

## **TRANSFER OF TENANCY MANAGEMENT FROM PUBLIC HOUSING TO COMMUNITY HOUSING PROVIDERS, July 2018**

### **Information sheet for tenants**

In October 2016 the Government announced the transfer of tenancy management for approximately 18,000 public housing properties from the Department of Family and Community Services (FACS) to Community Housing Providers.

Almost 14,000 of these announced transfers will affect tenants in the following areas on the following dates:

**Shoalhaven:** Southern Cross Housing, 22 October 2018

**Nambucca, Kempsey, Port Macquarie-Hastings:** Community Housing Limited, 19 November 2018

**Ryde, Hornsby, Ku-ring-gai:** Link Housing, 3 December 2018

**North Sydney, Hunters Hill, Lane Cove, Willoughby:** SGCH, 1 April 2019

**Gunnedah, Tamworth, Walcha, Liverpool Plains, Armidale Regional, Glen Innes, Gwydir, Inverell, Moree Plains, Narrabri, Tenterfield, Uralla:** Homes North Community Housing, 6 May 2019

**Singleton, Cessnock, Dungog, Mid-Coast, Muswellbrook, Upper Hunter:** Compass Housing Services, 3 June 2019

**Coffs Harbour, Bellingen:** Mission Australia Housing, 1 July 2019

**Northern Beaches and Mosman:** Bridge Housing in partnership with the Women's Housing Company, 5 August 2019

**Maitland and Port Stephens:** Hume Community Housing, 2 September 2019

### **How will this affect you?**

If you live in one of the properties to be transferred, FACS will no longer manage your tenancy. Instead you will pay your rent to a Community Housing Provider (CHP), and you will contact them for all tenancy management issues. You will not need to move out of your home.

In October 2016, the NSW Government passed legislation that allows them to automatically transfer leases to a CHP. This means you will not be required to sign a new lease agreement and the conditions of your lease will initially remain the same after transfer.

FACS has already been in contact with you to let you know who the CHP is for your area and will introduce you to the provider as well as invite you to a drop-in session to meet with them in person. You can ask any questions you have about the transfer to FACS and the CHP. If you cannot make the drop-in session, call the CHP or FACS with any questions you may have before the transfer happens.

## **Rent and other charges**

Initially you should not see any changes to your income after rent and water charges when your tenancy is transferred to a CHP.

At the point of transfer the CHP will continue to calculate your rent in the same way as FACS Housing, however there will be one key difference. Following the transfer you may become eligible for Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA) as a tenant of a CHP. CRA is a Commonwealth rent supplement, and you will need to apply for CRA from Centrelink when your tenancy is transferred. If eligible, you will need to pay the full amount of any CRA you receive to the CHP as part of your rent. Initially your rental subsidy will be calculated to ensure you do not pay more than you already do, before the CRA gets added.

The CHP will be able to apply their policies for calculating rent and water charges under the following circumstances:

- Your income or circumstance changes
- When an automatic subsidy review is conducted
- Your current agreement ends and you sign a new lease with the CHP

This may result in a small change to the amount you pay in rent and water charges.

If you are currently required to pay a vacant bedroom charge you will continue to have to pay this.

If you have any concerns about changes to your rent or other charges arising from a transfer to Community Housing contact your local Tenants Advice and Advocacy Service.

## **Repairs and maintenance**

To report any repairs and maintenance issue you will continue to call the Maintenance Line on 1800 422 322. Request and record a job number. If the problem gets worse or you have not had any response in the initial agreed timeframe you should get back in touch with the Maintenance Line. If you continue to have problems getting repairs or maintenance done you should contact your new CHP directly to follow up on the issue.

If you were in the early round of transfers that commenced in July 2017, your CHP may have different arrangements for repairs. They should let you know of the appropriate way to report and follow up on any repairs and maintenance issues.

If you require advice or assistance regarding a repair contact your local Tenants Advice and Advocacy Service.

## **Pets**

If you have a pet that was allowed under your current agreement you will continue to be allowed to have that pet after the transfer.

## **Lease changes**

While you are on your current agreement, the CHP has agreed to be bound by your current terms. At the end of your fixed agreement, or at any time if you have a continuing agreement, the CHP may ask you to sign a new agreement. At this point, the CHP will be able to change the terms of the agreement from your old agreement. If you are asked to sign a new agreement you should

- ask your provider what changes are included from your current agreement; and
- seek advice from your local Tenants Advice and Advocacy Service.

## **Complaints and dispute resolution**

Following the transfer, you will continue to be covered by the *Residential Tenancies Act 2010* and are able to make an application to the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal if you are unable to resolve a dispute. Seek advice first from your local Tenants Advice and Advocacy Service.

If you are unhappy with a decision relating to policy (for example around rent calculation) that the CHP makes you can appeal the decision. You will first need to make an 'internal appeal' with your Community Housing Provider according to their complaints or appeal procedures. If you are unhappy with the outcome you can then appeal this decision to the Housing Appeals Committee (HAC). The Housing Appeals Committee is an independent agency who can review decisions of social housing providers for tenants. See <http://www.hac.nsw.gov.au/> for more info.

Each CHP is required to have an internal appeal policy and procedure, and information about this should be made publicly available and easily accessible for tenants.

**For further information or tenancy advice relating to the transfers or Community Housing Provider tenancy management call your local Tenancy Advice and Advocacy Service (visit [tenants.org.au](http://tenants.org.au) or find contact over).**

**SYDNEY:**

- Eastern 9386 9147
- Inner 9698 5975
- Inner West 9559 2899
- Northern 8198 8650
- Southern 9787 4679
- South West 4628 1678
- Western 8833 0933

**ABORIGINAL:**

- Sydney 9833 9314
- West NSW 1800 810 233
- South NSW 1800 672 185
- North NSW 1800 248 913

**REGIONAL:**

- Blue Mountains 4704 0201
- Central Coast 4353 5515
- Hunter 1800 654 504
- Illawarra Sth Coast 1800 807 225
- Mid Coast 1800 777 722
- Northern Rivers 1800 649 135
- Northwest NSW 1800 836 268
- Southwest NSW 1300 483 786