Sustainable Tenancies for Tenants with Complex Needs

Coodjingburra H.O.M.E
Helping Our Mob Everywhere

1. Purpose

To outline our ongoing commitment and strategies to provide sustainable and successful tenancies, empowering individuals to thrive, enjoy a higher quality of life, and reside in stable, resilient, and flourishing communities.

At Coodjingburra HOME, we're dedicated to building vibrant communities where people love to live, while also making sure that our homes remain affordable and sustainable for the long term.

We recognise the significance of living in a secure environment, as it fosters personal development through education, employment, and good health. Additionally, we comprehend the detrimental impact of tenancy breakdown on individuals' personal, health, social, and financial well-being. Our primary goal at Coodjingburra HOME is to prevent tenancy failures.

We acknowledge the multifaceted needs that tenants may encounter. To effectively support tenants in maintaining their tenancies, our staff must identify how complex needs influence behaviour and respond appropriately to the various needs that affect a tenant's well-being and potential independence.

2. Scope

All programs

3. Guidelines

3.1 Background

This policy has been derived from and is to be read in conjunction with, the Community Housing Industry Association of NSW Guidelines on Creating Sustainable Tenancies for Tenants with Complex Needs.

Expanded policy, templates and tools are found at:

https://communityhousing.org.au/publications/creating-sustainable-tenancies-for-tenants-with-complex-needs/

3.2 Complex Needs

A framework for understanding multiple, interlocking needs that span health and social issues. People with complex needs may have to negotiate different issues in their lives, for example, learning disability, mental health problems, and substance abuse. They may be living in deprived circumstances and lack access to suitable housing or meaningful daily activities.

The following needs are considered as having a compounding effect: mental illness; substance misuse; hoarding; discrimination based on ethnicity and/or sexuality; domestic and family violence; history of Homelessness; poverty; and history of involvement with the criminal justice system.

3.3 Sustainable Tenancy

A sustainable tenancy can be maintained successfully by the tenant throughout the life of the tenancy. For this to happen, certain conditions need to be in place; the property needs to be

appropriate for their needs, the tenant needs to possess the skills required to maintain their tenancy and they need to meet their tenant responsibilities.

Coodjingburra HOME recognises the importance of effective tenancy management in providing homes and communities where people aspire to live. Well-managed tenancies can have a positive impact on the wider community.

3.4 Appropriate Property Allocations

Coodjingburra HOME believes that sustainable tenancies are created by allocating the right property to the right tenants where complex needs have been identified for the applicant. We aim to ensure tenants are allocated properties that maximise the opportunity to create a sustainable tenancy.

This will include contacting the applicant's support provider (if relevant) in relation to any proposed offer to the applicant (where appropriate consent has been provided by the applicant).

Where complex needs are identified the Coodjingburra HOME Social Worker will be involved in all aspects of allocation and tenancy management from that point.

3.5 Prevention

It is recognised that prevention strategies are more effective than reacting to issues once they develop. We will conduct a risk assessment for all priority housing applicants when allocating housing to create a detailed profile of the potential risks the applicant may face in maintaining a sustainable tenancy.

This assessment will help identify appropriate referrals to assist the new tenant in preparing for their new accommodation and maximise the chances of maintaining a sustainable tenancy.

The following documents will assist the assessment:

- Support letters from service providers providing support to the applicant
- Letters and assessment forms from applicants' clinical practitioners
- Vulnerability Assessment Tool (VAT)
- Independent Living Skills assessment (intended to be completed by the applicant's health professional or support worker).

The outcome of the risk assessment will be recorded in a Tenancy Response Plan.

Applicants with a history of debt and/or rental arrears will be encouraged to get help with managing their finances before starting their tenancy. This could include financial counselling and assistance with creating a budget. Any referrals and agreements to seek support will be documented in the Tenancy Response Plan to help the tenant maintain their tenancy.

3.6 Lease Signup

Coodjingburra HOME will provide information in an easy-to-read format Easy Read factsheets | Tenants' Union to assist tenants in understanding their responsibilities and their requirements to meet tenancy obligations. Tenants will be encouraged to bring a support worker to the lease sign-up.

The Tenancy Response Plan developed during the allocation stage will be revisited and appropriate changes made in consultation with the tenant and the support worker.

Tenants with a history of debt or rental arrears will be encouraged to seek financial counselling and develop budgeting skills to help them sustain their tenancy. Early intervention and referral to support services will also be provided to assist the tenant in establishing a successful tenancy.

3.7 Tenancy Management

Following Residential Tenancy Agreements and associated procedures, Coodjingburra HOME will undertake a combination of tenancy management strategies to ensure tenants can be supported to sustain their tenancies and remain an inclusive part of our communities.

