



Teacher
Housing

Tenant Handbook

supporting education through
a quality housing service





Welcome to your new home

Whether you're a new tenant or a returning tenant, this handbook provides you with important and practical information about your new tenancy.

It explains the roles of Teacher Housing, our local real estate agents, and your town's Teacher Housing Representative, as well as how we can assist you.

Our website www.tha.nsw.gov.au is another important resource for property and tenancy information, contact details, feedback and essential forms.

We have over 30 years experience housing teachers in the bush. We trust that our services, support and advice will meet your expectations, and that we will continue to provide you with a quality housing service.

Philip Shelley

General Manager

June 2011

Contents

How to Contact Us	3
Your Residential Tenancy Agreement and Paying Rent and Bond	5
Your Responsibilities as a Tenant and Fair Wear and Tear	11
Maintenance and Refurbishment	15
Moving Out	19
Vacating Inspection Checklist	23
Pets	25
Security	27
Heating and Cooling	29
Pest Control and Septic Systems	31
General Information	33
Guarantee of Service and Useful Contacts	35



How to Contact Us

Toll Free	1300 137 343
Switchboard	02 9260 2000
Tenancy Services	Press 1
For tenancy advice, including housing applications, transfer of accommodation and vacating information, unresolved maintenance issues, and all rental payment and rental bond enquiries.	
Finance Services	Press 2
For accounts payable and receivable, and other non-tenant payments.	
Asset Services	Press 0
For information relating to programmed maintenance and refurbishment works.	
General Manager	02 9260 2001
Right to Information Officer	Press 0
Email	thastaff@tha.nsw.gov.au
Website	www.tha.nsw.gov.au
Fax	02 9260 2060
Our Office is located at	McKell Building Level 23 2-24 Rawson Place SYDNEY NSW 2000
Postal Address	Haymarket Post Shop Locked Bag 7 HAYMARKET NSW 1240
Business Hours	8.30am – 4.30pm Monday to Friday

Tenancy Liaison Service Agents

In most locations we have a service agreement with a real estate agent to provide a tenancy liaison service to our tenants. You will have met your Agent when you collected keys and signed your Lease Agreement.

Your Agent is your first point of contact for all issues relating to property maintenance and repairs. Your Agent's contact details are located on the front page of your lease agreement. They're also on our website

www.tha.nsw.gov.au

What do Agents do?

- Undertake inspections before and after your tenancy, and every six months;
- Hold keys to the property;
- Arrange maintenance identified by you, or by their agency at inspections.
- Arrange lawn mowing and grounds maintenance for unit accommodation; and
- Act on behalf of Teacher Housing as required.

Agents do not collect rent or bonds from teacher tenants, allocate housing, approve transfers between properties and cannot arrange for utility services to be connected or disconnected, including air coolers.

If you feel that your Agent is not providing you with an acceptable level of service and communication, particularly in relation to maintenance, we encourage you to resolve it together. If that is not successful you should contact your Tenancy Services Officer.

Local Housing Representatives

Local Housing Representatives are teacher tenants elected by the teachers in their location. As volunteers they liaise between us and the tenants in your town to ensure that the accommodation needs of teachers and their families are being met.

Reps are listed on our website. These reps:

- Are a point of contact for new teachers in Teacher Housing;
- Can provide you with local information especially to do with town services, amenities, clubs, entertainment, family activities and information specific to your town;
- Can advise about Teacher Housing from a tenant's perspective;
- Consult with us about tenancy allocations, particularly proposed sharing situations;
- Advise us on local teacher accommodation demand and policy issues; and
- Assist us in maintaining accurate records.

We host a Local Housing Representative conference every two years, where reps exchange ideas on services and initiatives to help the teachers they represent.



Your Residential Tenancy Agreement

The Residential Tenancy Agreement or “lease agreement” consists of three parts:

Part 1

The terms and conditions front page of your lease, which is attached to the standard NSW residential tenancy agreement in force across the State.

This is the document you signed when collecting the keys. It provides specific details of the property you are leasing such as address, weekly rent and the minimum length of time that you agreed to lease the property (the “fixed term”). It specifies the rights and obligations of both the tenant and the landlord regarding the use of the premises, how and when rent is to be paid, and how the agreement can be ended.

If there is any dispute over anything related to your tenancy, both yourself and Teacher Housing are bound to act according to the terms and conditions as stated in the lease agreement.

Part 2

The Premises Condition Report (PCR). This document describes in detail the condition of each item and fixture in every room of the dwelling, as well as the exterior condition of the property. This report documents the condition of the property at the time keys were handed over to you.

Your Agent will have completed this report just before you collected keys. It is your responsibility to complete the tenant section of the report within seven (7) days of the start of your tenancy. Completing it involves writing a Y for “yes”, or an N for “no” against the comment made by your Agent for each item in the PCR, regarding cleanliness, damage and if the item works as it should. Write in any additional comments you think are necessary to fully describe the condition of each item, especially if your Agent has missed recording any damage. Take photos if necessary.

It is in your best interest to complete the condition report as accurately as possible to reflect the condition of the property when you collected keys.

You must complete, sign and return the PCR to the Agent within seven (7) days of the start of your tenancy.

At the end of your tenancy your Agent will compare the condition of the property as you left it with the report made at the start of your tenancy. This identifies if any damage or un-cleanliness is your responsibility. We will charge you for any repairs or additional cleaning required to return the condition of the property to the same as it was when you moved in, less any fair wear and tear that reasonably occurs during your tenancy.

