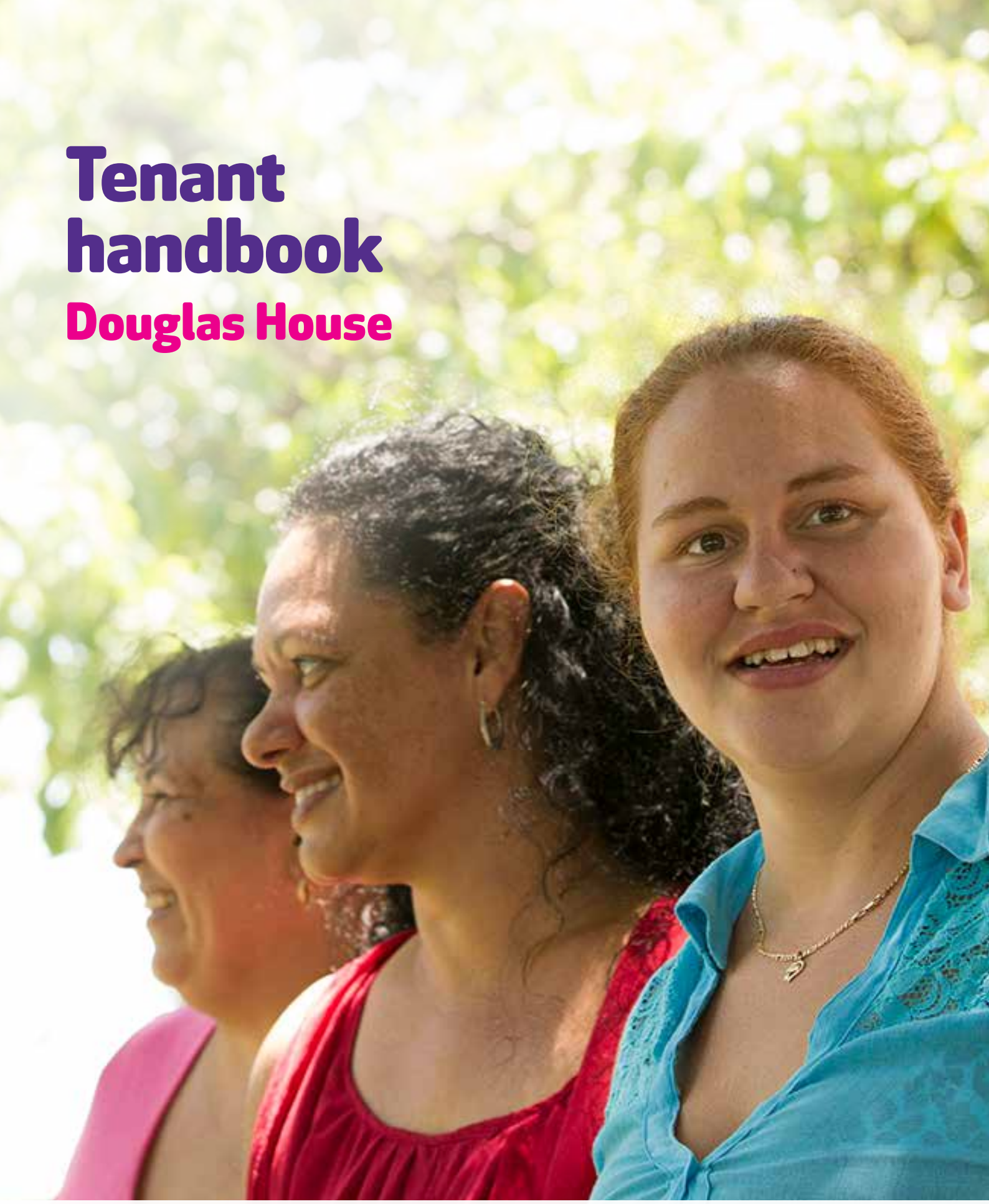
Tenant handbook

Douglas House



MISSION AUSTRALIA | together we stand

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WELCOME
to Douglas House

Douglas House is a supported housing accommodation facility run by Mission Australia and Mission Australia Housing. This facility will accommodate and support people towards attaining independent, sustainable housing and participating within their community.

