

Policy name	Managing Communal Spaces
Policy date	February 2026
Authorisation	Executive Housing & Property
Policy owner	Executive General Manager, Housing Operations
Policy type	Mission Australia Housing Operational Policy
Policy setting	

1 Purpose

1.1 Overview

1.1.1 This policy sets out the principles to be followed in managing communal spaces for housing managed by Mission Australia Housing (MAH). Our aim is to ensure a process that:

- Is fair and transparent;
- Provides tenants with the information they need to maintain successful tenancies, including their rights and responsibilities;
- Protects the assets managed by MAH; and
- Complies with the specific legal and contractual obligations placed upon MAH by government, funders and other housing partners.

1.2 Coverage

1.2.1 This document is a national policy and covers Mission Australia Housing (MAH), and its entities. All references to Mission Australia Housing, MAH and Housing means MAH and its entities unless specifically stated otherwise.

1.2.2 This policy applies to all forms of housing provided by MAH including social, affordable, and transitional housing.

1.2.3 This policy applies to housing provided by MAH in the jurisdictions of New South Wales (NSW), Tasmania (TAS), Victoria (VIC), Queensland (QLD), Western Australia (WA) and the Northern Territory (NT). Where jurisdiction-based variations exist in policies and procedures, these will be identified in the document.

1.3 Information on procedures and other related policies

- 1.3.1 This policy focuses on why certain things need to be done. It is supported by procedures that provide more detail on what to do and the steps involved in managing communal spaces.
- 1.3.2 This policy is one of a number of interlinked policies that support MAH's delivery of housing services. To assist you, these are identified where relevant in this policy.

2 Scope

2.1 Parts of Mission Australia that this policy covers

- 2.1.1 This policy applies to MAH staff responsible for working with MAH clients, tenants and properties.

2.2 Definitions

- 2.2.1 Key terms used in this policy are defined in the following table.

Term	Definition
By-Laws	A set of rules that the Tenants and household members and in some cases, visitors must follow. (Also known or referred to as Building Rules).
Communal Space	The spaces that can be shared by more than one property within the development.
Complex	The multiple units, communal spaces and facilities that make up a development.
Tenant	Under state-based residential tenancy and rooming accommodation legislation, a tenant is a person who has entered explicitly into a lease agreement. The term is used more broadly in this policy to refer to tenants and residents under rooming accommodation agreements, unless explicitly distinguished.

3 Policy

3.1 Guiding principles

- 3.1.1 The MAH communal space policy is tenant focused:
- MAH will assist tenants to understand the requirements applying to them.
 - MAH will seek to establish a shared understanding of rights and responsibilities.
- 3.1.2 The MAH communal spaces policy is fair and transparent:
- MAH will make the policy as clear and simple as possible.
 - MAH upholds accountability and transparency through its record-keeping practices.
 - MAH does not discriminate against or favour tenants.

- MAH aims to reduce neighbourhood conflict.

3.1.3 The MAH communal spaces policy protects the assets entrusted to MAH:

- MAH will ensure that tenants understand their responsibilities as well as their rights in regard to the maintenance of their property and the surrounding communal spaces.

3.1.4 The MAH communal spaces policy complies with relevant laws and procedures:

- MAH fully complies with the jurisdictional requirements of the states and territories in which it operates.

3.2 Managing Communal Spaces

3.2.1 The process followed in managing communal spaces lays the base for successful tenancies and for the management of any problems that might arise during the tenancy and within a Complex. It also complies with legal requirements, including residential tenancy and rooming accommodation requirements in each jurisdiction in which MAH operates.

3.3 Communal spaces

3.3.1 MAH owns and manages many Complexes that have communal spaces and facilities, that include:

- Carparking spaces
- BBQ Facilities
- Communal Gardens
- Communal Rooms
- Refuse area
- Entry and exit points

3.3.2 These spaces and facilities are to be shared, used and enjoyed by all tenants and their household members.

3.3.3 MAH will provide regular cleaning and maintenance services to these communal spaces and facilities. See the **Planned and Cyclical Maintenance Policy**.

3.3.4 Communal power can only be used for communal activities or by the contractors and staff.

3.4 Tenant Consultation

3.4.1 MAH will provide tenants with information relating to the car parking rules in their Complex where relevant at the start of their tenancy and throughout their tenancy.

- 3.4.2 MAH will consult with the residents of a Complex regarding the use of the communal spaces and facilities on a regular basis.
- 3.4.3 If a need is required for improvements to communal spaces, such as building communal gardens and shaded areas, MAH will in the first instance seek a community grant to provide these improvements; this will be done in consultation with all residents of the Complex.
- 3.4.4 Wherever possible, tenant noticeboards will be installed in complexes to help keep tenants informed of matters relating to their Complex.

3.5 Damage to communal spaces and facilities

- 3.5.1 It is the responsibility of all tenants, staff and contractors to the Complex to report damage to the communal spaces and facilities as soon as they become aware of the damage.
- 3.5.2 When damage to the communal spaces has been reported, then Housing Officer will coordinate with the Asset Officer to inspect the Complex.
- 3.5.3 If the damage is malicious damage, and if CCTV has been installed, this will be reviewed to determine if a tenant or household member caused the damage. See **Use of CCTV Policy**.
- 3.5.4 If CCTV is not installed, the Housing Officer will speak to the tenants of the Complex to try to identify who damaged the property.
- 3.5.5 If a tenant is identified, then the **Breach of Tenancy Policy, Repairs & Maintenance Policy** and the **Managing Tenant Damage charges and Payments Policy** will apply.