If you do not complete, sign and return the PCR to your Agent within seven days it is accepted under common practice of residential tenancy legislation that you have agreed with the condition of the premises as recorded by your Agent.

Part 3

The Furniture Inventory Report. Teacher Housing lease agreements have a 2-page Furniture Inventory Report at the back of the lease. This applies to villa unit accommodation only. Houses are not furnished, and the report will be struck through by your Agent if you are leasing a house. It is to be completed in the same way as the PCR, by indicating Y or N against the comment made by your Agent for each item. You should also write in any additional comments you think are necessary to fully describe the condition of each item, especially if your Agent has missed recording any damage. Take photos if necessary.

As with the PCR, at the end of your tenancy your Agent will compare the condition of furnishings provided by Teacher Housing with the report made at the start of your tenancy. This identifies if any damage or un-cleanliness is your responsibility. We will charge you for any repairs or additional cleaning required to return the condition of the furnishings to the same as when you moved in, less any fair wear and tear that reasonably occurs during your tenancy.

Sub-Leasing

In specific situations, we may lease properties owned by other landlords and rent them out to teachers. This is known as a sub-leasing agreement, where the teacher is the sub-lessee of the property.

If this situation applies to you, it will be discussed with you at the time an offer of accommodation is made. There will be no difference in the way you pay your rent, request maintenance or end your lease agreement than if you were leasing a Teacher Housing-owned or managed property.

Ending the Agreement

New laws came into place in 2010 surrounding the amount of written notice tenants and landlords must give to end the agreement.

The tenant must give 21 days notice in writing to end the agreement after the fixed term has expired. If the fixed term is due to expire, you can give 14 days written notice that you will be vacating on or after the expiry date. If you need to move out urgently, for a short notice employment transfer for example, we may reduce the notice period. Please contact your Tenancy Services Officer on **1300 137 343** to discuss your situation.

Teacher Housing can end the agreement:

- By providing 90 days written notice (without any grounds) after the fixed term has expired;
- By providing 30 days written notice on exchange of a sale contract which requires vacant possession by the new owner;
- By providing 14 days written notice if you seriously or consistently breach a term of the agreement, or if you are more than 14 days in rental arrears; or
- By providing 30 days written notice that the lease will not be renewed when the fixed term is due to expire.

For more information and advice about ending your tenancy, please refer to 'Moving Out' on page 19.

Your Right to Teacher Housing Accommodation

If you are a teacher employed under the *Teaching Services Act 1980* or the *TAFE Commission Act 1990* you are entitled to apply for accommodation in the town that you are appointed to (permanently or temporarily), for the period of your appointment. Casual teachers are entitled to apply for accommodation in the town where they are engaged by the school/TAFE, as long as they are employed at least two (2) days per week. Casual teachers have a lower priority for housing than permanent and temporary teachers.

For more information on our Housing Eligibility and Allocation Policy, please go to the Tenancy Services section of our website www.tha.nsw.gov.au

There is no limit on the length of time you may occupy a Teacher Housing dwelling, as long as you remain appointed to a school in the locality and employed under either of the above-mentioned Acts. If you leave the teaching service you relinquish the right to tenure in Teacher Housing accommodation.

Paying Rent and Bond

Rent is payable from the date that you collect keys to the property, including if you arrange to collect keys before the lease commencement date stated in your tenancy agreement.

Rental Determination

The rent charged is based on market values in the location that you are renting, as recommended by an independent registered property valuer. Rents are reviewed annually.

Where an increase in the rent occurs, we give affected tenants 60 days written notice, under the terms of the *Residential Tenancies Act 2010*. Rent reductions are effective from the annual review date in May.

Permanent and Temporary Teachers

If you are a permanently or temporarily-appointed teacher, two weeks rent will be deducted automatically from your salary every fortnight. This is not negotiable and rent cannot be paid any other way. We will make arrangements for deductions to start as soon as possible after you have moved in. Often at the start of the school term there can be a delay in rental deductions starting until your paperwork has been processed by your employer. If this occurs, your rental account will fall into arrears through no fault of your own. We will contact you to advise that an additional amount of rent will be deducted from your salary to reduce the arrears over several salary payments. The rate of this amount can be negotiated.

Casual Teachers

If you are a teacher on DET's casual payroll, or if you are a permanent teacher on unpaid temporary leave, you must make arrangements to pay rent directly to Teacher Housing. Your rent account must be paid on time and fourteen days in advance as stated in your lease agreement. You can pay by sending a cheque or money order to Teacher Housing, or by direct deposit to Teacher Housing's bank account. You cannot pay rent to your Agent.

Your Tenancy Services Officer will discuss your preferred method of payment with you at the time an offer of accommodation is made, and provide you with all the details needed to ensure your payment is correctly receipted to your rental account. If you want to change the method that you use to pay your rent, please contact us on **1300 137 343** to obtain the necessary details.

- Teacher tenants cannot pay their rent to their Agent.
- Casual Teachers and Direct payers must keep their rental account paid 14 days in advance.

You must clearly identify every rental payment you send to us with your name, tenant number or address, or it will not be credited to your rental account.

Rental Arrears

If your rental account is more than 14 days in arrears, Teacher Housing will write to you requesting rental payment within another 14 days, and outlining the options available to liquidate the arrears. Where, after a second reminder letter has not been responded to by you, and you have not made the requested rental payment or contacted us to discuss any exceptional circumstances, we will commence action to terminate your tenancy and recover the arrears.

