

Information for Northern Beaches Tenants

Change in management

Frequently asked questions

1. When is the change of management happening?

From August 2019, your property will be managed by Bridge Housing or the Women's Housing Company.

2. Who are Bridge Housing and the Women's Housing Company?

Bridge Housing and the Women's Housing Company are nationally-registered, not-for-profit community housing organisations. In partnership, we will manage the Northern Beaches social housing portfolio for the Department of Family and Community Services (FACS) for the next 20 years.

Bridge Housing currently manages some 2,200 social and affordable housing properties, housing more than 4,000 people across greater Sydney. Learn more about us:

<http://www.bridgehousing.org.au/>

The Women's Housing Company manages over 850 social, affordable and transitional housing properties across greater Sydney, with a focus on housing women. Learn more about us:

<http://www.womenshousingcompany.org.au/>

Both organisations are governed by independent skills-based Boards with relevant expertise.

3. Who will manage my tenancy?

Either Bridge Housing or the Women's Housing Company will be your new landlord and manage your tenancy. Bridge Housing will manage around 1,050 tenancies and the Women's Housing Company will manage some 150 tenancies on the Northern Beaches.

Bridge Housing and the Women's Housing Company notified you by letter in November last year which organisation will manage your tenancy, based on a number of factors. You cannot choose which organisation manages your tenancy.

The Women's Housing Company manages the tenancies of men, as well as women, so you can be housed with us regardless of gender and will enjoy excellent service.

The Bridge Housing – Women's Housing Company partnership means you will have the same access to services and opportunities whoever becomes your landlord.

4. Will I have to move house?

You will not have to move as a result of the change of management.

However, there may be situations that arise in the future when you choose to move or where we request you agree to a management transfer. This is no different to FACS managing your tenancy.

5. What will happen to my transfer application?

Your current transfer application is not affected by the change in management. It will stay on the Housing Pathways register.

If you have selected 'yes' to being housed by a community housing provider in your transfer application, Bridge Housing or the Women's Housing Company will consider your application when we have vacant properties.

If you have selected 'no' to being housed by a community housing provider in your transfer application, you will get a letter from FACS asking you to choose a new allocation zone.

If you wish to move house in the future, you can apply for a transfer just like you do now with FACS.

6. Will my rent change?

As a community housing tenant, your rent includes 100% of your Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA).

Commonwealth Rent Assistance is an additional Centrelink payment you apply for and receive, if eligible, as a community housing tenant. The CRA is an extra payment made directly to you, which you

then pay as part of your rent.

Your after-rent income will not change as a result of the change of management.

For example, if as a public housing tenant your rent is 25% of your income, you have 75% of your income available for other living expenses after paying your rent.

In this example, as a community housing tenant your rent will be 25% of your income plus your Commonwealth Rent Assistance. Therefore, after paying your rent, you will still have 75% of your income available for other living expenses.

We will send you information in April 2019 about the new forms you need to complete to access Commonwealth Rent Assistance and be ready to pay rent to your new landlord. We will also support you to prepare and lodge this paperwork.

7. How can I pay my rent?

Bridge Housing and the Women's Housing Company offer tenants a range of easy rent payment options.

Bridge Housing tenants can pay their rent:

- through Centrelink's Centrepay (similar to RDS)
- by electronic transfer from your bank account
- online via our website
- by EFTPOS at our office or over the phone
- at the Commonwealth Bank.

The Women's Housing Company tenants can pay their rent:

- through Centrelink's Centrepay (similar to RDS)
- by electronic transfer from your bank account
- at any branch of the Commonwealth Bank

Your new Housing Manager will help you set up the option that best suits you.

Rent payment at the Post Office is not offered by Bridge Housing and the Women's Housing Company.

8. How will I request repairs?

Tenants will continue to call the same Repairs and Maintenance line.

If you need to report a maintenance problem before or after the transfer date, you can call the Maintenance Line on 1800 422 322, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Any maintenance requests underway in August 2019 will be transferred to Bridge Housing or the Women's Housing Company for completion.