Douglas House is a 22 unit boarding house located on Grafton Street Cairns and is owned by the Queensland Department of Housing and Public Works (QDHPW). Mission Australia have been contracted by QDHPW to provide onsite support services to all tenants at this facility and Mission Australia Housing will provide the tenancy and property management.

The primary goal of the service is to support tenants to achieve long term lifestyle changes that respond to housing, health and other support needs exacerbated by alcohol and other substance dependencies. This service will have a focus on supporting disadvantaged people, in particular Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Culturally appropriate policy, procedures and practice will be used to ensure positive outcomes for Tenants.

Douglas House is an alcohol free facility.

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Welcome to Douglas House (cont)

Douglas House Principles

Douglas House operates according to the following principles:

1. **Douglas House is an alcohol free facility providing temporary accommodation and support services.**
2. **The service focuses on supporting Indigenous people. All aspects of the service will reflect culturally appropriate policy, procedures and practice in order to achieve positive outcomes for tenants.**
3. **Support provided by Douglas House is driven by tenant needs in recognition that each tenant will have different life experiences that have led to their current situation. The service will treat each person as an individual and plan support on this basis.**
4. **This service works towards ending the person's homelessness by assisting tenants to access support services and other community resources, in order to achieve lifestyle changes that may enable them to maintain stable long term housing and re-engage in the community.**
5. **Douglas House will provide tenants with day activities, such as art, crafts, group activities etc. in order to increase learning opportunities and reduce alcohol consumption.**
6. **Douglas House will also support tenants to develop daily living skills, such as preparing meals and maintaining their own living space.**
7. **Douglas House will arrange visits from external services such Health Services and Centrelink.**

Mission Australia Housing services

Mission Australia Housing (MAH) is registered in Queensland as a Tier 1 Community Housing Provider under National Registration. MAH operates a range of housing programs nationally, with over 2000 properties managed across 4 states.

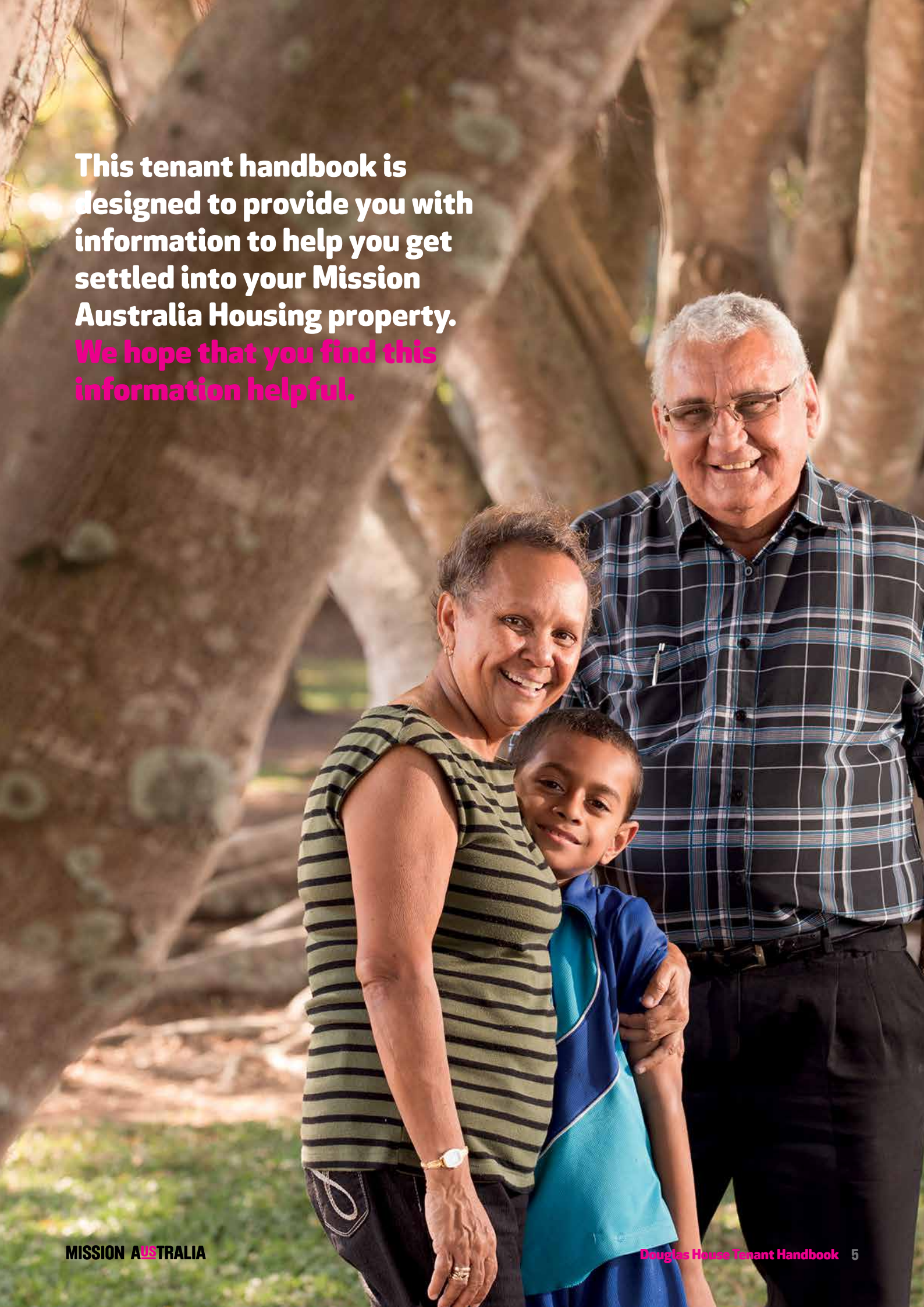
For information about different housing programs that Mission Australia Housing provides, please contact Mission Australia Housing on 1800 269 672.