Tenants who repeatedly fail to pay rent on time and in advance will be issued notice of termination and refused housing in future.

Rental Bond

We require payment of four weeks rental bond by all tenants residing in a property owned or managed by Teacher Housing. We collect, lodge and claim/return the bond at the end of tenancy in accordance with the provisions of the *Residential Tenancies Act 2010*.

- You will be required to pay four (4) weeks of the market rent of your property as bond.
- Teachers who pay their rent by salary deduction may also pay their bond by salary deduction over a maximum of four (4) fortnightly instalments
- Casual teachers must make arrangements to pay their bond in one lump sum directly to Teacher Housing at the time the offer of accommodation is accepted
- **Teachers who pay their bond in one lump sum are entitled to receive a 10% discount**

Your bond will be lodged with the Rental Bond Board (RBB) and you will be issued a receipt of lodgement by the RBB.

The bond cannot be used to pay your rent or any tenant charges during tenancy.

At the end of your tenancy, your bond will be returned to you within 30 days if there is no tenant charge for unpaid rent, cleaning or remedial work. You will be notified in writing by the RBB and by us if a claim is pending. You have 14 days to dispute the claim on your bond.



Your Responsibilities as a Tenant

Teacher Housing has the responsibility as a landlord to:

- Allow you quiet enjoyment of the property;
- Give you appropriate notice when we require access to the property;
- Provide you with a property that is reasonably clean and fit to live in at the start of your tenancy; and
- Provide and maintain the dwelling in a reasonable state of repair, having regard to its age and prospective life.

As the tenant, it is your responsibility to:

- Sign and return the agreement and completed Premises Condition Report within 7 days of starting tenancy;
- Ensure your rent is paid on time and kept up to date (see Paying Rent and Bond on page 8);
- Maintain the property in a clean state;
- Allow access to authorised Teacher Housing representatives to carry out necessary work (if you have received appropriate notice);
- Meet the cost of cleaning and/or repairing any damage (excluding fair wear and tear) caused by you or any person you invite or allow onto the property; and
- Give appropriate written notice of your intended vacating date (see 'Moving Out' on page 19 for more information on giving notice to vacate).

We ask that you:

- Notify us of any change in circumstances which may affect the way you pay rent;
- Make your request for repairs or maintenance in writing to your Agent;
- Not sub-let the dwelling or otherwise permit additional occupants into the dwelling without the prior written approval of Teacher Housing;
- Not operate any business enterprise from the dwelling without the prior written approval of Teacher Housing; and
- Co-operate with neighbours in your villa unit complex to keep the common area clean and tidy and allow access to lawns and grounds contractors.

Examples in 'Fair Wear and Tear' give some specific scenarios of damage where tenants are responsible for meeting the cost to repair.



Fair Wear and Tear

Wear to the property is inevitable, and your Agent and Teacher Housing recognise this. You are responsible for the actions of yourself, your family and any persons you allow on to the property. However, any damage to the property caused by misuse, undue force, accident or deliberate action is not fair wear and tear. You will be responsible for rectifying the damage at your cost.

The following is a list of items you are responsible for organising and paying for yourself:

- Replacing broken glass where the damage is caused by yourself or others on the property with your consent. This includes cracks and chips to glass caused during lawn mowing to houses (villa unit grounds mowed under contract by the Agent are excluded);
- Clearing plumbing chokes caused by you or others on the property with your permission who have placed items down drains, toilets and sinks;

- Cleaning of gutters (villa units excluded). See page 16 for more detailed information;
- Maintaining and pumping out the septic system as required during your tenancy. Refer to page 32 for more detailed information;
- Replacing keys or re-keying existing locks where keys have been lost or stolen;
- Cleaning (internal and external), including Teacher Housing furniture and appliances, to remove marks and stains caused by you and to maintain the condition of the property as it was when you first occupied it (less fair wear and tear);
- Repairing damage to walls and doors caused by furniture, wall posters, stickers/adhesive decorations or careless picture hanging, including re-painting repair patches;
- Repairing damage to floor coverings, window treatments and Teacher Housing furniture such as burns and stains;
- Removing mould, cobwebs, nests, dirt and rubbish from the property. See page 17 for more detailed information;
- Replacing light globes and fluorescent tubes. We will pay for replacement globes and tubes in common areas of villa units;
- Replacing batteries to smoke alarms if they expire during your tenancy;
- Repairing any damage caused by your pets;
- Making good any damage to lawns, fencing or exterior walls following the installation and removal of outdoor furniture, sunshades, children's play equipment, pet shelters, sports equipment eg basketball rings, decorations/ornaments, outdoor lighting, communication devices and other permanently fixed items you have placed on the property, even where you have sought the written permission of Teacher Housing to affix these items; and
- Any other repair or maintenance necessary because of the negligence of you or other persons on the property with your consent.

Fixtures

You are not permitted to make any improvements, modifications or inclusions to the property without the prior written consent of Teacher Housing. This includes painting; erecting pergolas, sunshades or satellite dishes; installing dishwashers or air conditioning units; or affixing any item permanently or semi-permanently to the property. Contact us before you undertake any improvements.

We have the right to request that you remove any fixtures, and to charge you for any repairs or re-painting required to return the property to its previous condition.



