



**Community Housing**

**Tenant  
Information  
Handbook**

Momentum Collective Community Housing Services

**Tenant Information Handbook**

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## Welcome to your new home

This handbook provides you with basic information about your rights and responsibilities as a community housing tenant.

If you need more information about your new tenancy with us, please contact our friendly staff at your local Momentum Collective office. We also have a range of factsheets available that cover matters that may be of interest or assistance you during your tenancy with Momentum Collective.

When moving into your new property you will be provided with:

- A legally binding agreement (e.g. a residential tenancy agreement or an occupancy agreement)
- a Property Condition Report describing the current state of your property
- a set of keys for your new property
- the name and contact number of your Momentum Collective Tenancy Officer

These are legal documents that set out your legal rights and responsibilities between you as a tenant and Momentum Collective.

If you need assistance contact Momentum Collective immediately:

- Tweed Heads on (07) 5524 9732
- Ballina on (02) 6686 3457

## Rent

### How your rent is calculated

Your rent is calculated on the basis of:

- 25% of gross income (15% for household members aged between 18-21 years who are not the “head tenants”)
- 15% of Family Tax Benefit
- 100% of the Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA)

If your income changes, or the income of any other persons living in the property changes, you are required to notify us within 14 days so we can make the necessary adjustments to your rent. It is your responsibility to provide us this information.

It is important to know that we are required to use the NSW State Government’s Community Housing Rent Policy for all rent assessments. This makes sure that rents are fair and affordable for all tenants. We are unable to make further adjustments to individual rent assessments where this Policy does not allow us to.

### Rent payment

Rent must always be paid in advance. Momentum Collective’s Community Housing Service encourages all payments to be made by Centrepay deductions through Centrelink. Your Tenancy Officer will assist you with this at the time of signing your agreement with us.

If you are having difficulties paying your rent, please advise us **immediately** to discuss your situation. If you fall behind in your rent by more than two weeks, then a Notice of Termination may be issued due to rent arrears which may result in further action through the Consumer Trader and Tenancy Tribunal (NCAT).

### Rent assessment

The amount of rent you are required to pay is reviewed by us every six months. You will be asked to supply up-to-date information about your household income so your rental subsidy can be re-assessed.

If you do not supply the information we ask you for, we will assume you do not wish to apply for a subsidised rent and your rent will be set at the market rate.

### Other costs

As well as rent, you are responsible for electricity, gas, telephone and contents insurance costs.

In any type of shared housing managed by Momentum Collective, additional charges can be levied to pay for common area cleaning and garden maintenance. These arrangements will be discussed with residents of the shared house prior to signing their agreement. This is in addition to charging for common area water and power.

### Water usage

You will also need to pay for your water usage. This is assessed according to the *Residential Tenancies Act 2010*, Clause 139 as a social housing provider.

### Your rental bond

Momentum Collective's Community Housing Service requires new tenants to pay a bond at the time they sign their agreement with us. The rental bond is four weeks rent and is sent to **NSW Fair Trading**. If you are unable to pay the full amount of bond, then an arrangement can be made to pay the remaining amount over an agreed period of 10-12 weeks.

At the end of your tenancy, Momentum Collective may claim any of the bond if there is rent owing, cleaning charges or damage to the property requiring repairs.

## Property Condition Report

The *Property Condition Report* is for your protection and is part of the tenancy agreement and should be completed carefully and returned within 7 days after the signing of the agreement.

You are responsible for taking care of the property and leaving it in a similar condition to when you rented it. You will be held responsible for any damage, cleaning or lawn mowing costs at the end of the tenancy, if you cannot prove it was like that when you moved in.

## Tenant participation

Momentum Collective encourages tenants to actively participate in their communities. This is to develop greater opportunities for you to provide feedback and suggestions to help shape our housing service.

There are many ways Momentum Collective can support you to get involved in your community including:

- Local Tenant Groups
- Social gatherings and activities
- Tenant housing forums and events
- Annual tenant satisfaction surveys
- Suggestion boxes at offices
- Workers that will listen to your needs or concerns

Momentum Collective regularly promotes these opportunities for all of our tenants.

