

Tenant Handbook

Supportive Housing for Families Program



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Welcome to your new home

Common Ground Queensland (CGQ) welcomes you and your family to your new home. We understand that the importance of having a place to call home should never be underestimated. There is no substitute for a door that locks, a warm bed, a comfortable chair – somewhere to call your own.

CGQ wants your home to be a safe, stable and comfortable place for you and your family. We also want to help you connect to you need to succeed.

This **Tenant Handbook** will help answer questions you have about your tenancy under the Supportive Housing for Families Program. If you have additional questions after you have reviewed the handbook, please contact your Tenancy Manager to discuss.

What is supportive housing?

Supportive housing is the close collaboration between housing and social support services. The aim of supportive housing is to support eligible tenants to stay housed as well as providing opportunities to access health, employment, training and activities.

If you would like to know more about supportive housing please refer to the Common Ground Queensland website: www.commongroundqld.org.au.

Supportive Housing 4 Families

Supportive Housing for Families (SH4F) offers subsidised private rental to eligible families within a supportive housing framework under a 12 month lease. At the end of the 12 month lease, families will be assisted to either remain in the property under a new lease or transition to suitable alternative housing.

Tenants housed under the SH4F Program will remain eligible for social housing and will retain their place on the Department of Housing and Public Works' waitlist.



About CGQ

CGQ is a specialist supportive housing provider focused on delivering quality tenant outcomes for people who have experienced long term homelessness and people who require access to affordable housing.

CGQ provides tenancy and property management services to tenants participating in the SH4F Program.

About Micah Projects

Micah Projects is a community-based not for profit organisation, working within a social justice framework.

Micah Projects provides support services to tenants participating in the SH4F Program. The multi-disciplinary team works with tenants to sustain their tenancy. The team provides personal services, events and group activities to facilitate tenants with their quality of life.

Contact details

Phone: (07) 3370 8320 (CGQ Office)
0488 008 274 (SH4F Tenancy Manager during office hours)
AND (Emergency Maintenance after office hours)
(07) 3370 8012 (Micah Projects - all hours)

Address: 15 Hope Street, South Brisbane QLD 4101

Email: admin@commongroundqld.org.au

Website: www.commongroundqld.org.au

Office Hours: Monday to Friday 8:30am – 4:30pm



Our commitment to you

CGQ recognises that moving into a new home can be exciting, but also challenging so we will do our best to make the process as simple as possible. To do this we recognise that we need to agree on how we can best work together. It's a two way process.

Our service

CGQ is committed to providing the best possible standard of service to all of our tenants. We will:

- Be honest and ethical
- Treat you fairly and courteously
- Act professionally in the execution of our duties
- Listen to what you tell us
- Use plain language in our communication
- Acknowledge and respond to reasonable requests for information in a timely fashion
- Maintain appropriate confidentiality.

Your role

You can help us deliver our service by:

- Treating our staff and contractors with courtesy and respect
- Abiding with the terms and conditions set out in the **Tenancy Agreement** and **Special Terms**
- Respecting the rights of your neighbours regarding quiet enjoyment of the premises
- Letting us know if you need further information, support or assistance
- Providing your queries or requests to us using the relevant forms
- Informing us of any issues promptly and working with us to resolve them
- Giving us sufficient and accurate information to be able to understand your request and to respond appropriately
- Keeping us informed if our personal circumstances, household or income change
- Giving us feedback on the service we provide.

Your feedback

We welcome your suggestions on how we can improve our service. We think it is important to know if you are unhappy with any areas of our service delivery. We would also like to hear about any positive experiences you have had with our service or staff. You can provide us with feedback anytime in person, by telephone, by email or in writing.

Privacy and confidentiality

CGQ collects, stores, uses and discloses personal information in accordance with the *Australian Privacy Principles* contained in the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cwth) and *Information Privacy Principles* contained in the *Information Privacy Act 2019* (Qld).