Maintenance and Refurbishment

Maintenance is a shared responsibility between you and Teacher Housing. Your Agent is your first point of contact for all maintenance you require to the property. All maintenance requests must be made in writing to your Agent.

A Maintenance Request Form is included in your *Tenant Welcome Kit* for you to fax to your Agent. You can also email your agent, or complete an online Maintenance Request form in the Tenancy Services/Tenant Forms section at www.tha.nsw.gov.au

Urgent Repairs

Your Agent has a service agreement with us that requires them to arrange for urgent repairs and maintenance to be carried out by skilled tradespersons within 24 hours of being notified by you.

Urgent repairs are defined in your Residential Tenancy Agreement at Section 19 *Urgent Repairs*. Essentially, any fault that disrupts the normal supply of water, sewerage, gas, electricity, cooking, heating, cooling or laundering to your property requires urgent repair. This also applies to any fault or damage that causes the property to be unsafe or insecure, and any damage caused by flooding or storms.

In event of an emergency Teacher Housing, our Agent, or any other authorised person may enter the premises without your permission to carry out urgent repairs. See Section 23 of your Lease Agreement for more information.

Emergencies

If you require urgent repairs (as defined above) to your dwelling and you cannot get any response from your Agent or from us (after hours or weekends for example), you are entitled to arrange the repairs yourself with a licensed, qualified tradesperson, and to seek reimbursement not exceeding \$1000 from Teacher Housing so long as:

- The damage was not caused by yourself or others on the property with your permission;
- You make a reasonable attempt to let your Agent or us know about the damage;
- You give your Agent or us reasonable opportunity to undertake the work;
- You make a reasonable attempt to have your Agent's tradespeople make the repairs;
- The repairs are carried out by an appropriate licensed tradesperson; and
- You give us or the agent written details of the repairs, including the cost and receipts for anything you have paid for as soon as possible.

More information about tenants arranging urgent repairs is detailed in Section 19 of your Lease Agreement.

Non-Urgent Repairs

Contact your Agent in writing for all other repairs and maintenance. Ask for an estimation of when the repairs will be carried out. Contact your Agent if work has not been undertaken within this estimated timeframe and find out the reasons for the delay.

Lawns, Grounds and Gutters

Tenants in Villa Units

We meet the cost of maintenance to lawns, grounds and gutters for villa unit accommodation, due to the large area of common land. This work will be organised by your Agent and carried out on a regular basis.

You should find out what day this work is being done as you are responsible for removing toys, pet items (including pet faeces) from the lawns and grounds so it is clear for lawn mowing. Pets must be restrained or removed while work is undertaken. The grounds contractor will not fill holes or repair damage caused by your family or your pets.

Tenants in Houses

Tenants in houses are responsible for maintaining the lawns, grounds and gutters at their own expense. We strongly recommend that you engage a licensed and insured professional to undertake gutter cleaning and tree trimming. Your Agent can advise you of suitable tradespeople and/or arrange this work at your cost.

Removing Mould, Cobwebs and Nests

If you live in a property that is prone to mould it is your responsibility to remove mould and control its growth. Keeping windows open as much as possible for ventilation and opening curtain and blinds to let in natural light helps to minimise growth.

It is your responsibility to remove cobwebs and bird and insect nests from your property. Swallows, wasps and hornets are common nesting examples, and they often accumulate under eaves. Knock these nests down promptly and clean up any resulting debris.

Contact your Agent if you'd like some more advice.

Property Refurbishment Program

We take pride in offering you accommodation that is well cared for, comfortable and suitable to you and your family's needs. During your tenancy your property may be scheduled for programmed refurbishment to maintain or up-grade the facilities. This may include internal/ external painting, gutter and roof repairs, re-carpeting and kitchen or bathroom renovations.

Refurbishment Process

Depending on the type of work undertaken, some disruption to your household may occur. Every effort will be made to minimise the disruption.

Kitchen and bathroom facilities will be made available to you when these amenities are under refurbishment. This may be in the form of temporary connections, temporary sharing arrangements, or portable services on your property.

The tradespeople will shift and replace furniture on a room-by-room basis during works. You will need to pack away any items that you don't wish to risk being inadvertently damaged during works. Your co-operation in this matter is appreciated, and of benefit to your belongings.

Thank you for your patience during this process to make your home a more comfortable place to live.



Moving Out

There are 3 things that you must do when preparing to move out.

- 1 Advise us in writing that you will be moving out**
- 2 Contact your Agent to schedule the end of tenancy inspection and return of keys**
- 3 Clean the property and arrange any work needed to return the property to the same condition as when you moved in.**

Advising us that you are leaving

Tenants are required to give notice in writing that they are vacating the property. You can either:

- complete a *Vacating Advice* online at www.tha.nsw.gov.au/forms
- complete and fax/post the *Vacating Advice* included in your *Tenant Welcome Kit* to us, or
- email us at thastaff@tha.nsw.gov.au

We will confirm your vacating date in writing and provide you with information about finalising your tenancy.

How much notice do I have to give?

Tenants are required to give 21 days written notice of the date they are moving out. If you move out within those 21 days, you will still be charged to the end of the notice period.

If you are vacating on or just after the end of the fixed term of your lease agreement, you must give at least 14 days notice of this date **BEFORE** the last day of the fixed term. Rent is chargeable until the end of the fixed term, or the date that you vacate if that is a later date.

For more information on vacating notice periods please refer to the Notes section at the back of your lease agreement.