If you have an interest or need, please discuss it with one of our staff members.

### Your privacy

Your privacy is important to us.

Momentum Collective staff and management are not allowed to discuss your tenancy with anyone outside of the office, unless they have your permission. Sometimes we can be required by law to provide information about our tenants e.g. Centrelink, Police or Courts.

If you want us to discuss your tenancy with someone else then you need to be present during the discussion; or you need to complete and sign a *Disclosure Consent Form* (available from our offices) that gives approval for Momentum Collective to do this.

### Complaints, reviews and appeals

Our aim is to provide a high quality, professional service. If you consider we have failed to do so, then you have every right to request a review of a decision that you believe is unfair or to make a complaint.

Most issues can be resolved quickly by contacting your Tenancy Officer or the General Manager Housing to discuss your concern directly. However, we realise that this is not always appropriate and so Momentum Collective has a range of ways in place for you to have your concern dealt with more formally. For more information, visit our website at [www.mymomentum.org.au](http://www.mymomentum.org.au).

If you do not agree with a decision made by Momentum Collective (and you do not agree with the outcome of our internal review) you can ask for an independent review by the NSW State Government's Housing Appeals Committee (HAC). You can contact the HAC by phone on 1800 629 794 or their website [www.hac.nsw.gov.au](http://www.hac.nsw.gov.au).

### Reporting repairs and maintenance

Momentum Collective is your landlord and you are responsible for reporting all repairs at your property. If you are responsible for damage to the premises Momentum Collective will recover the cost of the repairs from you.

You should make all requests for repairs and general maintenance directly to our office using the phone numbers listed on the agreement.

There are different types of repairs which have different response times. These include:

### **Emergency repairs**

Repairs of this nature requires immediate action due to the risk of health, safety or of serious damage being caused to the property including for example:

- a burst water service
- a blocked or broken toilet (if you have only 1 toilet)
- a dangerous electrical fault

### **Urgent repairs**

This includes major disruption to the occupant/tenant and where there is a possible risk of damage or waste escalating including:

- a leaking gutter
- a running tap
- common area faults with sprinklers or lighting operating continuously

### **Routine repairs**

Routine repairs refers to all other maintenance repair work.

## **Asbestos in Momentum Collective properties**

Asbestos is a naturally occurring mineral fibre which has been used extensively in the past in construction materials. The most common type of asbestos building material is fibro sheeting used in internal wall cladding, eaves and wet areas in bathrooms and laundries.

### **Is asbestos dangerous?**

Asbestos can be a health risk if the building material is cut, sanded, drilled, nailed or damaged in any other way as it allows for the release of asbestos fibres. This material is considered safe if left undisturbed and in good condition.

### **Is it still used to repair homes managed by Momentum Collective?**

Asbestos building materials have not been produced since 1992 in Queensland and 1986 in New South Wales. Materials used to undertake repair work in Momentum Collective homes do not contain asbestos fibres.

### **Am I in any danger?**

Whilst it is accepted that living in a home built with asbestos-cement building products is not considered a health risk, asbestos containing materials (ACM) can be a health risk if asbestos fibres become airborne and are inhaled.

The long-term risks of living in a home which contains asbestos products is extremely small relative to other risks experienced in everyday life.

### **What do I do if I suspect there is asbestos material in my home?**

A significant number of homes built before 1986 (in NSW) could contain some form of asbestos cement, irrespective if they are public housing or privately-owned houses. If you

think asbestos may be in your home, don't panic. If asbestos material is in good condition, and is left undisturbed, it is harmless.

### How do I ensure asbestos material remains in good condition?

Do not make changes to your home that might expose you to the risk of breathing in asbestos dust or fibres; this includes drilling holes in walls to hang pictures. If you're in doubt call your Tenancy Officer.

If you have broken or fraying asbestos within your premises contact your Tenancy Officer immediately. Momentum Collective uses experienced and qualified trades people to remove such asbestos materials which may pose a risk.