CGQ will respect your right to privacy. Personal information is shared with other agencies only where written consent has been provided and only when information sharing is essential for effective service provision. You can withdraw or modify consent at any time. A copy of the CGQ **Privacy and Confidentiality Policy** and **Procedure** can be provided on request. The **Privacy and Confidentiality Policy** is also available on the CGQ website: www.commongroundqld.org.au.

When renting...

Before moving in, you will receive a copy of the **Pocket Guide for Tenants – houses and units (Form 17a)** published by the Residential Tenancies Authority (RTA).

This guide covers the basics of renting and provides a summary of the property owner/manager's and tenant's rights and responsibilities covered by the *Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008*. CGQ manages tenancies in accordance with this Act.

As a tenant you must

- Pay your rent on time
- Keep the property clean and undamaged and leave it in the same condition it was in when you moved in (fair wear and tear excepted)
- Abide by the terms of your tenancy agreement
- Respect your neighbour's right to peace and quiet.

As the property and tenancy manager we must

- Ensure the property is vacant, clean and in good repair at the start of your tenancy
- Respect your privacy and comply with entry requirements
- Carry out repairs and maintenance
- Meet all health and safety laws
- Lodge your bond with the RTA.

Occupancy

When you accept our offer of a home, you will become the primary leaseholder of the property, even if you have a live-in partner. This means that if you and your partner decide to no longer live together, you will keep your home.

Only the family members named on your tenancy agreement are allowed to occupy your home on a permanent basis. You cannot sublet, take in boarders or set up a share house in a CGQ property. Visitors who stay longer than 4 weeks are considered residents. Regular visitors who stay at your place for periods of less than 4 weeks may also be considered residents. If you would like to change your lease to add one or more family members or need approval to have a visitor stay for more than 4 days in a week, please make an appointment to discuss this with your Tenancy Manager.

It is important to keep us informed of the changes in your household as this could affect the rent amount that you are paying.

Being a good neighbour

Everyone has the right to quiet and peaceful enjoyment of their home. Having good relationships with your neighbours is important – it makes your home a safer and more pleasant place to live. If neighbours disagree or cause a nuisance, it can lead to problems for all concerned. Please consider your neighbours if you are playing music, having friends over or coming home late at night.

The **CGQ Good Neighbour Guideline** outlines ways you can encourage healthy and respectful neighbour relations. You can access the **Good Neighbour Guideline** on our website www.commongroundqld.org.au or through the **BCG App**.

Your tenancy agreement

When you accept an offer of tenancy, you must sign a **General Tenancy Agreement (RTA Form 18a)** before you can move into the property. The tenancy agreement is a legal contract between CGQ (your landlord or lessor) and you (the tenant). It is an agreement between us. You agree to follow the rules we have for keeping your home safe and being a good neighbour. We agree to help you maintain your home and keep this a safe place for all. When you sign your tenancy agreement you are also agreeing to abide by CGQ's **Special Terms**.

You will receive a copy of the tenancy agreement to read prior to signing. Your Tenancy Manager will also explain your rights and responsibilities in detail to ensure that all items are understood and provide you with a signed copy of the agreement.

CGQ offers a fixed term lease for 12 months. Pending ongoing eligibility, you will be assisted to either remain in the property under a new lease or transition to suitable alternative housing.

Rent

The rent you pay is set according to a formula that is determined by the Queensland Department of Housing and Public Works. Any tenant in receipt of a Centrelink benefit will be eligible for rent assistance - this will be factored into the calculation.

All details of rent amounts, due dates and periods of tenancy are outlined in your tenancy agreement and will be fully explained to you before you sign your lease.

Tenants must pay two weeks rent before moving in and remain in advance for the duration of the tenancy. A rental statement can be provided upon request, showing rent charged, payments made and account balance.



Rent assessment and reviews

CGQ will require proof of income to carry out a rent assessment. You will need to provide:

- Centrelink income statement
- Proof of income such as payslips, tax returns, employer statement, bank statements, etc

CGQ undertakes income reviews once a year to ensure that tenants are paying the correct rent. You will be informed of any changes and given plenty of notice about any rent increase.

