



## Neighbour Policy

### Purpose

Servants Community Housing works hard to maintain positive relationships between residents in each house and their respective neighbourhoods. We recognise that we do not operate in isolation but are part of a broader community. The purpose of this policy is to provide information on how Servants works to support neighbourhood harmony and positive relationships between neighbours. It also explains how Servants will respond when a resident breaches their Residential Tenancy Agreement by interfering with the reasonable peace, comfort or privacy of neighbours.

We are committed to aligning our Neighbour Policy with the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities, to create positive communities within Melbourne's inner eastern suburbs.

### Definitions

**Neighbour** - a person living within a Servants Community Housing house, the same general area as a Servants Community Housing house, or someone directly affected by a Servants Community Housing house or resident

**Staff member** - the CEO, Tenancy Manager, Housekeeper, Operations Manager or Assets Manager

### Policy

#### Complaints

Under the Victorian Residential Tenancies Act (1997), all residents have the right to live in reasonable peace, comfort and privacy within their rooming house, and also within their neighbourhood. Residents must not in any manner that causes an interference with the reasonable peace, comfort or privacy of any occupier of neighbouring premises. Servants Community Housing will not tolerate any form of harassment, discrimination or abuse towards any neighbour. This includes, but is not limited to, verbal, physical or any other form of harassment, discrimination or threatening behaviour related to racial, religious, cultural or sexual orientation. If a neighbour deems this duty to have been breached, they have the right to make a complaint.

We strongly believe that addressing disputes or complaints early reduces the likelihood of any further escalation. To this end, we take each complaint seriously and endeavour to resolve it quickly and amicably. We will involve all necessary parties and maintain confidentiality where possible.

Neighbours should contact a Servants staff member to register their complaint in one of the following ways:

**In person** - each Servants house has Housekeepers who would gladly discuss any neighbour's concerns regarding their respective house

**Website** - <http://www.servants.org.au/contact-us/>

**Phone** - 03 9819 6073 (office)

## **Feedback**

While investigating and resolving the dispute, a staff member will keep the neighbour informed. After notifying a staff member of their concern or complaint, the neighbour will receive a response from a Servants staff member within 7 days. We encourage neighbours to maintain open communication with Servants and inform us of any developments (for example, the concern continuing or escalating).

## **Ongoing or unresolved issue**

The following information is from the Victorian Housing Registrar (with Servants Community Housing inserted as appropriate) and can be accessed online at this location: <http://www.housingregistrar.vic.gov.au/Publications/Information-sheets>

If no action is forthcoming, or you are not happy with the action or its outcome, you can make a formal complaint to Servants Community Housing. It is important that you tell Servants that you wish to use their formal complaints process. The complaint will need to be put into writing.

Registered housing agencies are required under the Housing Act 1983 to have a formal complaints process for tenants and prospective tenants which they may apply to other complainants such as neighbours. A timeframe of 30 days is usually allowed for investigation resolution.

If your complaint is about anti-social behaviour by tenants of registered housing agencies, there may not be an easy, quick solution. The Victorian Privacy Act 2000 limits the information too that an agency will release to you about any action it is taking.

Tenants of properties managed by registered housing agencies come under the provisions of the Victorian Residential Tenancies Act 1997. Any action to end tenancies outside of the tenancy agreement period generally involves a hearing at the Victorian Civic and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT). This may mean you will be asked to appear to give evidence. Prior to any hearing being scheduled, a tenant will generally be issued with warnings by the registered housing agency that their behaviour needs to change and given a specific time to do this.

## **Emergency**

If it is an emergency, call 000.

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## Related policies

[Code of Conduct and Conflict of Interest Policy](#)

[Complaints and Appeals Policy](#)

[Resident Transfer Policy](#)

## Legislation and standards

This policy implements the obligations of Servants under:

- Residential Tenancies Act 1997
- Housing Act 1983 (Vic)
- [Guidelines for Registered Housing Agencies published by DHHS](#)
- Performance Standards for Registered Housing Agencies

## Transparency and accessibility

This policy will be available on the Servants Community Housing website

[www.servants.org.au/policy](http://www.servants.org.au/policy).

## Review

This policy was written in April, 2019. It is rescheduled for review in April, 2021.