Interpreter service

If you require an interpreter, please contact the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) National on 131 450.

This is a free service for applicants and tenants of Mission Australia Housing when contacting the organisation.





This tenant handbook is designed to provide you with information to help you get settled into your Mission Australia Housing property.

We hope that you find this information helpful.

Before you move in

Your privacy

Mission Australia – which includes Mission Australia Housing – will abide by the Privacy Act 1988 at all times. This includes all employees of Mission Australia and the Board of Directors.

Principles

Mission Australia agrees to:

Only collect information that is necessary

Not collect personal information about an individual just because we think that the information may come in handy later

Provide privacy information for tenants

Consider whether we should be using personal information for a particular purpose

Consider whether we need to disclose personal information

Give people access to personal information held if required (a notice of at least 3 working days is required)

Always aim to keep personal information secure

Not keep information longer than needed or longer than is required

Wherever possible keep personal information accurate and up to date

Your rights & responsibilities as a tenant

Douglas House Tenants can expect:

Medium term supported housing

- An environment that provides safety, support and care
- Appropriate, safe and stable rooming accommodation with private bathroom
- Communal kitchen and laundry facilities
- Respect and a sense of dignity
- Appropriate tenant centred support
- Non-discriminatory and non-judgmental practices
- Information provision regarding their accommodation, recovery plan and responsibilities
- Referral to other suitable agencies/services if required

Tenants are expected to abide by the rules of the Facility and act in a way which respects the rights of other Tenants and Mission Australia & Mission Australia Housing staff and property.

Tenants accommodated by Douglas House have a responsibility to:

- Participate and engage in an initial and ongoing agreed recovery plan with Mission Australia
- Refrain from violent and intimidating behaviour
- Refrain from bringing alcohol and non-prescribed drugs to the facility
- Co-operate with the staff on duty
- Be responsible for their property, room upkeep and keys
- Agree to participate in support planning and case management process
- Abide by the House Rules at all times
- Mission Australia staff reserves the right to not allow entry if there are concerns related to health and safety to staff and other tenants

Tenants who do not respect the rules and tenancy agreement of Douglas House may face eviction and/ or exclusion from the service for a period of time.

Before you move in (cont)

Visitors

Visitors are allowed into the Douglas House facility between 9am and 5pm on the ground floor and must be in the company of the tenant and the tenant is responsible for the visitor's behaviour. Visitors must not be under the influence of alcohol and or drugs.