Paying rent

Centrepay is a free bill-paying service for Centrelink customers. Use Centrepay to arrange regular deductions from your Centrelink payment. You can start or change a deduction any time.

Direct deposit means that you can pay your rent directly into CGQ's bank account. We will give you CGQ's bank account details and a reference number if you choose this option.

EFTPOS payments are available. If you would like to pay with this method please contact your Tenancy Manager.

Payroll deduction can be set up with your employer.

Direct debit to withdraw rent automatically from your bank account each fortnight. You will need to contact your bank to set this up. We will give you CGQ's bank account details and a reference number if you choose this option.

CGQ also accepts **cheques** and **money orders**.

No cash payments accepted.



Rental bond

Tenants are required to pay CGQ a bond which is equal to 4 weeks rent. CGQ will lodge your bond with the RTA.

Your bond can be increased if your rent is increased. CGQ will lodge any extra bond money that you pay with the RTA.

You will get your bond back at the end of your tenancy as long as you do not owe any money to CGQ for rent, damages or other costs (e.g. cleaning).

Utilities

Tenants are responsible for the connection and payment of the following utility services:

- Electricity
- Gas
- Phone and internet

Before you move in, please ensure you have the required utilities connected in your name. If you have a Health Care Card, check with your service provider to see if you are eligible for a rebate.

If you need assistance in obtaining these services, please contact the Micah Projects Support Team.

Water is supplied to the property. Tenants are responsible for paying the costs associated with water usage and are required to pay a fortnightly water charge to cover usage costs. Your Tenancy Manager will let you know how much this charge is during your sign up. Should there be a shortfall at the end of the billing quarter (every three months) you will be notified and invoiced accordingly.



Property inspection & Entry Condition Report

When you sign your tenancy agreement you will receive an **Entry Condition Report (RTA Form 1a)**. A Tenancy Manager has already inspected the property thoroughly and filled in the report.

You are then responsible for:

- Carefully checking through the condition report and adding any further comments (if required)
- Signing and dating the report in the spaces provided
- Returning the copy to our office within 3 working days of the commencement date on the lease.

You will receive a copy of the signed report. We recommend that you keep this safely stored with your tenancy agreement.



Keys

You will be given a set of keys for the property when you move in.

If you lose or misplace your keys, please contact your Tenancy Manager (during office hours). This number is diverted to CGQ Concierge after hours.

A CGQ staff member will attend your property the next working day to collect the spare key from you.

Tenants will be charged a replacement fee for lost keys.

Pets

Tenants must have CGQ's permission to keep pets in their property. Applications should be made by filling in a **Pet Application Form** prior to the commencement of your tenancy. Please be mindful that some leasehold properties do not allow pets. All applications will be considered on a case by case basis. Your property needs to be suitable for the type of pet you are requesting to keep, for the health and welfare of both you and the animal.

If your pet application is approved you will be required to sign a pet clause as part of your lease.

Pets must not disturb your neighbours' quiet enjoyment.

Please be aware that dogs declared as restricted or dangerous on the Queensland restricted or dangerous dogs register cannot be kept on any property that CGQ manages.

Rubbish

Tenants are responsible for putting the general waste and recycling council bins out for collection on the nominated collection day. You will be advised of the nominated collection day during sign up.

