

Good Neighbour

Bridge Housing provides homes for a diverse range of people with different lifestyles. It is important to build positive relationships with your neighbours. Being a good neighbour means being mindful and respectful of others. You can do this by minimising noise, managing your pets and the behaviour of visitors and sharing common areas including parking places, laundries and gardens.

Tenant rights and responsibilities

As a tenant you have a right to the peaceful enjoyment of your home.

Under the Residential Tenancy Agreement, you are responsible for your own behaviour as well as the behaviour of all other household members and any visitors to your property.

What kind of behaviour is not ok?

Behaviour that causes, or is likely to cause, harassment, alarm or distress to other people is not ok. This is behaviour that unreasonably interferes with other people's rights to use and enjoy their home and community such as:

- Loud noise, particularly in the evening
- Abuse, intimidation or harassment
- Aggressive and threatening language or behaviour
- Vandalism
- Noise or nuisance caused by vehicles such as where they are parked or the way repairs are undertaken
- Noise or nuisance caused by pets
- Any type of criminal activity.

Be considerate to your neighbours when you are doing something noisy. It is always a good idea to let them know before you start a potentially noisy activity. Try to avoid making noise when people are likely to be sleeping.

What is a 'good' neighbour?

Being a good neighbour means being considerate of your actions and their impact on others.

You should:

- Listen respectfully if a neighbour complains directly to you about a concern
- Cooperate if a neighbour asks you to reduce noise
- Show tolerance to your neighbours if they have a different lifestyle to yours
- Don't harass people in any way
- Watch your language to ensure it is not threatening or abusive
- Be mindful to share public areas such as washing lines, shared gardens and parking spaces.

What can you do about noisy or difficult neighbours?

If you are having a problem with your neighbours it is always a good idea to talk to them about the problem first – they might be unaware that they are upsetting you. It is important that you listen to your neighbour to understand their point of view and any problems they raise.

These conversations can be difficult and you may need some help. In these cases, you can seek independent assistance from the Community Justice Centre to resolve the issues with your neighbour.

If your complaint relates to dumped rubbish or aggressive or noisy pets, you should contact your local Council who have Rangers that can investigate the problem and take action.

You should contact the Police on 000 if you suspect or witness criminal activity, for complaints about noise or if you experience violence or feel threatened.

If you have attempted to resolve the problem and are still experiencing issues with your neighbours you can report this to your Housing Manager.

Your Housing Manager can investigate the complaint and take action to help resolve the issues including advising you of services that can assist.

Our aim is to support you and your neighbour to resolve the issue or come to an agreement that everyone can live with.

What will Bridge Housing do if there is an ongoing problem?

Bridge Housing will investigate complaints in a transparent manner. We will listen and speak with you, your neighbour and any witnesses. Most issues can be resolved through discussion and do not require any further action.

We will review any evidence to determine if there has been a breach of tenancy. Evidence needs to be factual and confirmed by independent sources.

We encourage you to keep a diary detailing any disturbances or incidents. This can be used as evidence of an ongoing issue, the diary must include dates, times and details of incidents.

Depending on the circumstances and evidence, Bridge Housing will undertake some or all of the following actions to manage the problem:

- Refer neighbours to mediation at the Community Justice Centre to attempt to resolve the problem.
- Organise a block meeting to discuss and resolve issues amongst neighbours if the issue affects multiple tenants.
- Write a warning letter to the person responsible to remind them of their responsibilities and consequences of behaviour.
- Refer to a support agency who may be able to help the person causing the problem to change their behaviour.
- For ongoing and serious breaches of the tenancy that are proven by evidence, we will take action at the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal.

We will usually consider a combination of methods to deal with the problem **before** applying to the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal.

We always encourage tenants to resolve issues between themselves and try to avoid taking action against tenancies at NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal unless all other courses of action have been exhausted.

Bridge Housing cannot take direct action where the problem in your neighbourhood or block of units involves criminal activity. However, once a criminal conviction occurs then Bridge Housing can take action.

Taking the issue to the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal

If the problem continues, the case may be referred to the NCAT. We can only take the matter to the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal if there is clear evidence that a tenant has caused problems. Evidence may be presented at the NCAT from both sides of the dispute. Evidence must be factual and verified by independent sources

The NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal can make specific performance orders that the behaviour must stop. In extreme circumstances of ongoing nuisance and annoyance, the Tribunal may end the tenancy.

Need further information?

Further information about how we manage nuisance and annoyance can be found in our Good Neighbour Policy on the Bridge Housing website: www.bridgehousing.org.au or by contacting the Housing Team on **8324 0800**.