Pets

Pets are not permitted in this facility.

How rent is charged

Tenants housed through this supported housing program are eligible to apply for a rental rebate or subsidy. The rebate is based on 28% precent of the entire household's gross assessable income, plus 100% of their maximum entitlement for Commonwealth Rent Assistance.

The table below details the percentage of assessable income, payable by different members of the household:

Assessment rate	Tenant/other household member
3%	Community Studio Managed Unit Program (Boarding House) 3% surcharge for furnishings
25%	The tenant, their spouse or live in partner. This is regardless of age
	All other people living in the house aged over 21 years of age
15%	Family members aged between 18–21 years of age
15%	Family Tax Benefit A and B
100%	Maximum Commonwealth Rent Assistance Entitlement for all household members
Nil	Family Members earning an income who are under 18 years of age

Note: Not all government incomes are assessable for the purposes of rent. For full details of assessable and non-assessable rents please visit the Queensland Department of Housing & Public Works website www.hpw.qld.gov.au

Paying your rent

Tenants residing at Douglas House will be required to pay rent through the Centrepay direct debit process.

Payment method	Requirements
Centrepay	You will be required to complete a Centrepay form at intake which will be faxed Centrelink to be processed. Fortnightly rent will then be deducted automatically from your Centrelink benefits

Rent must always be kept in advance (2 weeks If rent payments are not received within the specified time and no contact or arrangement has been made with the Manager, a notice to Remedy Breech (Form R11) will be issued.

If the arrears continue a Notice to Leave (Form R12) will be issued.

Rental bond

A rental bond is an amount of money paid by you, the tenant, as a form of security for Mission Australia Housing in case you do not follow the terms of the tenancy agreement. You will be required to pay the equivalent of two weeks rent towards bond at the beginning of their tenancy. The bond money is paid to the Residential Tenancies Authority (RTA) until such time as you move out of your property.

Provided that there are no outstanding rent or non-rent charges on your account and the property has been left in a similar condition to what it was leased to you, you will receive your bond back. Mission Australia Housing may claim part or all of your bond money for any outstanding rent or non-rent debt that you have or for any maintenance that is required to the property or fixtures due to tenant damage or neglect.

Property Condition Report

When you sign a lease for your property, you will be given a property condition report, detailing the condition of the premises you are moving into. As the tenant, you must review, complete and sign this form, add any comments and return it to the Housing Manager.

If you move out of your property, this report will be used by Mission Australia Housing to determine whether there is any excess damage to the property and whether your bond will be returned to you or claimed. An exit inspection will be arranged with the tenant to discuss what is required upon leaving Douglas House.

While you are a Douglas House tenant

Rooming accommodation agreement

A rooming accommodation agreement is the agreement between the Tenant and Mission Australia Housing which sets out the terms that apply to the Tenant's stay in the accommodation. Both Tenants and providers must abide by the terms of the agreement.

A rooming accommodation agreement includes standard terms stated in the Act and Regulations covering the rights and responsibilities of Tenants and Mission Australia Housing. It will also include special terms as agreed between the Tenant and Mission Australia Housing such as room entry for weekly inspections.

House rules

Tenants are expected to abide by the House Rules for Douglas House at all times. The House Rules for Douglas House are:

NO alcohol or illegal drugs allowed on premises at any time.

Smoking is only allowed in authorised smoking areas.

Physical or verbal violence towards any person will not be tolerated. Any incidence of violence by tenants will result in immediate eviction and possible police involvement.

Visitors are allowed into the Douglas House facility between 9am and 5pm on the ground floor and must be in the company of the tenant and the tenant is responsible for the visitor's behaviour. Visitors must not bring in to the facility or be under the influence of alcohol and / or drugs.

Tenants are not permitted to cook in their rooms and must use the communal cooking facilities; Kitchenettes will be open from 7:00am - 9:30pm each day.

Tenants must make sure they leave common areas neat, clean and tidy after using them.

Tenants are responsible for any personal items left in the common areas.

Noise must be kept to a minimum at all times in consideration of other Tenants and neighbours.

Linen is to be washed weekly and washing is not to be left in the laundry or on the clothesline for extended periods of time.

Sheets and mattress protector are to be used on the beds at all times.