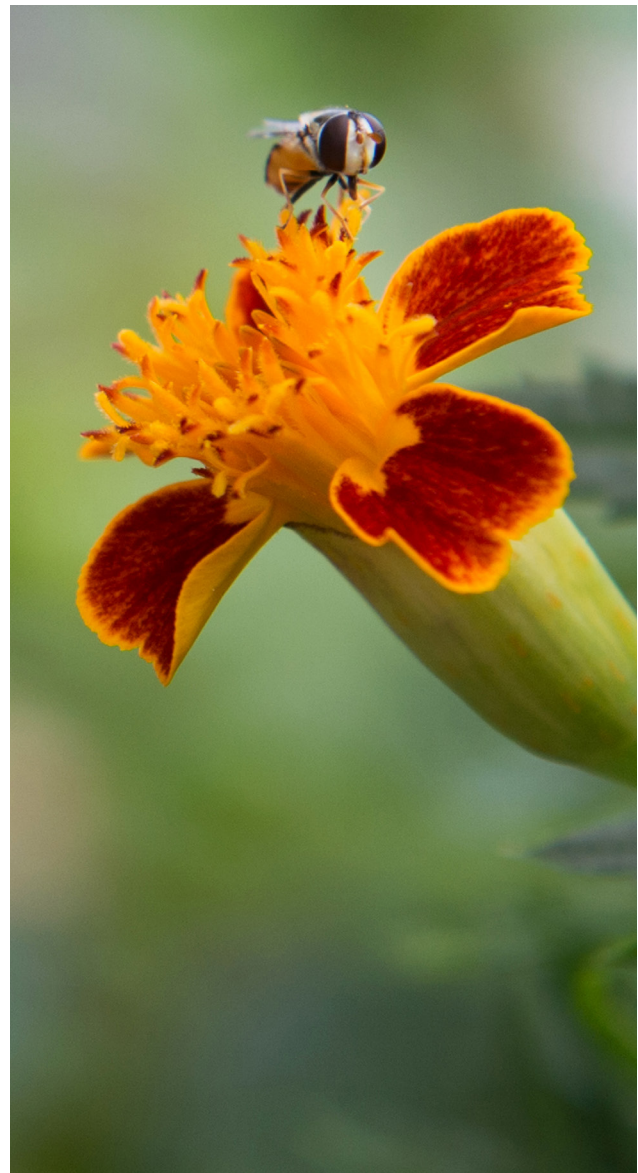
Lawns & gardens

If you have yard areas with gardens and lawns you are responsible for:

- Keeping gardens free of weeds
- Keeping lawns mown and edges are trimmed.

Tenants are required to enter into a **Yard Maintenance Agreement** with CGQ at the start of their tenancy.

If required, CGQ provides an affordable lawn mowing and gardening service. Please discuss this option with your Tenancy Manager if you would like to access this service.



Visitors

Please remember that you are responsible for your visitors (including their children) while they are in your home or on your property. If behaviour by your guests causes damage to the property or discomfort to your neighbours you will be asked to address the issue. We ask you to work with us on these issues.

If any visitor creates a nuisance or is considered to be breaking the law, CGQ may call the police. A repeated pattern of damage or disturbance caused by your visitors could jeopardise your tenancy.

You will receive a **Visitor Information Sheet** in your Sign Up Pack.

Parking

CGQ will endeavor that all properties will have the provision for on site parking for at least one vehicle. If your property is part of a unit complex, you must only use the designated parking bay allocated to your unit and ensure your visitors abide by the on-site visitor parking rules.

Any vehicles parked at your property must be registered.

Smoking

While it is your right to smoke in your property, we ask that you do so in a way that respects the property and others that share your home. If you are going to be smoking inside we suggest you keep your windows open and keep children's rooms and play areas smoke free.

Tenant notices

From time to time, CGQ and Micah Projects will distribute information and tenant notices via email or mail.

Going away?

If you are taking a vacation or will be away from your home for any other reason for more than one (1) week, please contact your Tenancy Manager to let them know.

If you have a pet you must make arrangements for someone to take care of it while you are away.

If you plan to be away from your home for more than 8 weeks at a time or a total of 8 weeks in any 12 month period, you will need prior approval from CGQ.



Rent arrears

When you signed your tenancy agreement, you agreed to pay your rent when it is due and in advance. It is our aim to help you to maintain your tenancy so, if you can't pay your rent on time, for whatever reason, please contact a Tenancy Manager to discuss the situation and find a solution.

