



CatholicCare
CAREERS & EDUCATION

There for any human

Our Vision is for an equitable society where the rights, dignity and worth of all individuals is recognised and promoted



Occupant Handbook

Welcome!

CatholicCare Property Management is committed to providing quality community housing. We have over 25 years' experience delivering a broad range of accommodation services to people in the Canberra Community.

We work closely with relevant Program Managers and Case Managers to ensure the delivery of appropriate property management and uphold occupancy principles, rights and participation.

This handbook provides you with important and practical information about your new occupancy.

It explains the role of our CatholicCare Property Management Team and how we can assist you, as well as other information regarding your role and responsibilities before during and after you move into your accommodation.

Our website www.catholiccare.cg.org.au is another important resource for information, contact details, feedback and essential forms.

Please take the time to read through this handbook which will help ensure you enjoy your new accommodation.

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1. Important Contacts

How to Contact Us

CatholicCare Property Management Team:

Deputy CEO: Lisa Higginson

Property Director: Juleen Schiefelbein

Housing Manager: Din Pla Hongsa

Contact Details:

Telephone: 02 6162 6100

After Hours: On-call numbers

General Inquiry: propertymanagement@catholiccare.cg.org.au

Website: www.catholiccare.cg.org.au

Address:

Head Office

Favier House

51 Cooyong Street

Braddon ACT 2612

CatholicCare Property Management, PO Box 3167, MANUKA ACT 2603

Opening Hours:

Monday to Friday: 9:00am—5:00pm

Saturday and Sunday: Closed

Public Holidays: Closed

Emergency Services

Police, Fire Brigade or Ambulance: 000

Police Assistance: 131 444

SES (for assistance in storms or floods): 132 500

Canberra Connect: 131 281

Advocacy, Advice and Referral Services

<p>ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal (ACAT)</p> <p>ACAT is an independent body that hears and determines a range of cases in the ACT. Including disputes between a lessor and tenant (<u>rental property disputes</u>)</p>	<p>ACT Health Building Level 4, 1 Moore Street Canberra City ACT (02) 6207 1740 tribunal@act.gov.au</p>
<p>ACT Official Visitor Scheme</p> <p>Official Visitors are appointed by the Minister responsible for the Official Visitor Act 2012. The scheme provides a monitoring and complaints system for entitled person in a visitable place, who are dependent on the service provider or accommodation manager supporting them.</p>	<p>An official visitor may be contacted by calling 1800 150 036 and following the prompts. A recorded message will direct the caller to the appropriate Official Visitor. Persons calling this number may be asked to provide their name, phone number and the place they would like the Official Visitor to visit.</p>
<p>National Regulatory System for Community Housing</p> <p>Aims to ensure a well governed, well managed and viable community housing sector that meets the housing needs of tenants and provides assurance for government and investors.</p>	
<p>Tenants Union ACT</p> <p>Is a not for profit community legal centre offering free services for people renting their homes in the ACT.</p>	<p>21 Barry Drive Turner ACT 2612 Ph: (02) 6247 1026</p>
<p>ADACAS</p> <p>Individual advocacy for people with disabilities, people who are ageing and their carers.</p>	<p>Suite 207 Block C, Canberra Technology Park Phillip Ave, Watson ACT 2602 Ph: (02) 6242 5060</p>
<p>Public Advocate</p> <p>Represents the interests and protects the rights of adults with a disability and children before courts, tribunals and with service providers and facilitates service co-ordination where complex service needs exist.</p>	<p>Level 3, Moore St Canberra City Canberra ACT 2601 Ph: (02) 6207 0707</p>
<p>Advocacy for Inclusion</p> <p>Providing individual and systemic advocacy to improve life for people who have a disability. ACT member agency of the National Council on Intellectual Disability.</p>	<p>Pearce Community Centre Building 3 Collett Pl Pearce ACT 2607 Phone: 6286 9422</p>
<p>Welfare Rights and Legal Service</p> <p>Provides free legal advice, information and advocacy in private and public tenancy, Centrelink benefits and legal aid appeals for people on low incomes. Night Time Legal Advice Service - one off advice and referral on all areas of the law.</p>	<p>Havelock House Gould St Turner Canberra ACT 2612 Phone: 6247 2177</p>
<p>ACT Ombudsman</p> <p>The ACT Ombudsman can consider and investigate complaints from people who believe they have been treated</p>	<p>Level 5, Childers Square, 14 Childers Street Canberra City ACT 2601 Phone: 02 6276 3773</p>