## Considerations for tenants

### Routine property inspections

As a landlord, Momentum Collective may conduct up to four routine inspections in a 12-month period. This is an opportunity to report any maintenance issues and update your details. Momentum Collective will provide written notice when these inspections are to be undertaken.

### Tenant charges

Where Momentum Collective has organised maintenance that is not considered to be the result of fair wear and tear, or where the property has been damaged maliciously by the tenant, the costs of the damage will be charged to the tenant.

Every effort will be made to notify the tenant of the likelihood of a claim by Momentum Collective *prior* to the work orders being issued, providing an opportunity for the tenant to have the work rectified.

### Break-ins

If your property has been broken into and damage has been caused, then you need to notify the Police immediately and contact your Tenancy Officer. When you make a report to our office of any damage caused during a break-in, you will be asked for a *Police Report Number or Event Number*.

### Absence from the property

Momentum Collective tenants require approval from us if planning to be away from your home for more than 4 weeks.

## Visitors and relatives

Visitors and relatives are welcome to stay with you from time to time, however you are required to advise Momentum Collective if they are staying for more than 2 weeks. Momentum Collective will consider a visitor staying longer than 14 days as an additional occupant. Momentum Collective must approve any additional occupants and your Tenancy Officer must be contacted.

## Pets

Momentum Collective has a **NO PET** policy with the exception of those covered by the Companion Animal Act. In certain properties, special consideration may be given in situations where this policy may cause undue hardship.

## Ending your tenancy

The law requires that you provide written notice *prior* to moving out of your property. You will need to pay rent until you return the keys. A joint inspection between you and your Tenancy Officer is conducted when vacating to ensure the property is left in a clean and undamaged condition.

## Complaints from neighbours

Tenants have a right to the peaceful enjoyment of their home and an obligation to abide by the conditions of their tenancy agreement. They have a right to complain about individuals who deny them this right.

In order for Momentum Collective to best respond to complaints about your neighbours, please keep written evidence of all incidents over a period of time. Incident report forms are available from our office.

The information you gather will only be used if we pursue this matter further and only with your permission at the time.

**Nuisance, annoyance, anti-social behaviour, or illegal activity which disturbs your neighbours will not be tolerated.**

## How will Momentum Collective respond to a complaint about a neighbour?

Firstly, we will check that you have notified the police. *This must always be your first point of call with all Noise, Nuisance, Anti-Social Behaviour or Illegal Activity complaints.* Momentum Collective will address complaints of this nature by:

### Step 1

- Obtaining incident report/s from neighbours, with Police Event Numbers if available.  
**Note:** Momentum Collective has a Record of Understanding (ROU) with NSW Police, permitting us to make enquiries about activities at our properties.
- Investigate reported incident/s by contacting other neighbours and/or police.
- Arrange a meeting between the tenant, Momentum Collective Tenancy Officer and any support agency (where relevant), if that will be useful to help avoid further complaints.
- Write to the tenant/s who we have received the complaints about, detailing the nature of the complaint and the breach. The tenant/s then has the opportunity to discuss the matter with Momentum Collective within 14 days of receiving this letter.

## Step 2

If no further complaints are received, the matter will be closed.

If further complaints are received, Momentum Collective can issue a *Notice of Termination* for breach of the *Residential Tenancy Agreement* and further action may be taken through the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NCAT)

### What happens if the matter goes to the NCAT?

The action Momentum Collective takes through the NCAT will depend on the nature and the severity of the complaint.

If the complaints are not of a severe nature, Momentum Collective may request the NCAT to put in place a "Specific Performance Order" states the tenant/s must stop this behaviour at the first NCAT hearing. If further complaints are received, Momentum Collective will pursue the matter through the NCAT at which time we may ask for termination of the *Residential Tenancy Agreement* and vacant possession of the premises.

If the complaints were of a serious nature, Momentum Collective would take the matter to the NCAT and may ask for termination of the Residential Tenancy Agreement and vacant possession of the premises immediately.

For Momentum Collective to pursue *Noise, Nuisance, Anti-Social Behaviour, Illegal Activity* or other complaints action through the NCAT, it is most important that we have well documented written accounts of the incidents from eye witnesses, complainants and include police incident reports and event numbers.