Short Notice Transfer and Exceptional Circumstances

If you must urgently vacate the property because you have received a short notice transfer to a school in another town, or for exceptional personal reasons, we may reduce your notice period to 7 days only. Please contact your Tenancy Services Officer on **1300 107 343** to discuss your situation.

Where do I leave the keys?

Your keys must be returned to your Agent's office. There is important documentation to be signed to finalise your tenancy. Please factor in travel to the Agent's office during business hours in your vacating plans.

Leaving keys with your flatmate, neighbour or principal is not an acceptable way to end your tenancy.

Finalising Rent

When you give notice to vacate we will confirm your vacating and rental charge-to date in writing. Your rental account will be reconciled and arrangements made for rental deductions from your salary to cease. There is generally always one final rental deduction made from your salary in the fortnight after you have vacated.

If your rental account is in arrears of greater than one fortnight at the time that you vacate, your Tenancy Services Officer (TSO) will contact you to discuss methods of payment.

If you pay your rent directly to us (casual teachers, permanent teachers on unpaid leave), your TSO will advise you of the final amount owing to your rental charge-to date. This amount must also be paid in advance in the same way you normally pay rent.

Rent is chargeable to the end of your required notice period. Keys must be returned on or before this date, and rent will be charged until the date keys are received by your Agent if you do not return keys by your vacating date.

End of Tenancy Inspection

Your Agent will carry out an inspection of the property within seven (7) days of you vacating. They will compare the condition of the property at the end of tenancy with notes made by yourself and their office on the in-going condition report made at the start of your tenancy. It is recommended that you are present at the end of tenancy inspection in case any issues arise.

Your Agent will discuss any cleaning or remedial work required to be undertaken by you at this final inspection. They will give you opportunity to do any necessary work or arrange for the work to be done at your cost by a licensed contractor of your choosing. You can request that these costs be taken from your bond. Work must be completed before the next tenant moves in.

Your lease agreement states that the tenant must return the property in the same condition it was leased in, excluding any fair wear and tear. This means that you must fix up any damage you have caused to the property, even if it was accidental, including any damage caused by moving out.

You are responsible for any damage your pets may cause to the property. This includes re-filling holes dug in the ground, garden beds or lawn, and removal of pet faeces and hair.

Ensure that all rubbish is removed or placed in bins allocated to your property only. Any rubbish that does not fit must be taken away by you and not left in your neighbours' bins or cluttering up common areas.

Tenants in houses:

Mow the lawns, arrange for gutters to be cleaned out and ensure the exterior of the house and the grounds/garden are left clean and tidy.

Tenants in units:

Ensure that your unit's enclosed outdoor area and the common area is clean and tidy.

A detailed *Vacating Inspection Checklist* is included on page 23 to help ensure you cover all areas that are your responsibility.

Returning your Bond

Your Agent will send a copy of your end of tenancy inspection report to your Tenancy Services Officer within seven (7) days of you vacating. Your Agent will have discussed any cleaning or remedial work required to be undertaken by you/at your expense with you at the final inspection.

Your bond will be returned to you within 30 days of vacating if there are no charges for unpaid rent, cleaning or remedial work. It can be refunded by cheque, or deposited to your bank account if you provide us with your account details.

If you do not undertake the remedial work you are responsible for, or if you have not made arrangements for work to be done, your Agent will be instructed to arrange the work with a contractor. You will be notified in writing if you are responsible for meeting the cost involved.

When this work is completed you will be provided with proof of completion of work. The Rental Bond Board will notify you of a pending claim from Teacher Housing, and it will be finalised after 14 days unless you lodge a dispute with the Consumer, Trader & Tenancy Tribunal.

You will be refunded the remainder of your bond. If your bond does not meet the total cost of work we will seek the difference directly from you.

Remember to disconnect your utilities and re-direct your mail to your new address.



Abandoned Properties and Goods

Abandoned goods will be handled in accordance with the *Residential Tenancies Act 2010*.

If we have good reason to believe that a premises has been abandoned, we will inspect the property, and then seek an order from the Consumer, Trader and Tenancy Tribunal (CTTT) to declare the premises abandoned so it can become available for a new tenant. We have the right to seek compensation from the former tenant through the CTTT for the loss of rental income and property damage.

Teacher Housing may immediately dispose of perishable goods left on the property. We will contact the former tenant to give notice that non-perishable goods will be disposed of after 14 days. We will dispose of any non-perishable goods regardless of value. Any non-perishable goods disposed of will be recorded.

Personal documents left on the premises will be disposed of after 90 days and the former tenant will be given notice of this. Personal documents will be disposed of securely so that the personal information does not become publicly revealed.

Vacating Inspection Checklist

Please contact your Agent to arrange **a mutual time to complete an end of tenancy inspection**. It is in your interest to attend and complete this inspection with your Agent to discuss any further cleaning or repairs that you may be responsible for undertaking.

Completed
(Tick)

Remove all personal items and effects from the dwelling.

**Disconnect utilities with service providers
– telephone, gas and electricity.**

Bathroom:

Cabinets and Vanity – empty, clean and wipe out.
Clean glass and mirrors where applicable.

Exhaust fans – remove and clean protective covers.

Shower screen and recess – scrub and remove all soap residue and mould, including tiles and grout.

Wall tiles – scrub and remove all soap residue and mould from tiles and grout.

External:

Verandahs and Garage floors – clean and remove any oil and/or grease stains.