unfairly or unreasonably by an ACT Government Directorate or agency	Dedicated <u>Indigenous</u> number 1800 060 789 or use our Indigenous language interpreter service
<p>NSW Ombudsman</p> <p>The ACT Ombudsman can consider and investigate complaints from people who believe they have been treated unfairly or unreasonably by a NSW Government Directorate or agency</p>	<p>Level 24, 580 George Street, Sydney NSW 2000 Phone: 02 9286 1000 Toll free (outside Sydney metro): 1800 451 524</p>
<p>ACT Human Rights Commission</p> <p>Investigate and conciliate complaints about discrimination and complaints about services in the ACT including health, disability, older people and services for children and young people.</p>	<p>Level 2, 11 Moore Street Canberra City 6205 2222 TTY 6205 1666 Email: Human.rights@act.gov.au</p>
<p>NDIS Quality & Safeguard Standards Commission</p> <p>The NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission (NDIS Commission) is an independent agency established to improve the quality and safety of NDIS supports and services.</p>	<p>Phone: 1800 035 544 (free call from landlines) or TTY 133 677. Interpreters can be arranged.</p>

Other Helpful Services

<p>Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National)</p> <p>Provides access to phone and on-site interpreting services in over 150 languages.</p>	<p>Immediate phone interpreting (24 hours, every day of the year) Phone: <u>131 450</u> (within Australia)</p> <p>ATIS phone interpreting (24 hours, every day of the year) Phone: <u>1800 131 450</u></p>
<p>National Relay Service (NRS)</p> <p>A government initiative that allows people who are deaf, hard of hearing and/or have a speech impairment to make and receive phone calls. For persons with a hearing disability, who have a TTY phone, we have installed a TTY phone to receive your request and arrange a visit by the official visitor for the purposes of the <i>Disability Services Act 1991</i>.</p>	<p>Phone: 1800 035 544 (free call from landlines) or TTY 133 677. Interpreters can be arranged. <u>National Relay Service</u> and ask for 1800 035 544.</p> <p>The TTY phone number is 1800 424 183. This phone is however only attended to during business hours on week days.</p>

2. Before You Move In

Privacy and Confidentiality

CatholicCare Property Management is subject to the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (PPIP Act) and the Australian Privacy Principles (APPs) in relation to collecting, storing, disclosing and protecting personal information.

We may:

- ❖ Confirm your name, address and occupancy agreement start date with essential services (electricity, gas and telephone if applicable)
- ❖ Give your phone number to contractors to arrange repairs with your consent
- ❖ Discuss occupancy issues with your support worker
- ❖ Share relevant information with other organisations who may have an interest in considering your application or occupancy, including where relevant; Housing ACT or another community housing organisation, or the ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal (ACAT) <https://www.acat.act.gov.au/>
- ❖ Provide information to third parties for the purposes of debt recovery
- ❖ Release information where this is required by law, for example, on written request from authorities such as Centrelink, Australian Taxation Office
- ❖ Disclose information to other government agencies or statutory bodies for purposes including child protection, health reasons, law enforcement and investigation, where authorised to do so under the PPIP Act, APP, or by another Act or Law.

All information about your occupancy is kept in our office either in your file and/or in our electronic Management System. This includes items such as your original application, occupancy agreement, rent reviews and copies of all letters sent and received.

You have a right of access to, and correction of, your personal information held by CatholicCare to ensure it is accurate. If you have any questions about privacy and your personal information, please contact our Head Office. You can also view our Privacy Information on our website:

<https://catholiccare.cg.org.au/>

Your Occupancy Agreement

Your Occupancy Agreement consists of 2 parts;

Part 1 – Agreement Particulars - This occupancy agreement is made under the Residential Tenancies Act 1997 (the Residential Tenancies Act). By signing the agreement, the lessor (CatholicCare) and the Occupant (You) agree to be bound by its terms during the period of the occupancy it creates.

Part 2 – House Rules - House Rules are in place for your safety, the safety of other occupants, CatholicCare Staff and the wider community in which you live. After having read the rules and signing the agreement, you are acknowledging that you understand the rules and are making a commitment to abide by them.