Please refer to the Residential Tenancy Agreement for further information about your rights and responsibilities in relation to your neighbours.

## Smoke Alarms

**If there is a fire, dial 000**

In NSW, all home and units are required by law to have smoke alarms.

Smoke alarms help to protect your life and your property. Smoke alarms are early warning systems which detect smoke and fires and sound a warning alarm and they provide additional security and safety in your home. Most fatalities in house fires are caused by breathing in smoke and toxic fumes, which can overcome you, particularly if you are asleep.

In our properties, smoke alarms are connected to the wiring system of the house or unit. The alarms are usually mounted in a high position and may be located in the living room, hallway, or in the bedrooms.

Under the *Residential Tenancies Act*, Momentum Collective is responsible for the installation of smoke alarms in rented premises.

You will notice two different lights on your smoke alarms

- a steady green light indicates that the alarm is being powered
- a red light flashes once a minute to indicate that the alarm is working

### What should I do if the alarm goes off?

If you are woken by a smoke alarm, wake everyone and leave the house immediately. Once outside, phone 000 and report the fire. Alarms can sometimes go off from smoke or steam (such as burning toast or showers). You should make sure there is ventilation when cooking in a small area, or when smoking.

If the alarm sounds because of these activities, you can turn it off by pressing the hush button or fanning away the smoke or steam. If the power is turned off, you will hear a short beep every few seconds. When the power is first connected to the alarm, it may sound for two to three seconds and continue to beep once every 40 seconds for around 10 minutes. This is normal.

If a smoke alarm sounds regularly for no clear reason, or you think it is not working properly phone Momentum Collective Community Housing offices:

- Tweed Heads (07) 5524 9732
- Ballina (02) 6686 3457

The emergency after hours mobile number is **0458 029 101**. Please note only voice calls are accepted, do not send text messages as they cannot be received or responded to.

### How do I look after my smoke alarm?

It is against the law to remove or interfere with the operation of a smoke alarm. If you interfere or remove a smoke alarm and an electrician has to be called out, you will incur a cost. This is tenant damage.

Momentum Collective will arrange to inspect and check your smoke alarm annually. You can also test it yourself once a month using the test button. Simply press the test button gently and hold for five seconds. Do not test the alarm with a flame.

Carefully vacuum the smoke alarm several times a year to remove dust, cobwebs, or insects.

**Do not attempt to open the alarm** as it is connected to the main power supply of the house and could give you an electric shock. The standby battery in the alarm will last for 5-10 years and does not fit into any other electrical appliance.

Insects may be attracted to smoke alarms and can sound the alarm. If this occurs, spray the ceiling around the alarm, with insect surface spray. Never spray the alarm directly.

### Need more information?

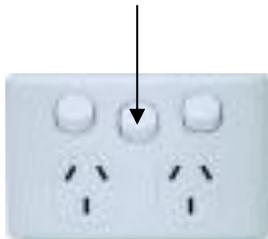
Visit the NSW Fire Brigades website [www.fire.nsw.gov.au](http://www.fire.nsw.gov.au) for handy tips and fact sheets on fire safety including a home safety checklist, home escape plan, and keeping fire safe in all seasons.

## Trouble shooting around your home

### Appliance Power

All new units are equipped with isolation switches that control electricity to your fridge power point and oven. If these appliances are not operating then Please check your kitchen area to find the isolation switches. Generally these switches are similar to the picture below.

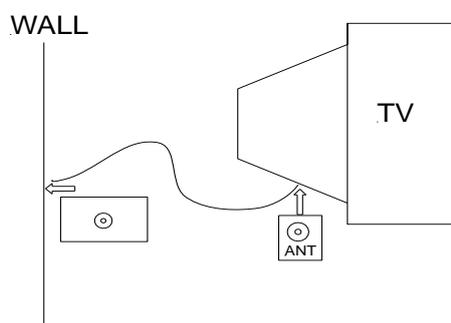
The middle switch is the isolator which needs to be turned on.