All damages or repairs required must be reported to the Douglas House staff as soon as practicable. Tenants will be responsible for the cost of repairs for any intentional or negligent damage to the property or other household items. Deliberate or negligent damage to the property may result in eviction and police involvement.

Tenants must attend weekly house meetings

While you are a Douglas House tenant (cont)

Access into Douglas House

Douglas House is a secure facility. To enter, tenants must use the intercom at the front door for access. Any contraband items will not be permitted into the facility. If illegal drugs are found the police will be called. If alcohol is found the tenant will be asked to dispose of it immediately. Tenants will be able to access and leave the facility whenever they choose.

Douglas House Contraband items are:

Alcohol

Illegal Drugs and/or implements

Weapons

Stolen Goods

Poisons

Staff and/or security are on site 24hrs a day to assist and allow access.

Room entry

Mission Australia Housing staff will conduct tenant room inspections to ensure properties are being maintained and to manage any repairs and maintenance. You will be provided with a written Entry notice giving the appropriate amount of notice time being 2 days'. Staff may only enter tenant's room without notice under the following circumstances:

- there is an emergency (including a suspected health issue)
- if staff believe that the room has been abandoned
- if emergency repairs are required

In all other instances notice must be given prior to entry.

Room furnishings

The following items of furnishings will be provided in each room:

Bed and Mattress

Small Fridge

Chair

Bed Side Table

Medication

Any medication brought to the facility by a tenant remains the property of the tenant. They are to be responsible for the administration of their own medication. Tenants with medical conditions that require self-injection of medication must arrange with Mission Australia for an appropriate sharps disposal unit for their bathroom.

Illness and injury

Tenants who are ill or injured while at the facility are to contact a staff member immediately for medical assistance to be organised if required.

Repairs and maintenance at your property

Repairs and maintenance must be reported to the office as soon as identified. Costs of repairing damages caused by tenants (either deliberate or negligent) to the property must be met by the tenant.

Room maintenance

Tenants are responsible for keeping their room in a clean and hygienic state as part of their accommodation agreement. Linen must be washed regularly; sheets and protectors MUST be used on the bed at all times. Tenants who soil or damage the provided mattress will be responsible for replacing it

Rubbish

Tenants are responsible for ensuring that the rubbish bin supplied in their room is emptied DAILY into the industrial rubbish bin at the back of the facility.

Blockages

Tenants are responsible for repairs for blockages caused by loose items being dropped down drains in the bathroom and toilet. Determination of the cause of the problem will rest with the repairer.

Note: only toilet paper is to be flushed – sanitary bins are provided in all female toilets.

Common areas

Common areas must be left neat, clean and tidy after use. Tenants are responsible for cleaning their own dishes and the kitchen must be left clean and tidy. The Kitchen and kitchenettes are open until 9.30pm. During meal times the kitchen will be monitored by a support worker to ensure the WHS obligations are met and that tenants are responsible for cleanliness. Noise must be kept to a minimum at all times in consideration of other tenants and neighbours. House rules will be enforced and if tenants are found to be in breach of any of these house rules a Form R11 breach notice may be issued.

While you are a Douglas House tenant (cont)

Emergency repairs



Any emergency repairs identified by Tenants should be brought to the attention of Douglas House staff for immediate action.

Emergency repairs are listed as the following:

Blocked Toilet

Electrical fault

Severe water leak or busted pipe causing large amounts of wasted water

Maintenance that may be a risk to a person's Health & Safety

A serious roof leak

Serious storm or fire damage

Keys for your property

Tenants will be given a key for their room at the start of your tenancy. Tenants will be asked to sign a key acceptance form at the lease signing to acknowledge receipt of key. If tenants lose their keys, they will be responsible for the cost of replacing them.

Tenants are encouraged to leave their key at the front office to be securely stored when exiting the facility to help ensure the safety of the tenant's keys.

Fire and evacuation

Evacuation instructions are given to all tenants at their induction explaining what to do and where to go in an emergency, including when they hear the fire alarm. Evacuation plans can be found on every floor.