All Occupants in CatholicCare properties sign an Occupancy Agreement before moving into the property and receive a copy of the agreement.

It is an important document. Please keep it in a safe place.

Residential Tenancies Booklet

We are obliged to either provide you with the Information Booklet about Residential Tenancies authorised by the Commissioner for Fair Trading or provide inform you of where the booklet can be obtained. If you would like a hardcopy of this booklet please email us at propertymanagement@catholiccare.cg.org.au or following this link to the booklet. https://www.revenue.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0009/1408851/The-Renting-Book.pdf

Utilities

CatholicCare will have arranged the utilities including electricity and if applicable gas to have been connected before you move in. CatholicCare will also have arranged for your water to be connected.

A utilities charge of \$30.00 every two weeks will be added to your rent. This is for gas, electricity, and water. CatholicCare will refund you if you paid too much for gas, electricity, and water.

Calculating Your Rent

The rent you pay is calculated according to a formula that is set by CatholicCare Property Management.

The rebate is based on a percentage of your gross assessable income, plus 100% of the maximum entitlement for Commonwealth Rent Assistance. The table below is a guideline to the formulas used to determine your rent.

Payments / Income Types	Rate
Gross Income	25%
Family Tax Benefit A – Where applicable	25%
Family Tax Benefit B – Where applicable	10%
Commonwealth Rent Assistance	100%

Commonwealth Rental Assistance

If you receive a Centrelink Benefit, you may be eligible for Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA). We will print a Centrelink Rent Assistance letter showing your rebated rent at the time you sign up as an occupant. You will need to provide this letter to CatholicCare as verification of the rent you pay so you may receive the correct Rent Assistance. It is assumed that all Centrelink beneficiaries have applied for rent assistance and your rent is calculated on this assumption.

<https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/rent-assistance>

Changes to Your Rent and Income Reviews

It is the occupant's responsibility to advise CatholicCare immediately if there is a change in your income or circumstances as this may affect the amount of rent payable. In the following circumstances, CatholicCare will reassess the rebated rent immediately and not wait until the next rental rebate renewal period. CatholicCare is to be advised if:

- ❖ you commence, cease or change employment;
- ❖ you receive a wage or salary increase such as an annual increment or pay rise through promotion;
- ❖ you have a pension or benefit granted, withdrawn, reduced or increased (other than increases through indexing); and

Written proof and/or a statement of income from Centrelink and your employer must be supplied within 28 days. If appropriate, a Separation Certificate must be supplied when employment ceases.

Property Condition

Your property will have been thoroughly cleaned before you move in. A Property Condition Report will detail the state of repair and cleanliness of your property at the commencement of your occupancy. The report will be used as the basis for our routine property inspections and at the end of your occupancy. It enables identification of any damage or alterations made to the property during the occupancy and CatholicCare to schedule ongoing maintenance work.

You are responsible for taking care of the property and leaving it in a similar condition as to when you moved in and fair wear and tear that could be reasonably be expected is taken into account. may be

liable for the costs of repairing damage to the property, beyond what is considered reasonable wear and tear, when identified during routine property inspections or at the cessation of your occupancy.

Complaints and Appeals

Whether it is a compliment, a suggestion, a complaint we want to hear from you. Whatever the issue, CatholicCare is committed to treating your communication with us with respect, professionalism and confidentiality.

Compliments and suggestions

Feedback from our tenants is important to us so we know what we are doing right and what we need to improve. If you have any suggestions or compliments, please feel free to contact us and let us know by completing our annual survey, speaking to your CatholicCare Worker or contacting the Housing Manager.

Complaints

If you have a problem about the quality of service, you should raise the issue with us. There are two ways of doing this:

1. Verbally
2. In writing

Verbal complaints

Our preferred option is that you initially contact us via phone or visit our offices to discuss your issue. We will find the most appropriate person to investigate the issue and where possible work towards a resolution.

In writing

A written complaint can be lodged if you are dissatisfied with the outcome from your discussions with us. The process to lodge a written complaint is:

1. Send a letter or email to the attention of the Manager or Director to info@catholiccare.cg.org.au or complete CatholicCare Complaint Form which is available at any of our offices or our website.
2. CatholicCare will acknowledge the complaint within 2 working days of receiving it.
3. Your complaint will be investigated and you will receive a written response within 28 days.

