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## Maintenance Services Policy

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## 1.1 Purpose

The purpose of the *Maintenance Services Policy* is to set out practical guiding principles relating to the asset management and maintenance services delivered by Aboriginal Housing Victoria (AHV) for the properties in its asset portfolio.

## 1.2 Scope

This policy applies to the maintenance and repairs of all existing AHV owned and managed rental properties.

## 1.3 Cultural statement

The First Nations people of Australia have the oldest continuous cultures in the world. AHV celebrates and takes pride in the rich and spiritual culture, values and practices of Australia's First Nations people. We celebrate the significant contribution made by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and culture to the enrichment of Victorian society, and, we acknowledge and respect the special place of Victorian traditional owners as Victoria's First Nations peoples.

As an Aboriginal Community Organisation we acknowledge that our legitimacy is derived from the strong relationships we have with Victoria's Aboriginal communities and our success is through achievement of our shared vision and aspirations.

Our vision is that **Aboriginal Victorians secure appropriate, affordable housing as a pathway to better lives and stronger communities.**

We believe that achievement of our vision is through the provision of housing services which enhance the dignity of our clients and tenants and which respects and celebrates their cultural beliefs, values and practices.

Our policies and procedures are designed so that our practice and service delivery is in accord with this cultural statement.

## 1.4 Application of cultural statement

As an Aboriginal Community Organisation providing housing services to Aboriginal Victorians, AHV has cultural obligations to Victorian Aboriginal communities beyond those of registered housing agencies.

The cultural statement is applied in this policy as it governs appropriate decision making and use of resources with respect to the management of assets to:

- maximise our capacity to deliver quality services to our clients;
- maintain high standards of accountability, probity and transparency to tenants, clients the Aboriginal community, government and the public;
- ensure the fair, equitable and impartial allocation of resources to maintain and improve properties based on transparent criteria; and
- encourage and promote the employment of Aboriginal people in the delivery of maintenance and improvement works.

## 1.5 Policy context

The *Maintenance Services Policy* has been developed in accordance with key legislative and regulatory obligations and best practice standards. AHV is required to manage and maintain owned and managed housing assets within the legislative and regulatory framework and standards outlined in the *Housing Act 1983* and the *Residential Tenancies Act 1997* (RTA).

## 1.6 Relevant legislation and regulation

- Residential Tenancies Act 1997;
- Housing Act 1983;
- Fences Act 1968;

AHV's key obligation relevant to this policy under section 68(1) of the (RTA) is to "ensure that the rented premises are maintained in good repair".

Tenants also have duties under the RTA.

Housing agencies registered under the *Housing Act* are required to comply with defined performance standards. Section 2 of the *Performance Standards for Registered Housing Agencies*, Housing Assets, outlines the following key performance requirements and indicators relevant to repairs and maintenance of rental properties:

- Setting and meeting relevant property condition standards.
- Planning and undertaking responsive, cyclical and life-cycle maintenance to maintain property conditions (asset maintenance).

The registered agency:

- manages community housing assets in accordance with the specific legal and policy property condition requirements relevant in Victoria;
- seeks consensual agreement with tenants in relation to access to properties that do not compromise tenants' rights under the RTA; and
- ensures:
  - properties are well maintained;
  - maintenance is undertaken in a timely manner; and
  - maintenance work is undertaken by suitably qualified staff/contractors /consultants.

## 1.7 Key stakeholders

AHV's stakeholders include our tenants, clients and Aboriginal communities; the Department of Health and Human Services; the Director of Housing (DoH); the Housing Registrar; Government; corporate and community supporters; and the public.

The Registrar of Housing Agencies (Housing Registrar) is the regulator of registered community housing agencies in Victoria, as provided for under the *Housing Act 1983*. AHV is required to demonstrate compliance with the Housing Registrar's performance standards and performance against the business plan, on an annual basis.

## 1.8 Organisational context

As a social housing agency and an Aboriginal Community Organisation providing housing services to Aboriginal Victorians, AHV has responsibilities beyond those enshrined within tenancy and building legislation, to provide quality housing and culturally sensitive services to Aboriginal people.