Coodjingburra HOME will conduct routine inspections of all properties in accordance with inspection procedures. There will be an inspection conducted within an agreed timeframe after the tenancy has commenced to determine if there are any early signs of tenancy issues and to reiterate the tenant's and landlord's rights and responsibilities as per the Residential Tenancy Agreement.

Routine inspections will also allow for the determination of whether there are any tenancy issues; discuss any concerns the tenant may have; and refer tenants to any relevant services to help sustain the tenancy.

If the tenancy is at risk, a referral to the relevant support provider may be made. The Tenancy Response Plan will be reviewed and modified to outline the response/s to the identified tenancy issues. Future tenancy visits to monitor the progress of the tenancy may be included in the Tenancy Response Plan and in agreement agreed to by the tenant.

3.8 Supporting Tenancy Sustainability

Coodjingburra HOME understands that some tenants will need support for varying amounts of time to enable them to establish and sustain a tenancy. Coodjingburra HOME has a range of partnerships with local support services that enable a collaborative plan to be established with the tenants to assist them with this goal.

Coodjingburra HOME will enter into a formal Support Agreement with the tenant and relevant support provider when a tenancy is identified as being complex and/or at risk.

Tenants may present with a range of needs throughout their tenancy. Coodjingburra HOME will assess the needs of tenants and develop a response based on a tenant's individual needs. The Vulnerability Assessment Tool (VAT) will be used to determine the severity and likelihood of a tenancy being at risk. The information can be used to indicate the tenants' vulnerability for sustaining their tenancy.

Based on the VAT outcomes Coodjingburra HOME will collaborate with the tenant and support providers to develop or modify a Tenancy Response Plan to address the identified risks/needs. The response plan will outline the required response/s to manage the identified risk/s and articulate the required interventions if the risk escalates.

3.9 Improved Financial and Economic Stability

Coodjingburra HOME has strategies in place to support financial inclusion for tenants. A 'payment culture' will be fostered, and tenants with complex needs will have regular direct contact to establish good rent payment habits. Early contact will be made with tenants once arrears are detected, and those having trouble paying rent will be encouraged to contact Coodjingburra HOME. Vulnerable tenants will have a tailored approach outlined in the Tenancy Response Plan.

Such a plan will include Coodjingburra HOME working with other services and partners to provide appropriate support services.

Tenants will be empowered through the provision of information, advice and support to determine how to address their rental arrears.

Strategies to assist tenants experiencing financial difficulties may include:

- Checking to ensure that the tenant is receiving the full amount of Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA) that they are entitled to
- Information and referral to appropriate financial counselling (including informing the tenant that linking in with financial counselling is about more than sustaining their tenancy, it's to assist with their financial life)
- Realistic and achievable repayment plans will be established – which could include the involvement of other support workers/financial counsellors assisting in determining the amount

the tenant can realistically afford

- Providing information and referral to local brokerage programs if other non-rental aspects of the tenants' finances could be addressed through brokerage.

3.10 Trauma Informed Care

Coodjingburra HOME will use a trauma-informed approach to assist tenants in sustaining their tenancy. Trauma informed care acknowledges the impact of trauma in a person's life and aims to reduce the likelihood of re-traumatisation through practice.

Such practice supports a person to work towards empowerment by focusing on the person's strengths and promoting choice.

3.11 Tenancy Failure and Causes

Coodjingburra HOME aims to better understand the challenges faced by tenants who struggle to maintain their tenancies, to create a quality review process that enhances service delivery practices.

During the tenancy, we will collect information to ensure accurate and up-to-date records are maintained for all tenants and household members. We will also gather details about support needs. This information will help us review the reasons behind tenancy failures

3.12 Approval/Audit

Tenancy Management Plans will be approved by the Operations Manager. The Operations Manager will also provide a report on the status and outcomes of the Plan.

2. Relevant Legislation, Regulations and Guidelines

Residential tenancy agreements NSW Government	Community Housing Industry Association NSW CHWC Framework	Easy Read factsheets Tenants' Union
CLICK TO VIEW & DOWNLOAD	CLICK TO VIEW & DOWNLOAD	CLICK TO VIEW
Aboriginal Tenants Advice and Advocacy Service (ATAAS)	Creating Sustainable Tenancies for Tenants with Complex Needs – a Toolkit to Support Community Housing Providers Strengthen Practice in NSW & QLD | The Deck	
CLICK TO VIEW	CLICK TO VIEW	

NOTE: We have inserted the exact links as of June 2026. Links can change from time to time. To clarify, or if you encounter any challenges, please contact Operations Manager Sharyn Logan: **sharyn.logan@coodjingburrahome.com** or **0431 633 002**