3.6 Complex meetings

- 3.6.1 MAH encourages tenants to hold Complex meetings to resolve any issues within the Complex. If required, the Housing Officer, Asset Officer and Community Development staff will arrange and chair these meetings.
- 3.6.2 These meetings can be used to agree and review a set of “principles” for the Complex.
- 3.6.3 These meetings may be used to address anti-social behaviour in the Complex.
- 3.6.4 All tenants will be invited to these meetings, and if “principles” are agreed, then these will be given to all existing tenants and new tenants to the Complex.

3.7 Carparking

- 3.7.1 In order to support tenants with a disability, where possible, MAH will designate a proportion of communal car parking spaces for the use of car parking spaces for people with disabilities and mobility impairments.
- 3.7.2 MAH will generally prioritise the use of car parking spaces for tenants rather than visitors.
- 3.7.3 When developing and acquiring new stock, MAH will seek properties within a reasonable distance to amenities such as schools, public transport and shopping facilities where possible.

- 3.7.4 Signs or labels will be used in communal car parking areas, where appropriate, to inform tenants and visitors of any car parking restrictions.
- 3.7.5 Tenants will be informed of their right to appeal organisational decisions as per the **Complaints & Appeals Policy**.

3.8 Properties with designated parking spaces

- 3.8.1 Where there is designated parking, it will be clearly stated within the Residential Tenancy Agreement.
- 3.8.2 Tenants living in properties with designated car parking spaces, such as a house, townhouse or villa with a carport, garage, or designated driveway to the property, must park their vehicle in their dedicated space.
- 3.8.3 Caravans, trucks, boats or storage containers are not to be stored on MAH premises unless MAH provides written permission.
- 3.8.4 Tenants and visitors are not to park cars on the lawn of the premises, or on the verge or footpath.
- 3.8.5 Where tenants in a unit complex have been allocated a car space on their lease agreement, this space will revert to a communal space at the end of the tenancy or be assigned to a new tenancy.

3.9 Unit Complexes with communal parking spaces

- 3.9.1 Unit complexes typically do not have designated car parking spaces for the exclusive use of individual households. Parking spaces provided for unit complexes are **communal parking spaces** unless otherwise marked or stated on a tenant's lease agreement.
- 3.9.2 Where required by council as part of the development application, a proportion of car parking spaces in unit complexes will be marked for disability use only. Parking spaces marked for disability use only are not allocated to individual units. Only tenants with disability parking permits, or their carers or support workers, will be allowed to park in these spaces.
- 3.9.3 The remaining car spaces will be communal spaces to be used by residents on a "first come, first served" basis. If all car parking spaces are full, tenants must park on the street which may be subject to local government parking laws.
- 3.9.4 Generally, parking will be for residents only unless labelled as visitors' parking.
- 3.9.5 Only registered cars and motorcycles are permitted to be parked in MAH car spaces. Unregistered vehicles will only be allowed in exceptional circumstances with the written permission of MAH.
- 3.9.6 Communal car parking bays are not to be used:
 - As storage spaces

- To carry out vehicle repairs
- For parking caravans, boats, trailers, trucks or storage containers
- For dumping rubbish

3.9.7 MAH may order an unregistered or unauthorised vehicle to be removed from communal car parking spaces, and if the vehicle is not removed, MAH may arrange to have the vehicle towed away.

3.10 Abandoned vehicles & vehicles causing a nuisance

3.10.1 Tenants will be in breach of their tenancy agreement if they, or a member of their household, stores or abandons a vehicle on common property.

3.10.2 MAH will investigate the ownership of abandoned vehicles in Communal Spaces and every effort will be made to identify and contact the owner of the vehicle and provide them with an opportunity to remove the vehicle.

3.10.3 If the Vehicle is not removed MAH will follow the appropriate jurisdiction legislation to remove the vehicle

3.10.4 MAH will treat a vehicle as abandoned if;

- It is causing a health or safety hazard
- It is left by a current or former tenant
- The owner cannot be found, and MAH has made every reasonable effort to establish the owners identify and location.

3.10.5 A tenant will be in breach of their tenancy agreement where a vehicle;

- Causes a nuisance to other residents because it is blocking access to common areas
- Interferes with the comfort of neighbours because it is occupying spaces allocated to other tenants or visitors
- Represents a hazard because it is in a state of disrepair and had been left in a common area or resident car space

3.11 Record keeping

3.11.1 Staff will:

- Keep accurate records of carparking allocations;
- Detail any vehicles that are causing a nuisance; and
- Ensure that all records are logged in the tenancy management system

3.12 Appeals

3.12.1 Staff will inform tenants of their right to appeal organisational decisions and to complain about the services of MAH as per the **Appeals and Complaints Policy**.

4 Responsibilities

4.1 Housing Officers are responsible for:

- Informing all tenants at the start of their tenancy about the car parking in their Complex and use of communal spaces and facilities.
- Consulting with residents about the use of communal spaces
- Working with tenants, the Assets Team and Community Development to develop a set of by-laws if required
- Assisting the Asset Officer to establish the cause of malicious damage
- Communicating to all tenants their responsibility for the communal spaces and facilities
- Working with a Complex to solve anti-social behaviour if necessary.
- Recommending improvements to this policy and associated procedures.

4.2 Asset Officers are responsible for:

- Arranging for the regular cleaning and maintenance to the communal spaces and facilities
- Working with tenants, the Housing Team and Community Development to develop a set of by-laws if required
- Assisting the Housing Officer to establish the cause of malicious damage
- Recommending improvements to this policy and associated procedures.

4.3 Team Leaders/Regional Asset Managers are responsible for:

- Incorporating this policy and associated procedures into staff induction and training.
- Ensuring staff are aware of and have access to this policy and associated procedures.
- Escalating feedback about this policy to the policy owner and/or policy writer.

4.4 The Operations and State Manager is responsible for:

- Ensuring that MAH complies with this policy and associated procedures.
- Recommending any changes to this policy and associated procedures