

# Bridge Buddies Program



## **Related Policies and Additional Resources**

See the Bridge Housing website to find links to the policies listed

Bridge Buddies Code of Conduct

Tenant Volunteer Confidentiality Agreement

Tenant Complaints and Grievance Handling Procedure

## What is Bridge Buddies?

Bridge Buddies is a way for new Bridge Housing tenants to get to know how things work at Bridge Housing by talking to other Bridge Housing tenants.

It is also a way for tenants to get to know other people in the tenant community. This will be done through matching 'buddies' together for conversation, email contact or in person meetings.

## Who are the buddies?

Buddies are Bridge Housing tenants who have some free time that they would like to use to help new tenants learn about Bridge Housing or who would like to get to know other tenants in the community.

Buddies might also be Bridge Housing residents who would like someone they can chat with every now and again.

Buddies will be paired with other tenants with similar interests and experience so buddies can get to know one another.

They will also be able to share information and answer questions about being a Bridge Housing tenant. This might include questions about getting involved at Bridge Housing, understanding Rent Review, starting a community garden, using MyBridge Portal or just simply sharing information and knowledge about your local area.

## Who can be a buddy?

Any Bridge Housing resident over the age of 18 can apply to be a Bridge Buddy.



## How does Bridge Buddies work?

The Bridge Housing Community Team will keep a register of interested residents and will help facilitate initial contact between buddies.

The buddies will then be able to arrange times that suit them to talk on the phone or meet in person. The Community Team will be available to support buddies and ensure that any issues that arise are resolved in a timely manner.



### How long will I stay a buddy?

A buddy can be matched with a tenant (or tenants) for as long as they have spare time and are happy to be involved.

## How can I apply?

Fill in the Bridge Buddies application form which can be found at our website [www.bridgehousing.org.au](http://www.bridgehousing.org.au)

Please answer as many questions as you can so we can match you with a buddy with similar experience and interests.

Someone from the Communities Team will phone you within 15 business days of receiving your application to check they have enough information and add you to the register

You will be sent and required to read, complete and return the Bridge Buddies Code of Conduct and Volunteer forms and return the forms to the office before you can start as a Bridge Buddy.

## Will my information be shared with the other buddy?



Yes. Once a match has been made, we will provide each person with ONLY the following information about one another:

- Full name
- Contact number/email
- Suburb you live in
- Length of tenancy
- Suitable times to contact each other
- Interests specified in the application form

You can decide how much information to share with your buddy once you start talking with each other.

Bridge Buddies will be required to read and sign to the Bridge Housing's Volunteer Policy and associated guidelines. To ensure privacy and confidentiality are maintained during the program and to support buddies to feel safe and comfortable.

## Can I meet my Buddy in person?

We encourage tenants/buddies to speak over the phone before meeting in person. Take your time to get to know each other. Meeting in person is something both parties need to be comfortable doing.

You don't need to meet in person if you don't want to.

## What do I do if my Buddy is in danger?

If your buddy informs you they are in danger or if you feel your buddy is in danger, contact the police.



## **I've had an argument with my buddy and I want to stop the program.**

Letting your buddy know that you will be exiting the program is courteous however we understand that in some cases, this might be difficult. The Bridge Housing Community Team can help with this process so please contact us if you would like to end the program.

Even though you will no longer be partnered with a buddy, you mustn't share any information about your buddy to other people.

Bridge Housing will offer referral to mediation services if partnered buddies have an issue but do not want to leave the program.

If a buddy or a tenant makes someone else feel uncomfortable, or acts inappropriately, they may be asked to leave the program.

## **The buddy program is becoming too difficult to manage?**

It's important to set up expectations with your buddy from the very beginning, such as how often you will talk.

If you feel that the program is becoming too difficult to maintain, call Bridge Housing Community Team and we can look ways to support you through the program.

### **For further information you can speak to someone from the Communities Team**

Phone: 02 8324 0800

Email: [community@brighousing.org.au](mailto:community@brighousing.org.au)

Head Office: Level 9, 59 Goulburn Street, Sydney

Northern Beaches Office: Level 1, 660-664 Pittwater Road, Brookvale

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