If you are still unhappy with the action taken you have the right to approach:

ACT Office of Registrar Community Services Directorate on 02 6207 5474

ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal ACAT is also a way you can seek to resolve any disputes on 6207 1740 or visit www.acat.act.gov.au

Appeals

An appeal is a request to have a specific decision reviewed. If you disagree with a decision made by CatholicCare, you have the right to lodge an appeal. Generally, the decisions that can be appealed

are those made under CatholicCare Property Management Policies. The sorts of decisions that can be appealed are:

- ❖ rent subsidy assessment
- ❖ application for housing transfer
- ❖ property modifications relating to medical needs
- ❖ absence from a dwelling

3. While You're an Occupant

Your Rights and Responsibilities

As an occupant, you have the right to:

- ❖ have quiet enjoyment of the premises
- ❖ privacy in the property with access only in accordance with the Terms of your Agreement and House Rules
- ❖ have the premises fit to live in
- ❖ have repairs done in a timely manner
- ❖ have a rent increase reviewed to determine if it is excessive
- ❖ have disputes resolved through an independent third party - see List of Advocates, Advice and Referrals Services Section in Handbook
- ❖ privacy and confidentiality
- ❖ be treated with dignity and respect
- ❖ have reasonable security e.g. codes or keys that open any access doors and windows, locks in working order etc.

As an Occupant, your responsibilities include:

- ❖ Paying rent as agreed
- ❖ Taking care of the premises and not cause a nuisance or annoyance to other occupants or neighbours
- ❖ Co-operate other occupants or neighbours
- ❖ Not using the premises for illegal purposes
- ❖ Not operate any business enterprise from the property without the prior written approval
- ❖ Not sub-letting the property or otherwise permit additional occupants into your house without prior written approval from CatholicCare
- ❖ Allow CatholicCare reasonable access to the premises in accordance with the Agreement and House Rules

- ❖ To repair any damage negligently or intentionally caused by you or someone else associated to you or compensate CatholicCare for the loss incurred
- ❖ To notify us of a need for repairs or maintenance.
- ❖ Keep your property in a clean and safe manner at all times

In addition to the above we ask you to:

- ❖ treat CatholicCare Workers respectfully
- ❖ provide us with accurate information, openly and honestly
- ❖ read, or have read to you, any information that we send or give to you
- ❖ reply to our requests by the due date
- ❖ provide feedback about the quality of our service so we can continue to meet your needs If you think we are not meeting the standards

Contact the CatholicCare Housing Manager if

- ❖ your income or household changes within 14 days of the change
- ❖ you need further information

Paying Rent

All occupants are required to pay rent. This is consistent with the provisions under the Residential Tenancies Act 1997, the National Community Housing Guidelines and the Occupancy Agreement. Rent is required to be paid two weeks in advance. You are required to maintain consistent rent payments to avoid falling into rental arrears. Failure to pay rent or to reach an acceptable agreement to repay any rent arrears may lead to CatholicCare seeking termination of the tenancy or prosecution for the recovery of the debt through the ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal (ACAT).

Two weeks rent in advance must be paid at the time the Occupancy Agreement is signed (or the tenancy commences). You must continue to be two weeks in advance throughout your tenancy.

CatholicCare's preferred payment method is through the Centrepay Deduction Scheme. Centrepay is a **free** service offered by Centrelink. An agreed upon amount is regularly deducted from your Centrelink payment before the remainder of the Centrelink payment is deposited into your bank account. The amount deducted is paid by Centrelink directly to CatholicCare. This system of payment ensures that your rent is paid on time, and helps you manage your personal finances. We also request that an '*Income Confirmation Authority*' form is signed as this form allows us to download income statements directly from Centrelink. This means that we are able to confirm any income changes, to facilitate regular reviews.

Rental Arrears

If you fall behind with your payments, this represents rental arrears. Rental arrears are a serious matter and in breach of your Occupancy Agreement. If the rent payments fall more than 2 weeks in arrears you will be sent a reminder notice by CatholicCare Property Management, along with a request to contact the office to arrange a repayment agreement for the amount of the arrears owed. In some cases, a repayment agreement can be negotiated and you can enter into an agreement to pay by instalments.

