your own records.

All tenants are given a Residential Tenancies Authority Information booklet 'Renting in Queensland' which is an easy-to-read guide to your tenancy produced by the RTA.

Your tenancy will continue unless conditions of the tenancy are breached, you are made an offer by the Department of Housing and Public Works or for transitional tenants, your application is cancelled from the Department's housing register.

If this happens, you will become ineligible for both the Department of Housing and Public Works and Community Action housing. If you are deemed ineligible you must discuss this situation with both Community Action and the Department of Housing and Public Works immediately. When you are housed with Community Action your eligibility will be reviewed periodically.

2. Entry Condition Report & Property Photos

When you sign your Tenancy Agreement, you will be given two copies of the Entry Condition Report (Form 1a) and property photos. Community Action staff will have completed the Lessor's side of both reports. Check the report carefully, inspect your property and if you think anything about the condition of your property has been missed, make a note on the Tenant side of the report and sign at the bottom of each page.

The signed report is to be returned to the Community Action office within 3 working days. The purpose of this report is to ensure that you are not liable for any pre-existing damage or missing items when you leave. It is important that you keep a copy of this report, as it is your evidence of the condition of the premises when you moved in and it may help to resolve any dispute that may arise when you exit the premises.

3. Looking After Your Property

As a tenant it is your responsibility to keep the premises clean, having regard to their condition at the start of the tenancy this includes yard maintenance. Any damage, whether it is accidental or deliberate, must be reported to Community Action as soon as possible. You must ask for approval from Community Action before you install any fixtures or make any changes (picture hooks, window locks, Austar installation, etc).

4. Payment of Rent

It is a condition of your Tenancy Agreement that rent is paid 2 weeks in advance. Payment of your rent must be treated as a priority. If for any reason, you cannot pay rent on the due date, please contact the Community Action staff immediately to negotiate alternate arrangements. Community Action offers a variety of payment options – cash or cheque at the office, cheque or money order by post, deductions from your Centrelink payment through the Centrepay facility, or direct deposit from your bank to ours.

5. Rent Reviews

Community Housing rents are based on total assessable household income. A rent review will be conducted annually. You will be requested to provide all details of the income you earn. If your income consists entirely of Centrelink payments, we are able to access these details using our computer system. Tenants will be given two (2) months' notice in advance of any rent increase.

If at any time your household income decreases, please advise office staff and we will make any necessary adjustments.

6. Smoke Detectors

Smoke detectors save lives.

Do not smoke inside your property – this is a strict condition of your tenancy agreement. Cigarette smoke and heat or vapours from cooking can easily set off smoke detectors.

The majority of smoke detectors are battery operated, when the battery needs replacing, it starts beeping. If the location of the smoke alarm is too high for you to safely access, please contact the office.

New Laws state that smoke alarms must be installed and working in all rental properties. Any tenant or visitor interfering with a smoke alarm can now be charged for doing so.

If the smoke detectors are found not to be working due to tenant/visitor interference, the tenant will be responsible for the costs of any repairs, replacement batteries and installation costs.

7. Repairs & Maintenance Procedure

- Please contact the office if any repairs are required.
- Let us know if the repair has not been attended to in a satisfactory manner or if you have any issues with our contractors.
- If an emergency repair is required outside office open hours, call the nominated plumber or electrician listed in your Tenancy Agreement under '**EMERGENCY REPAIRS**'. Please be aware that 'emergency callouts' not considered an emergency by our contractor will be charged to the tenant.

For further clarification of an Emergency Repair see the quick list below or refer to the RTA 'Renting in Queensland' information booklet.

Some example are:

- A burst hot water service
- A blocked or broken lavatory system
- A serious roof leak
- A gas leak
- A dangerous electrical fault
- Flooding or serious flood damage
- Serious storm, fire or impact damage
- A failure or breakdown of gas, electricity or water supply

If you do need to contact the plumber or electrician after hours, please advise that you are renting from Community Action - Housing Services.

Some hot water systems have release valves that need attending to every few months. Community Action staff will check your hot water service on our 3 monthly inspections and release this valve then. If you are having trouble with your hot water service, please call the office for advice.

8. When Can Community Action visit?

Community Action staff and maintenance contractors will visit to carry out inspections and repairs to the premises.

You will be given:

- 7 days notice in writing prior to a routine inspection.
- 24 hours notice to carry out repairs, except in the case of an emergency.

For all other entry notices and timeframes, please refer to your RTA 'Renting in Queensland' information booklet.

Rights

All persons involved with Community Action – Housing Services have the right to:

- Respect.
- Fair & non-discriminatory treatment.
- Confidentiality of information (summary contained in this kit – a full copy of Community Action policy available on request).

Complaints & Appeals Process

The complaints procedure is included in your tenancy information at sign up, but should you require further information please ask a Community Action staff member.

- Step 1 Phone the office and discuss your concern with a Community Action staff member
- Step 2 If you are unsatisfied with the outcome of this ask to speak to the Manager
- Step 3 If you still feel that the issue is unresolved then please put your concerns in writing to the address below:

Private & Confidential
The President
Community Action Inc.
PO Box 659
GYMPIE QLD 4570

Tenant Participation

A focus of Community Action – Housing Services is:

To maximise tenant participation in all the Association's activities

Tenants are encouraged to:

- Assist with the Newsletter
- Attend Tenant Meetings
- Become members of Community Action Inc.

Tenant Responsibilities

The tenant will:

- Take care of the property.
- Pay rent in advance.
- Be respectful to your neighbours.
- Notify Community Action promptly of any repairs needed.
- Not alter, repair or affix anything to the property without lessor permission.
- Maintain eligibility with Department of Housing and Public Works – transitional tenants only.
- Advise Community Action of any changes to household income.
- Advise Community Action of any changes to household members.
- Not use the premises for any illegal activities.
- Treat all Community Action workers with respect.

There is comprehensive information on the Tenant's Rights and Responsibilities in the in the RTA 'Renting in Queensland' Information Booklet.

Further Information Regarding Your Tenancy

These services can provide advice on your rights and responsibilities as a tenant:

Tenants' Union

Ph: 1300 744 263

Residential Tenancies Authority

Ph: 1300 366 311

Tenants' Union website <http://www.tuq.org.au/>

Or log on to the RTA website www.rta.qld.gov.au

Feedback

Community Action welcomes your feedback, both positive and negative. Feedback is essential to let us know we are doing our job right and that our information is easy to understand. No tenant will ever be penalised for providing feedback. A feedback sheet is included in your tenancy information at sign up but if you require another one, please ask a staff member.

Helpful Telephone Numbers

POLICE, AMBULANCE, FIRE	000
Alcohol and Drug Information	1800 177 833
Centrelink	131 021
Directory Assistance (white pages)	12 455
Directory Assistance (yellow pages)	131 319
Domestic Violence Line	1800 811 811
Energex – Emergency Repairs only	131 253
Family Drug Support	1300 368 186
Gas – Happy Gas	5483 9500
Gympie Cabs	131 008
Gympie Hospital	5482 1444
Gympie Police Station	5480 1111
Gympie Women's Health	5483 6588
Kids' Help Line	1800 551 800
Legal Aid	1300 651 188
Life Line	131 114
Men's Crisis Support Centre	5483 6744
Mensline Australia	1300 78 99 78
Mental Health Team	5489 8777
Parentline Counselling Service	1300 301 300
Qld Poisons Information Centre:	13 11 26
Sexual Assault HelpLine	1800 010 120
Telstra	132 200
Victims of Crime	5483 8859