AHV's Vision reinforces this:

**That Aboriginal Victorians secure appropriate, affordable housing as a pathway to better lives and stronger communities.**

In relation to asset management and housing maintenance, the relevant AHV objectives that underpin this Vision are that AHV will:

- be independent and financially viable;
- provide efficient and effective housing services for Aboriginal people;
- manage housing stock to ensure quality and affordability;
- develop constructive and mutually beneficial partnerships and relationships within the housing, community and corporate sectors;
- advocate for, influence and deliver improvements in Aboriginal housing and other outcomes; and
- maintain high standards of accountability, probity and transparency to tenants, clients, the Aboriginal community, Government and the public.

## 1.9 Policy objectives and principles

The key objective of the Maintenance Services Policy is to enable effective and timely delivery of property repair and maintenance services, consistent with AHV's Vision, values, objectives and priorities.

The relevant policy objectives are to:

- maintain and improve the safety and security of tenants; and
- deliver effective, timely and good quality maintenance and repair services in accordance with the overarching asset management policy objectives, of:
  - maximising the amenity provided by AHV properties;
  - ensuring the long term financial viability of AHV's assets;
  - maximising value for money;
  - aligning assets to Aboriginal housing needs; and
  - leveraging property maintenance and improvement program to increase Aboriginal employment.

Decisions relating to the management and maintenance of properties are made in accordance with the following principles, to ensure effective management over the property life cycle:

- quality service delivery underpins repair and maintenance practices;
- property management is integrated in business planning and budget development and evaluation processes;
- asset management decisions, from acquisition to disposal are made in accordance with rigorous analysis of costs, benefits and risks over the life of the property assets;
- continuous improvement will be informed by auditing and monitoring performance in the delivery of maintenance services, including feedback from tenants on service quality.

## 1.10 Responsibilities

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Board   | Approves the policy, sets strategy, monitors policy implementation and performance, and, reviews policy when necessary   |
| Chief Executive Officer (CEO) with the Executive Management Group | Oversees and monitors policy implementation and approves procedures to implement the policy.   |
| Director of Operations  | Manages the delivery of AHV property maintenance and repair services   |
| Head contractor   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• receives works orders from AHV officers</li> <li>• arranges for work to be completed within required timelines and to required standards, on behalf of AHV</li> <li>• issues invoices upon completion of works</li> </ul>   |
| Maintenance Team  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• receives and records maintenance requests</li> <li>• raises works orders</li> <li>• inspects properties to identify works to be undertaken</li> <li>• inspects property after contractor has completed works (compliance and quality assurance)</li> <li>• negotiates with tenants on maintenance issues, including possible damage to properties.</li> </ul>   |
| Tenants   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• keep their homes in a clean and safe condition, and look after the internal and private external areas of the property, eg, replace light bulbs, test their smoke alarms, maintain grassed areas, tidy the garden and paths, and dispose of rubbish appropriately</li> <li>• are liable for the cost of repairing any damage, accidental or deliberately caused to the property, which results from their actions or those of their visitors and/or household members.</li> </ul> |

## 1.11 Definitions and acronyms

|   |   |
|---|---|
| After hours emergency and maintenance service | Outsourced service contracted by AHV to deliver after hours call centre services, for urgent/emergency repairs that need to be actioned immediately. Any non-urgent repair requests are referred to AHV for action.   |
| Agreement to fence                            | A legal agreement between adjoining property owners or occupiers to replace all or part of an adjoining fence.  |
| AHV   | Aboriginal Housing Victoria   |
| CAV   | Consumer Affairs Victoria   |
| DoH   | Director of Housing. The Director of Housing is a body corporate created under the <i>Housing Act 1983</i> . The DoH is the owner of public housing stock in Victoria and provides indirect funding to housing agencies to deliver social housing services.   |
| Fences Act 1968 (FA)                          | The Fences Act outlines rules about respective responsibilities for costs for a dividing fence. It includes the type of fence to be built, notices required and dispute resolution.   |
| Housing Registrar                             | The Registrar of Housing Agencies; responsible for implementing a regulatory framework to encourage the development of rental housing agencies providing housing services to low income tenants.  |
| Maintenance                                   | All actions necessary to retain the asset as near as practicable to its original condition. (This excludes rehabilitation or renewal). Maintenance does not increase the service potential of the asset or keep it in its original condition; it slows down deterioration and delays when rehabilitation or replacement is necessary. |
| NDIS  | National Disability Insurance Scheme. Federal government program providing funding for support and services to Australians aged under 65, who have permanent and significant disabilities.  |
| Notice to Fence                               | Formal notice served to an adjoining property under the <i>Fences Act 1968</i> for the repair/replacement of a party fence.   |
| Not on Schedule (NOS)                         | Works that are not specifically identified within the Schedule of Rates, and not appropriately raised as work orders using the Schedule of Rates.   |
| Non-standard fixtures (NSF)                   | Non-standard fittings and fixtures in AHV managed and owned properties, including air-conditioners, ceiling fans, blinds and curtains. AHV retains and <b>maintains</b> NSFs when the item is assessed to be in good condition and its retention will add value and amenity to the property.  |
| Property Condition Assessments (PCA)          | Property inspections undertaken by AHV asset and technical staff to gather detailed data on the condition of all properties to inform the planning of maintenance and capital expenditure programs.   |