Garden – remove any debris and rubbish.
Correct/rectify any damage caused by animals.

Lawns to be mowed and clippings removed (this item applies to houses only).

Guttering – remove leaves and debris (this item applies to houses only).

Garage, Carport and Storeroom – remove all rubbish and personal possessions, and sweep.

Kitchen:

Drawers, cupboards and bench tops – empty, clean and wipe down.

Exhaust fans – remove and clean protective covers.


Refrigerator and freezer (furnished villa units only) – empty, defrost and clean. Switch off power and leave doors ajar to prevent mould.

Stove – clean stove, griller, drip trays, oven and burners and general body of stove (behind stove where possible).

Vacating Inspection Checklist (continued)


Laundry:

Laundry tub – wash and remove any stains or soap residue. 


Dryer and Washing Machine (furnished villa units only) 


– remove and clean lint filters. Wipe over appliances.


Throughout Dwelling:

Air vents – dusted. 


Carpet – cleaned, marks and stains removed. 

Cobwebs, Nests and Mould– remove and clean throughout premises (internal and external). 


Cupboards, drawers and storage/ wardrobes cupboards – emptied, shelving wiped down and ‘face’ panels cleaned. 


Curtains and/ or blinds – cleaned and dusted. 


Doors, skirting and architraves – dusted and washed. 

Floors, lino and floors to wet areas (laundry, bathroom and toilet) – swept and mopped. 


Furniture (furnished villa units only) – spot cleaned and dusted. 

Globes and fluorescent tubes – in working order. 

Do not remove globes and fluorescent tubes when vacating. 

Light fittings – remove light fittings, dust, clean and refit. 

Walls – remove marks with light sponging. 

Windows, sills and flyscreens – cleaned. 

Return all keys, including copies, to your Agent. Advise your Agent if you have changed the security alarm code. It is not acceptable to leave keys with your neighbours or Principal, or with your flatmates.



Pets

You are permitted to keep domestic pets on Teacher Housing properties, provided they are appropriate to the type of property and that you maintain control over its activities. We are guided by the *Companion Animals Act 1998* to determine if a pet is appropriate to the property type.

Dogs and cats **are not permitted inside** the main residential building forming part of the property.

Some local councils have by-laws placing restrictions on the number and type of animals, particularly dogs, you may have on a residential property in some locations.

Stock animals (eg horses, goats, sheep, cattle) must not be kept on Teacher Housing property without our prior written approval. Wild animals (eg kangaroos, emus, pigs) are not permitted on the property under any circumstances.

Domestic pets or stock must not create a nuisance or cause damage to our property. The property must be kept in a clean and hygienic condition at all times. You will be required to arrange or meet the cost of repairing any damage to the property caused by your pet, including to lawns and grounds.

Tenants in villa units must ensure that pet faeces and toys are removed from the lawn and gardens, and that your pets are removed or restrained, when grounds maintenance is being undertaken. Speak to your Agent to find out when maintenance is scheduled. The grounds contractor will not fill holes or repair damage caused by your pets – this is your responsibility.

Teacher Housing has sole discretion to direct you to remove a pet or other animal from the property by giving you seven (7) days notice.



Security

Security provisions in Teacher Housing properties comply with the requirements of the *Residential Tenancies Act 2010*.

The following standard security provisions are supplied to all of our properties:

- Solid core external doors
- Deadlocks on all external doors (keyed alike)
- Security screen doors (keyed alike); and
- Locks on all windows (keyed alike)

If your property does not have these standard Teacher Housing security measures, they will be provided upon your request.

Security System Servicing

Your property may have a security system. You will be provided with the alarm code to your security system when you collect keys for the property. You must notify your Agent if you change this code, especially at the end of your tenancy when you move out. Your Agent can explain how your particular security system operates, and arrange for any repairs.

Changing Your Locks and Security Devices

If you decide to change or add locks or other security devices to your Teacher Housing property as an additional security measure, you must supply the Agent with a copy of each new key, opening device or information required to open any lock or security device within seven (7) days of the change, at your expense. This is a requirement under the *Residential Tenancies Act 2010*.

Insurance

Every Teacher Housing property is insured against loss or damage from fire, accident, storm or flood.

This insurance **DOES NOT** extend to the loss, damage or theft of your personal possessions, including furniture, clothing and vehicles. You are strongly advised to arrange suitable insurance for these items.

You are responsible for all glass breakages on the property, except when caused by someone on the property without your permission. Glass insurance can be written into most household contents insurance policies.



Heating and Cooling

Heating

We provide one heater to the main living area in every Teacher Housing property.

Cooling

Air cooling is provided to all our properties. Your property will have either an evaporative air cooling unit, or a reverse cycle (refrigerated) air conditioning unit.

Air Conditioning Units

We install refrigerated reverse cycle air conditioning units in locations where data from the Bureau of Meteorology and other criteria proves that an evaporative air cooling unit would be inefficient. One unit will be installed in the main living area of the dwelling, and fans will be installed in the bedrooms.

Evaporative Air Cooling Units

In most locations an evaporative air cooling unit is installed. This type of cooling is better suited to environments that have dry heat and low humidity than refrigerated air cooling systems. They are significantly cheaper to run than refrigerated air units.

These units are serviced and switched on in August/September, and switched off again the following April/May at the end of summer. Your evaporative air cooler cannot be used over the winter months. This is because water in the pipes may freeze and cause damage by bursting or cracking.

