

Being a Good Neighbour

CHL is committed to working with you to build and sustain a positive living environment and support safe and harmonious communities.

If you live in a unit complex you have additional responsibilities for being a good neighbour. Following and understanding your *Communal Rules* is an important part of being a good neighbour.

Principles of being a good neighbour

- Have respect for and get to know your neighbours and the environment in which you live.
- Treat people fairly, irrespective of their race, religion, gender, ability, culture, or political views.
- Accept people are different, being tolerant and understanding of the lifestyle of others.
- Caring for the elderly, the lonely and the vulnerable in your community.
- Being responsible for the behaviour of your children and anyone visiting your home.
- Respecting the rights of children to live, meet, and play in a safe and happy environment.
- Keeping your community clean, tidy, and safe.

Tips for being a good neighbor

- Be considerate and think about how your behaviour and habits might affect your neighbours. Ensure your visitors do the same.
- Consider things like language (swearing) or smoking near your neighbours.
- Remember noise travels. Keep noise to a minimum, particularly between 9pm and 7am.

- Don't slam doors, sound car horns, talk loudly or shout – inside or out.
- Keep the volume on televisions, radios, and electronic devices turned down.
- Let your neighbours know when you are going to do something noisy such as maintenance activity or having a get-together.
- Talk to your children about how their playing habits and behaviour might affect your neighbours.
- Always clean up mess from pets and make sure pets don't make excessive noise, roam free, or wander into a neighbour's property.
- Don't leave external security doors or gates open at secure multi-unit complexes or use fire doors to enter or leave the building. Don't let anybody into the building if you don't know who they are.
- Always report anything suspicious to the police

What kind of behaviour is not ok?

Behaviour that causes, or is likely to cause, harassment, alarm, or distress to others is not acceptable. This includes behaviour that unreasonably interferes with other people's right to live safely and peacefully in their home or community.

This includes but is not limited to:

- Loud or ongoing noise or nuisance – e.g. music or power tools outside of reasonable hours, pets, or vehicles.
- Abusive, intimidating, aggressive, or threatening language or behaviour.
- Vandalism or any type of criminal activity.

Tenant is used as a general term and includes Renter in Victoria, in line with Residential Tenancies Act 1997 (Vic) as amended.

What do I do if I am having problems with my neighbour?

CHL encourages you to try to resolve neighbour disputes directly where it is safe to do so.

In many cases, a calm conversation is the quickest and most effective way to resolve the issue.

- Explain your concern in a calm and respectful manner.
- Be clear about what the problem is and how it is affecting you.

Often, neighbours are not aware they are causing a problem, and a simple conversation can lead to a compromise.

Likewise, if a neighbour approaches you to raise a concern they have, listen to what is bothering them, and appreciate that they made the effort to speak with you, rather than reporting it to CHL or another authority.

If you feel threatened, harassed, intimidated, or there have been acts of violence or aggression, please contact the police first and then CHL.

This is deemed to be anti-social behaviour and will be investigated and actioned in accordance with our *Anti-social Behaviour Policy*. Refer to our *Anti-social Behaviour Information Sheet* for further information.

What can CHL do for neighbour disputes?

CHL staff are unable to intervene or get involved in personal-type neighbour disputes, unless it is in relation to anti-social behaviour, or there is a breach of the tenancy agreement involving a CHL tenant.

Examples of personal-type neighbour disputes may include:

- Rude behaviour, personal disagreements or non-threatening verbal conflicts
- Untidy gardens (unless attracting pests or impacting condition of property)
- Children having a falling out with each other

- Parking disputes (unless in relation to misuse of allocated parking).
- General nuisance matters such as:
- Foul odours e.g. cooking smells
- Noise of children playing or gathering socially (unless being inconsiderate or intimidating)
- Noisy household appliances

If your neighbourhood dispute does not breach tenancy obligations, CHL will:

- encourage tenants to resolve issues directly in a respectful and constructive way.
- offer information about mediation services as a voluntary option to help parties reach an agreement
- refer tenants to external agencies when appropriate and where all parties agree to participate.

What is mediation?

Mediation involves an independent, trained professional (a mediator) who helps neighbours talk through issues in a safe and respectful way.

A mediator is trained to help neighbours settle their dispute quickly and fairly.

It is usually faster, cheaper, and less stressful than legal action.

Further information

If your neighbour's behaviour escalates and you believe they have now breached their tenancy agreement, you may lodge a tenancy complaint to CHL. Refer to our *Feedback, Complaints and Appeals Brochure* for information on this process.

Visit our website at www.chl@org.au or feel free to contact your nearest CHL office.