If you haven't paid your rent by the due date you are in breach of your tenancy agreement. If you fall into arrears by more than 7 days, especially if you have not contacted us, we will issue you a **Notice to Remedy Breach (RTA Form 11)**. If you do not remedy the breach within 7 days, we will issue you with a **Notice to Leave (RTA Form 12)**.

Non-rent debts

As part of your tenancy agreement you are responsible for:

- Paying for the water that you use
- Any damage that you or your visitors cause to the property (including furniture)
- The cost of a locksmith to replace locks or to provide new keys
- Any costs associated with yard maintenance.

We can arrange for you to pay an extra amount to CGQ each fortnight to cover these debts. Please talk to your Tenancy Manager about arrangements for non-rent debts.

Changes to your household income

If there are any significant changes to your household income, it is important that you tell CGQ and provide confirmation from employers or Centrelink within 14 days of the change taking place.

Some examples of what these changes might look like include:

- You or someone else in your household starts or stops working
- A change in wages
- A change in the type of benefit or pension received.

Ongoing eligibility

As part of the rent review process, tenants living in community housing properties are assessed against the following 'ongoing' eligibility criteria:

- Gross assessable household income must not exceed \$80,000 per annum
- A household member cannot own or partly own a property within Australia or overseas
- Your household's ongoing match and need for the property you are living in.

If you are no longer eligible for housing assistance due to a change in your circumstances, we will work with you to support your transition to an alternative, more appropriate housing option.

BCG App

You can use the **BCG App** to log a maintenance request, send us feedback and stay up to date with important information. Key features include:

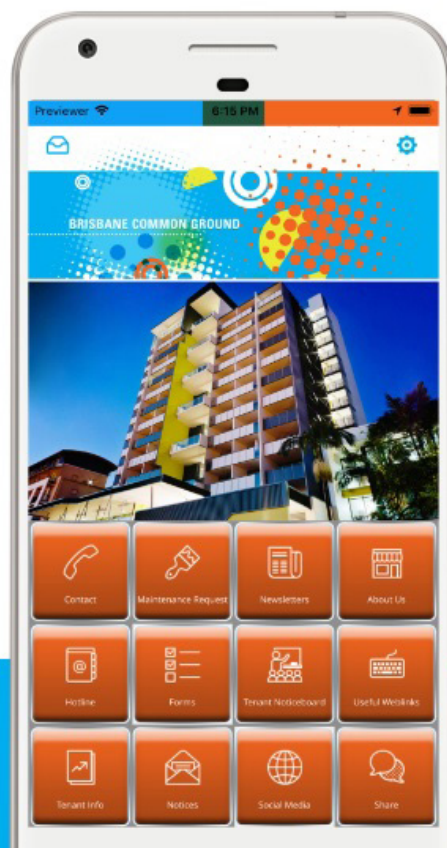
- Online tenancy forms - less paperwork
- Tenant information
- Important contact details and useful links
- Tenant Notices.

You can download the **BCG App** to your mobile phone or tablet. If you need help please contact the CGQ office.

SEARCH FOR:

BRISBANE COMMON GROUND

IN YOUR APP STORE



Emergencies

Always contact **Emergency Services** immediately by dialling **000 (triple zero)** if you are in danger or any of the following situations occur in or around your home:

- Physical violence or threats of physical violence
- Sexual assault
- Fire
- Medical emergency
- Theft or destruction of the property
- Break-ins or forced entry
- Any other criminal acts.

Emergency maintenance

Please contact **Emergency Maintenance on 0488 008 274** for all after-hours emergency maintenance matters.

Examples of emergency repairs include:

- No lights in property or electric shocks or sparks visible
- Stove not working and no other cooking facility available
- Blocked toilet or drains
- Burst water pipes (water needs turning off)
- Damage which threatens the security of the property e.g. broken door
- No hot water.



Public access

If you live in an apartment or townhouse complex, you must not block or leave anything (including bikes and prams) in the passageways, fire exits, footpaths, entrances, driveways, stairs or common areas of the property, other than in designated areas (e.g. bike racks). Public access thoroughfares are to be used only for entering and leaving your dwelling.

