



GOOD NEIGHBOUR POLICY

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1. PURPOSE

This policy describes how SPCHG seeks to maintain positive relationships between neighbours and harmony in and around the properties it manages. It also provides guidance as to how SPCHG staff will respond when a tenant breaches their Residential Tenancy Agreement by interfering with the reasonable peace, comfort or privacy of other tenants or neighbours.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to tenants, visitors and former tenants of SPCHG. It also applies to neighbours, property owners and community members who have complaints regarding the behaviour of tenants, occupants and visitors of SPCHG managed properties.

3. PRINCIPLES

Under the Residential Tenancies Act 1987 (Vic) all tenants have a right to quiet enjoyment of their premises.

In approaching issues of neighbour disputes or disturbances SPCHG will seek to uphold:

- Fair and consistent process
- Responding in a timely manner
- Clear and transparent communication between all parties
- Support for marginalised people to maintain tenancies, to live in and enjoy the City of Port Phillip
- A zero tolerance approach to violence or threatening behaviour
- All obligations under the Residential Tenancies Act 1997 and Residential Tenancies Act 2018 (being phased in until 1 July 2020)
- Relevant privacy laws
- Effective maintenance and management of SPCHG owned and managed property assets to enable tenants to take pride in their properties

4. POLICY GUIDELINES

4.1. MAINTAINING NEIGHBOURHOOD HARMONY

SPCHG takes a proactive approach to managing and creating harmonious tenancies in the City of Port Phillip. It does this through:

- Openness and transparency in working with neighbours and community members to resolve issues and maintain good relations and respect for the work of the organisation



GOOD NEIGHBOUR POLICY

- Creating opportunities and supporting tenants to participate in and contribute constructively to community life in the City of Port Phillip
- Conducting regular property visits and inspections and maintaining an active interest in the lives and aspirations of SPCHG tenants
- Working with support agencies to help tenants maintain tenancies
- Allocating client appropriately to the properties we manage and own
- Ensuring tenants read and understand their rights and responsibilities at the commencement of a SPCHG tenancy.

Examples of issues that could interfere with the reasonable peace, comfort or privacy of tenants and neighbours include:

- Physical assaults and acts of violence
- Verbal abuse or other threatening behaviour
- Using, causing or permitting the property to be used for any illegal purpose, such as distributing or selling illicit drugs
- Damaging and vandalising property
- Excessive and persistent noise
- Retaliatory disputes between households
- Loud and unruly behaviour
- Not keeping pets under control.

5. PROCEDURES

5.1. ISSUES RAISED

- Following a report or complaint of a neighbour, tenant or community member, the issue will be investigated by a SPCHG housing worker. Interviews with neighbours, residents and other tenants may take place.
- The issue will be formally documented by SPCHG as part of the Complaints process (see Complaints Policy).
- The nature of the issue will be made known to the CEO of SPCHG.
- If a criminal activity has occurred, SPCHG encourages the person reporting to contact the police in the first instance. Should there be evidence of a violent or criminal activity by a SPCHG tenant, SPCHG will issue an Immediate Notice to Leave.
- SPCHG will seek to resolve the matter amicably and to the satisfaction of all parties.
- Reports of antisocial behaviour of tenants will be attempted to be resolved through explanation of the rights and responsibilities of their agreement under the Residential Tenancies Act 1997.
- If the issue continues or there is evidence it contravenes the Residential Tenancies Act 1997, SPCHG will issue a Breach of Duty Notice to a tenant. A further breach may result in an application for an Order of Compliance at the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT).
- Should the Order of Compliance be breached, SPCHG may issue an application to VCAT for an Order of Possession and an eviction process may occur (see SPCHG Evictions Policy).



GOOD NEIGHBOUR POLICY

- SPCHG encourages any complaints made by neighbours or community members to be made to the organisation directly and not to bodies such as the Victorian Housing Registrar. The Victorian Housing Registrar has no jurisdiction to resolve matters. A formal complaint made to SPCHG will be investigated within 30 days of it being received (see SPCHG Complaints Policy for further information).
- Staff investigating will keep the CEO and Manager Housing Operations informed of progress.
- CEO and/or Manager Housing Operations will keep the neighbours informed of progress.
- If complaints involve a number of neighbours and the issue is not resolved quickly, the CEO and Manager Housing Operations will offer to meet with the neighbours, regularly for a time if necessary.