The contractor will require internal access to your home to undertake servicing. You will be notified by the contractor of the date for each service. We appreciate your co-operation in allowing access so that we can ensure your air cooling is operating efficiently.

The unit is on the roof of your house/villa unit. It works by pumping cooled water over the unit's pads. The air blows through the pads, where it is cooled, and then cool air is ducted into the main living area and bedrooms.

Evaporative cooling systems require air flow to work. This means that doors and windows need to remain open to create a flow through air movement. The system will not work efficiently if the house is shut up, the way you would with a refrigerated air conditioning system.

How to Operate Your Evaporative Air Cooling Unit

Evaporative air cooling systems work differently to air conditioning systems. They require air flow to work. The system will not work efficiently if the house is shut up, the way you would with a refrigerated air conditioning system.

- 1** Open as many windows as possible to at least 10cm. Keep your front and back doors open, with the security screen doors closed or locked shut. This creates air flow.
- 2** Locate the unit's control panel – generally on the living room wall.
- 3** Turn the pump switch on, and leave it running for at least 10–15 minutes before you turn on the switch for the fan.

Having the pump going first will soak and clean down the pads, and wash any dust into the tank (where it will settle). Very little dust will blow out. When the pads are thoroughly wet it will allow for more efficient cooling.

You can expect that an efficient evaporative air cooler will reduce the temperature of the house by 10°C.

Dust Storms

Following a dust storm you should leave the pump running for two–three hours before turning on the fan.



Pest Control

We will provide you with a property that is free from pest infestation. However, during your tenancy you are expected to take all reasonable precautions to prevent an infestation of rats, cockroaches, fleas or other pests in the dwelling.

We expect that you will take preventative action such as

- removing rubbish from the dwelling;
- storing rubbish securely until its disposal;
- routine use of pest prevention treatments, such as those widely-available at supermarkets and hardware stores.

You must notify your Agent promptly of any infestation of rats, cockroaches, fleas or other pests in the dwelling. If your actions, including lack of preventative action, make you responsible for the infestation you will be required to meet the full cost of fumigation or eradication.

If an infestation of pests is due to activities or neglect by us, we will meet the full cost of rectifying the problem.

Where an infestation of pests (excluding white ants/termites) cannot be attributed to either Teacher Housing or you, we will refund half the amount to you of the costs associated with eradication or fumigation. You must obtain our agreement to reimburse you **BEFORE** the work is carried out. Payment cannot be made if the agreement has not been registered prior to receiving your claim for reimbursement. Contact your Tenancy Services Officer on **1300 137 343** to discuss any pest problem.

Your Agent and your Teacher Housing Rep can advise you of seasonal infestations that may be specific to your location, and how best to manage them.

White Ant/Termite Infestations

We will meet the full cost of eradicating white ants/termite infestations. Please report the presence of white ants/termites to your Agent immediately. Do not disturb the infestation or attempt eradication yourself.

To reduce the opportunity for white ant/termite damage you should take the following precautions:

- don't store firewood or boxes on verandahs, or against or under the building;
- don't enclose foundations, and keep them clear of rubbish and leaves; and
- don't fill in foundations for rockeries, gardens or trellis work.

Teacher Housing will not accept responsibility for any damage to your personal property or possessions by white ants/termites.

Septic Systems

If there is no sewerage system operated by the council in your location, we have installed a septic system to your property. The system consists of a septic tank combined with a soil absorption system and/or transpiration beds.

How Does It Work?

A healthy septic is a living eco-system where the right bugs (bacteria) thrive in the right proportions to digest waste and treat the water. In some systems, the water is distributed into the ground by a system of trenches (an absorption field).

Septic systems may also have a separate tank for grey water, the wastewater which comes from the kitchen, laundry and bathroom. There may also be a grease trap, to collect oil and grease from the kitchen. The water from the grease trap eventually ends up in the grey water tank.

What Do I Need to Do?

Here are some tips to make your system as efficient as possible:

- Be aware that anything that goes down a drain will go through the septic system;
- Learn the location and layout of the septic system – talk to your Agent;
- Check that any products to be flushed or washed away are suitable for a septic tank;
- Use biodegradable liquid detergents, such as concentrates with low phosphorous;
- Clean the grease trap (if installed) at least every two months – wear gloves and wash it where the drainage will go back into the septic;
- Use a sink strainer to keep food waste out of the system; and
- Conserve water.

The following is a list of actions that will make your septic system less efficient:

- Putting large quantities of bleaches, disinfectants, whiteners, nappy soakers and spot removers into the system via the sink, washing machine and toilet;
- Allowing things like nappies, condoms and hygiene products to enter the system; and
- Tipping fats and oils down the drain.

Septic System Pumping

A well-maintained system may never need pumping out. It is your responsibility to arrange for septic pumping, and to meet this cost. Tenants in villa units must arrange for and divide the cost between them. Your Agent can advise you of local septic system contractors.

Your septic may need attention if:

- The toilets or drains are slow to clear, or keep backing up or overflowing;
- The air around it smells – usually like rotten egg gas; and /or
- The ground is damp or soggy, or pools form downhill of the system.



Furniture

All Teacher Housing villa units are furnished. Your unit will contain:

Either

- Lounge suite – 4 seat ensemble: 1x double-seat and 2x single-seat chairs (double bedroom villa units only) **OR**
- Sofa bed ensemble – 1x double-seat and 2x single-seat chairs (single bedroom villa units only)

AND

- Dining suite – table and 4 chairs
- Queen bed* (1x each bedroom)
- Coffee table
- Refrigerator
- Washing machine

* Existing double beds will be replaced with a queen bed when the bed is due for replacement.