Building Management will remove any items from these areas.

Child friendly home

It is important to make sure your home is a safe place for your children. The Micah Projects Support Team can assist you to identify and apply strategies for a safe home environment for your family.

Property inspections

CGQ will carry out property inspections every 3 months. You will be given a minimum of 7 days written notice of the intended inspection, in accordance with the *Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008*. The inspections are to make sure that everything is working and in good order. It is also an opportunity for you to let us know about any maintenance issues you may have.

We seek the cooperation of all of our tenants to refrain from smoking when our employees are in your home and also to ensure that any pets are appropriately restrained.

Items requiring attention by CGQ will be attended to within a reasonable time. You will be advised of any matters that you may be required to remedy. Tenants are given a reasonable timeframe to rectify the matters requiring attention by them.

Pest control

Pest control will be carried out prior to you moving in. However, if there is evidence of infestation by insects or vermin it may need to occur more frequently. All tenants must provide access for pest control services as required.

You are also responsible for ensuring you do not do anything that will encourage cockroaches, fleas, ants and mice/rats such as leaving food out and not keeping your property clean and tidy. Please contact your Tenancy Manager if you are having a particular problem with insects or vermin. Please be aware that you may be charged for any additional treatments.

Maintenance & repairs

If you notice something in your home that needs to be fixed and the matter is non-urgent you can notify your Tenancy Manager or the CGQ Office (during office hours) or fill out a **Maintenance Request Form** online via the BCG App or through your web browser: <http://mex.commongroundqld.org.au/MEXData/Ops/#/Login>. Timeframes for repairs vary depending on the circumstances (e.g. availability of tradespeople) and the type of repairs needed.

If you discover a major problem which may be considered an emergency, please contact your Tenancy Manager or the CGQ Office (during office hours) or phone Emergency Maintenance (after office hours) immediately.

Examples of emergency repairs include:

- No lights in property or electric shocks or sparks visible
- Stove not working and no other cooking facility available
- Blocked toilet or drains
- Burst water pipes (water needs turning off)
- Damage which threatens the security of the property e.g. broken door
- No hot water.

If the repairs have not been completed within a reasonable period of time, please contact your Tenancy Manager.

CGQ will notify you to arrange entry when the maintenance has been arranged.

Repair contractors should keep to the access arrangement made between you and CGQ, e.g. contacting you before they come to your property. **You should never let someone without identification into your home without your prior knowledge.** Contractors sent by CGQ should show you identification that proves they are authorised to do the repair.

Property alterations

If you wish to alter the property (e.g. install shelving), please submit a **Tenant Issues Form**. You will be advised in writing if permission has been granted or not.

Please be aware that you will be responsible for returning the property to its original condition when you move out.

Tenant damages

If you or your visitors break or damage any fixture, fitting or other parts of the property you are responsible for its repair or replacement and the cost associated with it.



Tenant Issues Form

One of the easiest ways to let us know if you are satisfied with our service or if you have a concern or a request is by filling in a **Tenant Issues Form**. You can fill out a **Tenant Issues Form** online using the **BCG App**. Forms are also available from the CGQ Office or can be downloaded and printed from the CGQ website.

You can use a **Tenant Issues Form** to:

- Pay a compliment
- Make a complaint
- Provide feedback
- Make a suggestion
- Make an appeal
- Ask for support.

If you need help to fill in a **Tenant Issues Form**, your Tenancy Manager or Micah Projects Support Worker will be able to assist.

CGQ will provide you with written acknowledgement of receipt within 2 business days of receiving your notification.

Complaints

CGQ acknowledges the right of tenants to make a complaint if they are dissatisfied with the quality of our service. We are committed to providing tenants with responsive procedures that are accessible, prompt and fair.

If you make a complaint you can expect to:

- Be treated with respect and receive fair and non-discriminatory treatment
- Be able to state your case in person or use an advocate or representative
- Have the matter dealt with at any time by an external complaint mechanism
- Have a right to be kept informed of the progress and outcome of grievance procedures.