|                                      |  |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Reletting standard                   | Property is safe, secure, in a reasonably clean condition and in good repair   |
| Repair                               | Action to restore an item to its previous condition after failure or damage.   |
| Repair - Normal repairs              | Maintenance works of a non-urgent nature. Good customer service requires that action on maintenance requests will occur with 14 days of the request being received, and in many cases works may be completed in that time period.  |
| Repair - Priority repairs            | Requires action within 7 calendar days as a delay may cause the further dysfunction of the appliance, fitting or surface resulting in the need for urgent repair.  |
| Repair - Urgent repairs              | As defined by the <i>Residential Tenancies Act 1997</i> :<br>"urgent repairs" means any work necessary to repair or remedy—<br>(a) a burst water service; or<br>(b) a blocked or broken lavatory system; or<br>(c) a serious roof leak; or<br>(d) a gas leak; or<br>(e) a dangerous electrical fault; or<br>(f) flooding or serious flood damage; or<br>(g) serious storm or fire damage; or<br>(h) a failure or breakdown of any essential service or appliance provided for hot water, water, cooking, heating or laundering; or<br>(i) a failure or breakdown of the gas, electricity or water supply to rented premises, or<br>(j) an appliance, fitting or fixture provided by a landlord that uses or supplies water and that is malfunctioning in a way that results or will result in a substantial amount of water being wasted; or<br>(k) any fault or damage that makes rented premises insecure; or<br>(l) a serious fault in a lift or staircase; or<br>(m) any damage of a prescribed class. |
| Residential Tenancies Act 1997 (RTA) | Victorian legislation that outlines the respective rights and responsibilities of tenants and landlords in Victoria, including timelines for repairs to rental premises.   |
| Schedule of Rates (SOR)              | The SOR is a standard list of description of works by items and cost which form the basis of works orders to head contractors. The SOR may be applied to responsive, cyclical and vacant property maintenance and can be used to describe and inform the scope of works for a maintenance program.   |
| TRMC                                 | Tenant responsibility maintenance compensation. Compensation sought by AHV when property damage is incurred by tenants, residents or guests.   |
| Vacant property maintenance          | Works undertaken at the time that a property becomes vacant to bring the property back to a reletting standard.  |

## **1.12 Policy details – Property inspections**

In addition to meeting our responsibilities under the RTA to maintain the properties in good condition, property inspections enable AHV to maintain current information on the condition of our properties. This information informs AHV's planned and responsive maintenance and upgrade programs.

Home visits provide an opportunity for AHV staff and tenants to meet and discuss any maintenance and tenancy related issues that tenants may be experiencing. They also provide an opportunity for AHV to help tenants to access support services that they may need to successfully maintain their tenancies.

AHV recognises the rights of tenants to quiet enjoyment of their properties and acts in accordance with the RTA with regard to providing prior notice to the tenant of an intention to enter the property.

Inspections occur at various points in the life cycle of each tenancy/property, including:

- inspections when maintenance is required, whether responsive or planned;
- inspections following completion of repairs to assess standard of work undertaken;
- routine periodic inspections during all tenancies; and
- vacant unit inspections.

### **1.12.1 Property condition assessments**

In addition to the above inspections, AHV has a program of property condition assessments (PCA) that aims to undertake a PCA for each property in AHV's portfolio, every three years.

Information gathered during PCA inspections is included in AHV's asset management software system, and provides base data for the development of upgrade programs, redevelopment, planned and preventative maintenance, budget planning and controls and improved stock utilisation.

### **1.12.2 Periodic home visits**

Along with scheduled PCA inspections, Housing Officers undertake periodic home visits to all properties they manage. Home visits provide an opportunity for Housing Officers to share information with tenants on community services that may be available to assist them to meet their responsibilities to maintain their homes in a clean and safe condition.