Bridge Housing and the Women's Housing Company will be responsible for ensuring maintenance is delivered to the required quality. Our tenants are highly satisfied with the repairs and maintenance we manage and with the condition of their homes.

9. Can I keep my pet?

Any tenant who already has a pet can keep their pet with the transition to Bridge Housing or the Women's Housing Company.

If you are thinking about getting a pet, please ask Bridge Housing or the Women's Housing Company for a copy of our Pet Policy.

10. Will my support services change?

Any relationships you have with local support services will not change as a result of the change of management unless you choose to change services.

We have been talking to support services operating in the Northern Beaches and they will be notified about which tenancies Bridge Housing or the Women's Housing Company will be managing closer to August 2019.

11. How will you deal with neighbourhood disputes and tenancy breaches?

Bridge Housing and the Women's Housing Company support neighbourhood harmony and positive relationships between tenants and their neighbours.

We have clear policies and procedures for dealing with tenancy breaches or disputes between neighbours. You can download the Good Neighbour Policy from the Bridge Housing website or the Keeping a Tenancy Policy from the Women's Housing Company website to learn more.

12. Will my local housing office still be in Brookvale?

Bridge Housing is looking to take over the lease of the FACS office on Pittwater Road in Brookvale so that Bridge Housing and the Women's Housing Company tenants can continue to visit the same office.

13. Will the staff be the same?

Bridge Housing and the Women's Housing Company are in the process of recruiting the best team to manage the transition and for the housing teams to manage your tenancy moving forward.

We have already recruited a number of FACS staff from the Brookvale office and other quality candidates to join our Northern beaches housing and transition teams.

14. How will we engage with you?

Bridge Housing and the Women's Housing Company have a very clear commitment and plans to engage with residents and ensure they have a say in how we do things.

Bridge Housing has:

- **Your Views E-Panel:** a group of tenants

who give input on new projects via email

- **Advance Scholarships** – for education and employment
- **Big Ideas Grants** – small grants for community based ideas
- **Community Garden Program** – in partnership with Royal Botanic Gardens
- **Good Neighbours and Self Care workshops** – learning and sharing together to deal with neighbourhood issues and care for your own mental health
- **TAG meetings** – location based and cultural groups (Aboriginal and Vietnamese)
- **Time to Talk** – meetings for community groups such as language specific, LGBTIQ
- **Block meetings** – for all tenants in a block to get to know each other and resolve block specific issues

We also respond to tenant ideas such as:

- Art Clubs and craft groups
- Cultural holiday celebrations
- Block parties.

The Women's Housing Company has:

- **Tenant consultations** – on service improvements, policies, property upgrades, community gardens
- **TAG meetings** – to share information, ideas and experiences, held at various locations
- **Block meetings** – for all tenants in a block to get to know each other and resolve block specific issues
- **Skill building opportunities** – photography skills, smart phone skills, jewelry making, TAFE courses
- **Social events** – outings to art galleries, gardens, national parks, movies and theatre, Tenants Day
- **Wellness activities** – art therapy, tai chi, yoga, healthy movement.

We will talk to Northern Beaches tenants about the programs you would like to have and the ideas you have for engaging with us. We will do this by using survey and talking with tenants closer to August 2019.

15. How can I find out more?

Neighbourhood Q & A sessions

At these sessions in December 2018 – March 2019 we will provide you with information about the changes and opportunities for you in becoming a Bridge Housing or Women's Housing Tenant.

Tenant Information Packs

In late April we will send you a Tenant Information Pack that contains the forms for applying to Centrelink for CRA and Centrepay.

Drop –In sessions

From May 2, we will be conducting Drop-In sessions at six locations across the Northern beaches, with the Department of Family and Community Services, to receive or help tenants complete their transition paperwork.

16. Who do I contact with my questions now?

For information about your current tenancy:

Please contact your Housing Manager at FACS

For information about the transfer program:

Email us at: northernbeaches@bridgehousing.org.au

Phone Jenny Speakman, SHMT Project Manager at Bridge Housing on 8324 0856.

For more information about our organisations:

Please visit the Bridge Housing

website at: www.bridgehousing.org.au or

visit the Women's Housing Company website at

www.womenshousingcompany.org.au