Smoke alarms

All Douglas House rooms have hard wired smoke detectors. These detectors will be checked on a regular basis by a qualified electrician or fire service. Smoke detectors must not be tampered with and tenants found removing or interfering with their smoke detector will be in breach of their tenancy

Rental reviews & income changes

Mission Australia Housing will conduct rent reviews up to twice a year. The purpose of the rent review is to ensure that all tenants are paying the correct amount of rent, as per their income details.

Tenants will be advised in writing of each rent review and given adequate time to provide your income details.

Going away (absences from Douglas House)

Absences under 2 weeks

Tenants will need to notify staff if you are going to be away from Douglas House for more than 3 nights and/or up to a period of two weeks

Absences over 2 weeks

Tenants who are planning on being away from the property for more than 2 weeks will need to contact the Manager to seek approval and to provide details of why they will not using their room and when they will be returning. If tenants do not notify the Manger and cannot be contacted regarding their absence even if your rent is being paid the room may be considered abandoned after 2 weeks and a termination notice will be issued. Tenants will be required to pay their rent during any absence from property.

It is extremely important that tenants who are going to be absent and wish to retain their accommodation at Douglas House that they notify the Manager.

Tenants who are requesting extended periods of absence may be required to provide reasons for and evidence of why the will be absent from their property and when they will be returning. These reasons may include, but limited to: incarceration, hospitalisation, family commitments.

While you are a Douglas House tenant (cont)

Douglas House notice board

Douglas House will utilise the notice board to communicate information to all Tenants. Tenants may ask the Manager to include different types of information on the notice board as required.

Annual tenant survey

All tenants will receive a tenant survey each year and will be asked to complete the survey and return it to Mission Australia Housing. The survey is an opportunity for tenants to anonymously provide feedback to Mission Australia Housing on the services provided. Mission Australia Housing will use the information gathered from the survey to improve our services.

Tenant group

Mission Australia Housing will encourage and help tenants to establish an advisory group to meet on a regular basis to discuss any issues related to their accommodation and to provide feedback to the organisation on its policies and services.

Tenant feedback

Tenants will be given the opportunity to provide feedback and suggestions to the organisation in many different ways. Mission Australia Housing hopes that by providing a number of outlets for Tenants to give feedback, it will encourage more Tenants to provide input.

Tenant involvement

Mission Australia encourages the rights of all tenants to participate in their housing, the organisation and to provide input into the services that we provide. Tenants will be informed throughout their tenancy of the different ways that they can participate or provide feedback to the organisation.



Leaving Douglas House accommodation

Ending your tenancy

A tenancy with Douglas House may be ended either by a tenant or by the organisation, for a variety of reasons. Whatever the reason for a tenancy being ended, Mission Australia Housing aims to ensure that:

All termination notices issued by Mission Australia Housing comply with legislation

Tenants are provided with information and access to legal advice, support and interpreters

Tenants are aware of their rights and responsibilities regarding ending tenancies

Tenants are provided with details of the vacating procedure

Tenants ending tenancy

Tenants who want to end their tenancy and hand back their room are required to give:

7 days written notice (Form R13) to the Manger of Douglas House.

Where tenants are unable to give 7 days' notice due to being offered a permanent social housing property or due to exceptional circumstances, they may be able to negotiate this with the Manager. Once the Manager has received notice to vacate, information on the vacating procedure will be provided.

What to do when leaving

Tenants must give 7 days' notice in writing if they intend to vacate.

On vacating the tenant will be responsible for:

Rectifying any damage to the property (fair wear and tear excluded)

Removal of any loose items left behind on premises

Thorough cleaning of room and linen.

Organising payment of any rent arrears

Support when exiting Douglas House

Alternate accommodation

Mission Australia Recovery Workers will assist tenants to transition from the service to permanent housing where possible, including ensuring support arrangements are in place prior to tenants exiting the service. These support arrangements will be developed as part of the Tenants ongoing recovery plans.

Exclusion and termination

If tenants do not abide by the rules of Douglas House, the Manager may opt to exclude the tenant from the service for a designated period of time. If the tenant is violent or threatening the police will be called.

If their tenancy is terminated, Mission Australia will collaborate with other agencies to identify appropriate case management responsibility and accommodation options.