During the visit, an inspection sheet is completed, which can be compared with previous reports to identify the wear and tear of the property over the period. The information also assists in development of planned maintenance and upgrade programs.

Under the RTA, AHV is entitled to conduct a routine periodic inspection every six months. Additional home visits may be conducted by Housing Officers to support tenants where the tenant has agreed in advance.

### 1.12.3 Tenancy condition reports

Tenancy Condition Reports (TCRs) are completed at the termination and commencement of every tenancy. TCRs provide AHV and the tenant with a fair appraisal of the cosmetic condition of the property at a point in time.

TCRs allow a fair comparison between the condition of the property at commencement and completion of the tenancy, and assist in the identification of fair wear and tear and/or possible tenant's responsibility maintenance compensation. The TCR must identify any defects and must be concise and accurate.

The TCR can also be used as objective evidence at the Victorian Civil Administrative Tribunal if required, to present a case for compensation on the basis of tenant damage to the property.

### 1.12.4 Assistance to maintain the property

During the inspection of the property and discussions with the tenant, AHV staff may make an assessment that the tenant may benefit from receiving some support to meet their tenancy responsibilities, including maintaining their property in a clean condition. Early intervention and involvement of other services that may be available to support the tenant are considered by AHV staff and line management when responding to issues, including tenant property damage.

This may include:

- disability information and support;
- family violence services;
- drug and alcohol services; and
- mental health services; and
- AHV's *Wellbeing Program*, where AHV staff take a lead role in the coordination of support provision or material assistance to the tenant, subject to the tenant's permission for AHV to do so.

## 1.13 Policy details - Rights of entry

In order to meet our legal obligation to maintain rental properties in good repair, AHV staff and contractors must be able to gain access to properties.

Sections 85 and 86 of the RTA confirm AHV's right to enter the premises for specific purposes, with the consent of the tenant or where appropriate notice has been provided to the tenant. Relevant reasons for entry to the property by AHV staff and contractors, for the purposes of this policy, include the following:

- entry is required to enable AHV to carry out a duty under the RTA, i.e. "landlord's duty to maintain premises";
- entry is required to enable inspection of the premises and entry for that purpose has not been made within the last 6 months; or
- AHV has reasonable grounds to believe that the tenant has failed to comply with his or her duties under the RTA or the tenancy agreement.

Under Section 89 of the RTA, tenants are required to allow AHV staff and contractors to enter the property. Where tenants refuse to allow access to properties, AHV may issue a Breach of Duty Notice. If access continues to be refused, AHV may seek a Compliance Order at the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal.

Access to the property without prior notice will only be initiated by AHV in crisis circumstances, such as the need to:

- undertake urgent repairs (as defined by the RTA), that represent a significant damage risk to the property and/or a significant health and safety risk to occupants and neighbours, and the tenant is unable to be contacted and/or is absent from the property; or
- conduct a welfare check due to risk or concern for the welfare of a tenant.

### **1.14 Policy details – Tenant requests for maintenance and repairs**

Tenants can request maintenance and repairs to their homes through AHV's call centre. AHV's telephone number for maintenance requests is (03) 9403 2100 and tenants may use this same number to access the after-hours emergency maintenance service.

### **1.15 Policy details - Unplanned/responsive maintenance**

Responsive maintenance is the day-to-day maintenance or repair works that are carried out on AHV properties in response to requests for repairs from tenants, to restore an item or component to its working condition.

AHV aims to complete responsive maintenance within:

- 24 hours for urgent repairs (as specifically defined in the RTA): AHV provides an after-hours emergency service for urgent/emergency repairs that need to be actioned immediately.
- 7 days for priority repairs: This category is not defined under the RTA but is used by AHV for works that need to be actioned quickly, because:
  - delay may cause the further dysfunction of the appliance, fitting or surface; and/or
  - the tenant's comfort and amenity is unduly compromised; or
- 14 days for non-urgent repairs.

In some instances, full completion of repairs may not be undertaken within the above timeframes. For example, AHV may arrange for an external damaged door to be secured as an urgent repair in the first instance, so that the property is made safe for the tenant and residents. If the door then requires replacement, replacement may be undertaken as a separate, non-urgent repair.

If tenants request non-urgent work to their properties that is a property improvement, like replacing old carpets, painting internal or external walls or upgrading their kitchen, works generally will not be able to be completed within 14 days. . These types of works are planned works, see Section 1.17, *Planned maintenance and improvements*, for further details.