### TV Antenna

All new units are connected to a central TV antenna system with the wall connection general found within the general lounge/living area. Refer to the picture below for connection.

The connecting cable is called a co-axial cable.



### Telephone

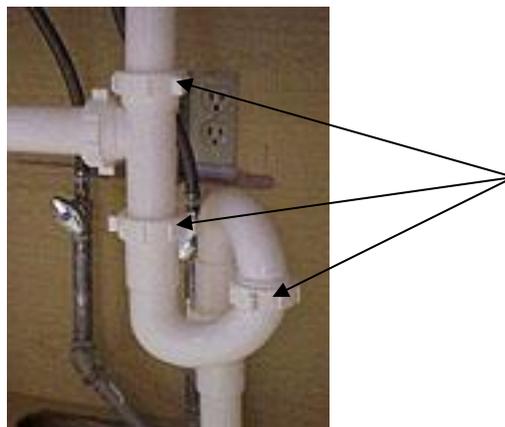
All new units have telephone numbers already established; this has been done to assist you with hassle free reconnection of the service. Advise Telstra or your preferred carrier that the line has been established, this ensures that you don't have to pay their establishment fees.

Please contact your Tenancy Officer for further information if needed.

### Leaks in kitchen sinks or laundry troughs

When first settling in to your new unit /home (if possible) check if you have any leaks under these units. If it is coming from the water connections, **contact us immediately**.

If it is from the drain (plastic pipe) you may be able to tighten the ribbed collar to stop this leak (do not over tighten these collars). If you are not able to do this, contact us immediately as water can damage the timber of the kitchen units.

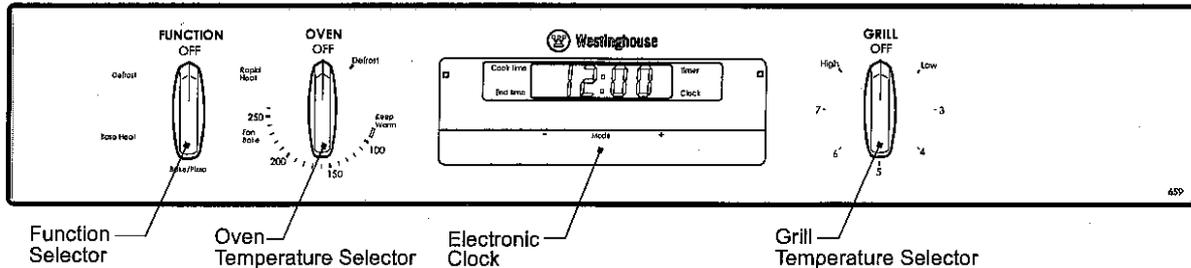


### Oven and cook top

Please read your instruction manuals concerning the use of these appliances.

Before you start you need to make sure you turn on the large switch usually located on the tiles behind the bench top. (This is an isolation switch which turns off all power to the oven and cook top in an emergency.)

With modern electric oven, you will need to set the timer prior to turning on all other controls on the oven.



If you still cannot get the appliances to work then report it as soon as possible, so it can be fixed.

### Toilets

Modern toilets use very little water and if objects such as baby wipes and large amounts of toilet paper are flushed down toilets they will cause blockages in drains.

Do not flush anything other than toilet paper down the toilet.

## Useful contact phone numbers

|   |              |
|---|--------------|
| Momentum Collective after hours emergency maintenance | 0458 029 101 |
| Centrelink (Older Australians) Line                   | 132 300      |
| Electricity outages and interruptions                 | 132 080      |
| Energex   | 136 262      |
| Telstra Phone Connections                             | 132 200      |
| Tenants Advice and Advocacy Service                   | 1800 649 135 |
| Tenant's Hotline                                      | 1800 251 101 |

### Momentum Collective

**Ballina Office: 02 6686 3457**

4/79 Tamar Street, Ballina NSW 2478

Postal: PO Box 578, Ballina NSW 2478

**Tweed Heads Office: 07 5524 9732**

44a Wharf Street, Tweed Heads NSW 2485

Postal: PO Box 793, Coolangatta QLD 4225