If any of the above items are missing, damaged or not working when you move into the unit you should note this on the ingoing Premises Condition Report and Furniture Inventory Report.

This applies to villa unit accommodation only. Houses are not furnished.

Garbage Removal

We will meet the cost of providing bins where the local council has arranged a garbage collection service for residential properties. The bin belongs with the property and you are responsible for maintaining its condition.

You are responsible for arranging and paying for rubbish removal if there is no local council garbage collection service in your area.

LP Gas (LPG) Cylinder Rental

Each installation of LPG is complete with external connections and two cylinders. The annual rental fee is paid for by us, however you need to arrange for this, as follows:

Your Agent can advise you of local LPG suppliers. You will need to open two (2) accounts with the supplier – one for rental of the cylinders in the name of the Teacher Housing Authority, and a second account in your name for the supply of the gas consumed.

Forward the original invoice for cylinder rental to us. We will pay the LPG supplier directly. Postal details are listed on page 3.

We do not refund the cost of unused gas when you move out of the property.

Smoke Detectors and Earth Leakage Protection Devices

Smoke detectors (hardwired with battery backup) and earth leakage protection devices are installed in all dwellings. The number and type of this equipment installed complies with the Building Code of Australia.

We will ensure that your smoke alarm is operational at the start of your tenancy. It is your responsibility to advise your Agent if the alarm becomes faulty.

You must replace batteries as soon as they require replacement. The NSW Fire Service recommends that you:

- get into the habit of changing your batteries at the end of daylight savings every year with a long-lasting alkaline battery;
- Test the detector regularly by pressing the test button with a broom handle; and
- Vacuum the detector monthly to clean the vents.

You must not interfere with the operation of the smoke alarm unless you have a reasonable excuse to do so. You must advise us if you do so we can correct any usage problems.

Swimming Pools

Tenants wishing to install above-ground swimming pools to the property must get the prior written approval of Teacher Housing.

There are a number of safety regulations that must be adhered to. These are enforceable by your local council. Teacher Housing has the right to request that you remove the swimming pool from the property if it fails to meet the safety requirements of the local council.

Telephone Line Connection Fee and Internet Connections

If you are the first teacher tenant in a dwelling requiring a telephone connection where no connection has previously existed, we will reimburse you the cost for one telephone access point, less the standard connection fee payable by all telephone subscribers.

You will need to write to us requesting reimbursement. Your request must include the original telephone account and proof of payment.

We do not reimburse the cost of telephone handset rental and associated fittings.

You must contact us in writing if you wish to add a telephone connection for internet use.

We will require proof that work has been carried out by a licensed and qualified contractor.



Guarantee of Service

Striving for excellent client service is an integral part of our business. Our Guarantee of Service (GOS) sets out the standards of service you can expect from us. A copy of the GOS is included in this *Tenant Welcome Kit*. You'll also find our GOS on our website www.tha.nsw.gov.au

Government Information (Public Access) Act (GIPA)

To promote open, accountable, fair and effective government in NSW, members of the public have a right to access government information. This right is restricted only when there is an over-riding public interest against disclosing the particular information.

For more information on how to access information please go to www.services.nsw.gov.au or contact Teacher Housing's Right to Information Officer on **1300 137 343**.

Personal Info

Under the *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998*, we are obliged to notify you about how, why and when we will use your personal information. This information includes your name, date of birth, sex and details about any dependents listed on your "Application for Housing".

We will ensure that your personal information is protected. We may, however, be required by law to release your personal information, in specific circumstances, to Government agencies including those involved in child protection, health and law enforcement. You have a right of access to, and correction of, your personal information.

If you want to access or make changes to your personal information you will need to write to our Right to Information Officer. Our contact details are in the front of this Handbook.

Useful Contacts

You might find the contact details listed below helpful during your tenancy with us:

Consumer, Trader and Tenancy Tribunal	1300 135 399
NSW Office of Fair Trading	
▪ Renting Services and Rental Bond Board	13 32 20
Telstra	13 22 00
Country Energy	13 23 56
Austar	13 24 32
NSW Department of Education and Communities	02 9561 8000
③ teach.NSW	1300 300 498
③ Leave and Pay enquiries	1300 338 001 (Newcastle Centre) 1300 338 002 (Wollongong Centre)
Emergency Services	000
State Emergency Service (SES)	13 25 00
Rural Fire Service Information Line	1800 679 737
Qantas	13 13 13
Regional Express (Rex) Airline	13 17 13
CountryLink rail services	13 22 32

(Please write in)

My Agent's Name	_____
Agent's Contact Numbers	_____

My Tenancy Services Officer	_____
My Local Housing Rep	_____
Agent's emergency Plumber*	_____
Agent's emergency Electrician*	_____
Local Police	_____
Doctor/Health Service	_____

* Refer to Maintenance on page 16 for the conditions under which you may arrange work directly with tradespeople.



Teacher Housing

Level 23, McKell Building
2-24 Rawson Place, Sydney

Tel: 02 9260 2000

Toll free: 1300 137 343

Fax: 02 9260 2060

Email: thastaff@tha.nsw.gov.au

Internet: www.tha.nsw.gov.au