The repayment agreement is a legal contract which sets out the amount of rent arrears to be paid in addition to your normal weekly or fortnightly rental payment. If you do not repay the amount in full, or make an arrangement to repay the arrears CatholicCare Property Management will need to seek an order from the ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal (ACAT) for an agreement with you to repay the rent arrears. If this agreement is not complied with, and/or renegotiated, CatholicCare Property Management will need to seek an eviction order from the Tribunal and you will be asked to vacate from the property.

Repairs and Maintenance

Maintenance is a shared responsibility between you and CatholicCare but as the lessor, CatholicCare has a legal responsibility to maintain the property in a structurally sound and functional condition and will meet the costs of repairs that are due to fair wear and tear.

You are responsible under tenancy legislation and under the terms and conditions of your Occupancy Agreement to keep the property clean, tidy and undamaged. You will be held responsible for any damage caused excluding fair wear and tear on the property.

Any request for general maintenance or repairs will need to be made in writing or phone call or via your case or program manager or directly to the CatholicCare Housing Manager.

Reporting Maintenance

During business hours speak to your CatholicCare Case Manager.

For afterhours urgent matters only you can call our maintenance on call number:

0488 555 799

Fair Wear and Tear

CatholicCare recognises and accepts that wear to the property is inevitable. You are responsible for the actions of yourself and any persons you allow on to the property. Any damage to the property caused by misuse, undue force, accident or deliberate action is not fair wear and tear and you will be responsible for rectifying the damage at your cost.

Defining 'fair wear and tear'

'Fair wear and tear' basically means the normal deterioration of a property from ordinary, everyday use. Such factors as exposure to the elements, time and just day-to-day living can cause fair wear and tear.

Fair Wear & Tear Vs Damage

Fair Wear and Tear	Damage
Faded curtains or frayed cords	Curtains that are missing or torn
Furniture indentations and traffic marks on the carpet	Stains or burn marks on the carpet
Scuffed wooden floors	Badly scratched or gouged wooden floors
Faded, chipped or cracked paint	Unapproved or poor-quality paint job
Worn kitchen benchtop	Burns or cuts in benchtop
Loose hinges or window or door handles; worn sliding tracks	Broken panes from a ball through the window
Cracks in the walls from movement	Holes in walls from occupants hammering in nails or from removing picture hooks or shelves
Water stains on carpet resulting from leaky roof or bad plumbing	Water stain on carpet resulting from an overflowing bath or indoor pot plants
Worn paint near light switch	Paint damage resulting from removing decorations stuck with Blu-Tack or sticky tape

Criminal Damage

If damage to a property has been caused by the result of criminal damage, the damage must be reported to the Police. CatholicCare will repair any damage to a property as a result of criminal damage upon presentation of a Police Incident Number (PIN).

Where the offender is known to you, charges must be made against the offender as costs may be recovered at a later date.

Property Inspections

Under the relevant tenancy legislation, CatholicCare will carry out annual or periodical property inspections. The purpose of these inspections is to check on the condition of the property and to identify any maintenance or repairs that need to be carried out by CatholicCare or you as the occupant. As per the tenancy legislation, CatholicCare will not undertake a periodical inspection of the property without making prior arrangements with the you, unless we have a reason provided under the tenancy legislation, such as an emergency or health risk.

Smoke Alarms

Smoke alarms are now required by law to be in every property. They save lives and are there to protect you. Never disconnect or damage smoke alarms as this could put you and other people in your property in danger.

Speak with your Case Manager or the Housing Manager if you have any problems with the smoke alarm.

All CatholicCare properties have smoke alarms and it is our responsibility to inspect the smoke alarm at least every 12 months.

Heating and Cooling Appliances

Your property will have either a gas or electric heating and system and some properties will also have a reverse cycle (refrigerated) air conditioning unit. All properties will have either gas or electricity run hot water system.

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 Act. Do not leave any items behind. If you can't take all your items with you when you leave, please talk to the Housing Manager who may be able to assist you.

4. Guarantee of Service

Registration and Compliance - CatholicCare is registered under the National Regulatory System for Community Housing (NRSCH). This Registration is obtained by going through an audit and application process and is reviewed annually.

National Community Housing Standards - CatholicCare is continuously reviewing its policies and procedures, and operational practices to ensure that it meets the National Standards for Community Housing.

Residential Tenancies Act - The ACT Residential Tenancies Act 1997 covers rental housing in the Capital Territory. CatholicCare's tenancies are managed in compliance with this Act.