Getting your bond back

If tenants decide to vacate their room, the bond will be refunded provided that no money is owed for outstanding rent or non-rent debt and that they leave their property in the same condition that they accepted it (fair wear and tear accepted).

Tenant bonds may be claimed by Mission Australia Housing if there is any money owing on their account. Any disputes between the tenant and Mission Australia Housing will be taken to the Residential Tenancy Authority to be heard.

Debt recovery

Any rent or non-rent debt that tenants have incurred during their tenancy will have to be paid to Mission Australia Housing. This must be done irrespective of whether tenants leave their property voluntarily or due to an eviction order. Tenants will also be responsible for the cost of any damage or repairs needed to their property as a result of deliberate or negligent damage (fair wear and tear accepted).

Mission Australia Housing will apply to QCAT requesting an order for tenants to pay any outstanding debt. If tenants have any current debt with Mission Australia Housing due to a previous tenancy they must enter a payment plan to pay the debt off in order to be eligible to renter accommodation at Douglas House.

Appeals & complaints

Appealing decisions made by Mission Australia and Mission Australia Housing

Mission Australia Housing staff and Mission Australia support staff welcome feedback and encourage tenants who disagree with a decision made by either organisation to lodge an appeal.

The appeals process allows both organisations to grow and hopefully to improve our services. Tenants will not be discriminated against or punished for lodging an appeal.

Information on appeals and complaints will be provided to the tenant upon entry to Douglas House.

Decisions that can be appealed

Tenants can appeal decisions that Mission Australia & Mission Australia Housing have made in regards to:

How your rent was assessed

A decision to withdraw an applicant from the waiting list

Offers of housing that you have been made

Any requests for specific property needs that have been declined

Any action that was taken due to an alleged breach of tenancy

Any charges that have been added to your non-rent account that you disagree with

Any applications for transfer, mutual exchange or succession that have been declined

Any decision made by staff that a tenant disagrees with

Tenants can request a formal review of the decision made and will be given an Appeals Form to complete along with information on Mission Australia Housing Appeals Policy. The appeal will be reviewed first by a Senior Manager. If tenants are unsatisfied with the outcome of this appeals process, they will be provided with information and contact details for the following external organisations that may be able to provide support or advice:

- The Residential Tenancies Tribunal
- Tenancy Advisory & Advocacy Service

If the Tenant is still not satisfied with the outcome they may also complete a Residential Tenancies Authority Form R16 – Dispute Resolution Request Form if they wish to commence conciliation processes.

Making a complaint about Mission Australia and Mission Australia Housing

Mission Australia and Mission Australia Housing Tenants who are unhappy with any part of the service that is provided we would like to know about it so that we can attempt to resolve the matter and improve the services we provide. Tenants will not be discriminated against or punished for lodging a complaint.

Tenants who are unhappy with the way they have been treated by an employee are encouraged to first discuss the matter with the staff member in question, to see if the matter can be resolved. Tenants who are not comfortable doing this, or y would like to complain about a service that Mission Australia or Mission Australia Housing provides, will be provided with a complaints form to fill in and returned.

If the matter is not resolved by the Manager the complaint will be reviewed by next appropriate manager and where contact details have been left, an initial response will be given to the tenant within 7 days of the form being lodged. Where appropriate, tenants will be requested to come into the office to discuss the matter in person. A letter will be sent detailing any action that Mission Australia or Mission Australia Housing have taken/will take in regards to the complaint within 28 days.

Case management

The case management process is integral to achieving the aims of Douglas House. Tenants must actively participate in this process if they wish to remain a Tenant of Douglas House.

Tenants Recovery Workers are an important tool to assist in ensuring that their tenancy at Douglas House is successful and pathways into secure appropriate long term housing can be established.

Mission Australia will provide all tenants with information on the support services available and the case management support that will be provided to all tenants.

Useful contacts

Tenant and legal advisory services

Tenants Advisory Service

p:1300 880 882

Residential Tenancy Authority (QLD)

p: 1300 366 311
w: rta.qld.gov.au

Queensland Civil & Administrative Tribunal

p: 1300 753 228
w: qcat.qld.gov.au



Mission Australia helps people regain their independence – by standing together with Australians in need, until they can stand for themselves.

Contact us

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