If you have a complaint about our service or a decision that we have made that directly affects you, it is important that you let us know as quickly as possible. You can raise a complaint with us in person, by telephone, by email or in writing.

While we will endeavour to help you work through any concern, it's important to know that you will only receive an official response from CGQ if you inform us that it is a formal complaint. That's why using a **Tenant Issues Form** is one of the best ways to let us know that an issue requires attention.

A copy of the **Tenant Compliments, Complaints and Appeals Fact Sheet** has been provided in your Sign Up Pack and is also available on the **BCG App** and CGQ website:

www.commongroundqld.org.au.

Appeals

If you are not satisfied with a decision made by CGQ, you can lodge an appeal in writing and ask that CGQ reconsider the matter. If you do this, you will need to give reasons why you think it should be looked at again. The CGQ Chief Executive Officer or the Chairperson of the CGQ Board will provide a written response to your appeal.

Compliments

We welcome your compliments! Positive feedback about our staff and services helps us to know we are on the right track.

Neighbour disputes

If you have a problem with your neighbour try sorting it out with them first. This is the simplest and fastest way to resolve most issues. Think about the best way to raise the issue with your neighbour. Be constructive and suggest ways to solve the problem, rather than complaining, blaming or demanding. However if you find that the problem continues or you feel that the problem is too serious or confrontational to discuss directly with your neighbour, please discuss the matter with your Micah Projects Support Worker who can assist you with trying to reach a solution.

If you are unsure about how the matter affects your tenancy, your Tenancy Manager will be able to explain your rights and responsibilities under the terms of your lease and refer you to other sources of information if you wish.

The RTA dispute resolution service can also assist with general neighbourhood disputes that are outside of CGQ's property and tenancy management responsibility.

For more information please visit - <https://www.qld.gov.au/law/housing-and-neighbours>.

General feedback and suggestions

If you would like to provide us with feedback on any of aspect of our service or would like to offer us a suggestion on how we can improve our service, please let us know by completing a **Tenant Issues Form**. You can also send us an email, phone us or let us know in person.



Vacating your property

If you are moving out, let us know and:

- Request a **Notice of Intention to Leave Form (RTA Form 13)** from your Tenancy Manager
- Ensure the property is in the same condition as when you moved in
- Clean everything - please refer to the **Cleaning Checklist** provided with your vacate letter
- Return a completed **Tenant Exit Survey** (if you would like to provide us with feedback)
- Make sure we have a forwarding address for you.

Bond refunds

Bond money is kept by the RTA. Once you have vacated the property and the final inspection has been carried out, CGQ will make an application to the RTA for release of the bond. The bond will be refunded to you less any money which is outstanding to CGQ. e.g. rent arrears, cleaning, damages and utilities.

Abandoning your property

If the Tenancy Manager believes you have permanently left your property, they will establish a case for abandonment. If the Tenancy Manager then believes that a property is abandoned, they will serve an **Abandonment Termination Notice (RTA Form 15)** to have the property declared abandoned. Any cleaning or damage is recouped from the bond and new locks may be fitted to all external doors.

Abandoned goods

If you leave personal items behind after you have left the property, they will be dealt with or disposed of in accordance with the *Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008*. It is best not to leave any items behind. If you can't take all your items with you when you leave, please talk to your Tenancy Manager who may be able to give you contact details for storage options.

Final inspection

A Tenancy Manager will contact you to arrange for an inspection. If the property is damaged, not clean, or there are other outstanding matters, money will be deducted from your bond to cover repairs and cleaning.

Rent is charged until the agreed end date of your lease. Keys must be returned in person and not by mail.

Exit survey

If you are ending your tenancy with CGQ, you can help us improve our services for other tenants by giving us feedback either verbally or by completing a **Tenant Exit Survey**.





Funded by

Delivered by



Queensland
Government



common
ground
Families



MICAH PROJECTS INC



Breaking Social Isolation
Building Community

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