### 1.15.1 Head contractors

AHV engages contractors under a head contractor model to deliver responsive and vacant property maintenance services in AHV managed and owned properties, on AHV's behalf.

Work is undertaken on the basis of a Schedule of Rates (SOR), which lists the different scheduled items of works or repairs that may be completed on a property, and the cost of works to be undertaken across various trades, eg building, electrical, plumbing, and painting.

Works that the contractor may be requested to carry out which are not covered by the SOR or other written, negotiated or agreed rates, are referred to as Not on Schedule (NOS) works. AHV seeks quotes for NOS works from head contractors and/or selected casual contractors.

### 1.15.2 Vacant property maintenance

AHV presents vacant properties to be relet in good repair. AHV has developed and implemented *Reletting standards*, to ensure that all vacant units are clean, safe and habitable prior to reallocation, and any urgent repairs have been completed.

Some works identified at the time the property is empty may be included on a planned maintenance program and completed after the property has been re-let, where such works are not required to make the property safe and habitable. In this way, AHV can achieve cost efficiencies and timely turnaround of vacant properties.

## 1.16 Policy details – Tenant requested property modifications and/or installation of fixtures

AHV aims to ensure that tenants live in safe, appropriate housing that meets their needs. Under the RTA, tenants are not permitted to carry out property modifications and/or installation of fixtures in AHV properties without the approval of AHV. AHV is not required under the RTA to undertake modifications or give permission to tenants to make modifications to AHV properties. However, all requests for building modification/improvements from tenants are genuinely considered by AHV and approval is not unreasonably withheld.

Building modifications and improvements that are requested by tenants to improve the amenity of their home (eg. garden shed, security door or removable air conditioning unit), will be considered by AHV on a case by case basis. The tenant would normally be expected to meet the cost of these fixtures, although in some cases AHV may meet full or partial costs of the modifications.

AHV reserves the right to not approve requests for modifications even if the tenant is willing to meet the costs, where such modifications will potentially limit the capacity of the property to meet future tenant needs.

Modifications, fixture or fittings will not be approved in the following circumstances:

- where they will have a negative impact on the building's structure, safety or on another tenant's right to safety; and
- where the request is considered to be frivolous, non-functional or difficult to "make good" or return to previous standard.

Tenants must obtain written approval from AHV before installing non-standard fixtures or fittings or making modifications to their rental property. In addition to approving the work, the tradespeople conducting the work must be approved by AHV.

Any non-standard items installed by the tenant are the responsibility of the tenant to maintain, even if AHV has approved the installation of the item. At the end of the tenancy, the tenant will generally be required to remove the items at their expense. If the property is damaged during the installation or removal of the items, AHV may seek compensation from the tenant for the cost of repairing the damage.

AHV may take any reasonable action necessary to remove unauthorised property modifications and/or installation of fixtures undertaken by tenants and reinstate the property to its pre-existing state. AHV may seek compensation from the tenant for the cost to reinstate the property.

See Chapter 4 of the Housing Services manual, *Tenancy management* for further details.

Tenants have the right to appeal against any decision by AHV to not approve a request for modifications or fixtures to the property. See Chapter 1 of the Housing Services manual, *Client rights and advocacy* for further details on complaints and appeals.

### 1.16.1 Disability modifications

AHV recognises that the housing needs of tenants or household members may change over time due to illness, injury, ageing or disability. AHV will consider undertaking disability modifications to an existing property where a demonstrable need has been established. Decisions regarding minor disability modifications and non-standard items are made on the basis of supporting evidence from a suitably qualified health professional.

Decisions regarding major or full disability modifications are made on the basis of detailed specifications from a suitably qualified health professional, and an assessment of the suitability of the property for modification. AHV aims to support tenants and household members to maintain their independence, and their AHV tenancies wherever possible. However, AHV is not in a position to meet the costs of major disability modifications, as a matter of course. Other considerations include portfolio benefit (e.g. whether specific modifications will make the property more difficult to re-allocate in the future), and the availability of alternative accommodation that may better match the tenant's/household member's requirements.

For major modifications, where the tenant/household member is eligible for funding under the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), AHV will work collaboratively with the NDIS provider to ensure modifications are carried out as required.

## 1.17 Policy details - Planned maintenance and improvements

Planned maintenance is non-urgent work that is usually an improvement to the property. These works are large scale works that are delivered on a schedule and frequently have an extended wait time. Planned maintenance may typically include the following:

- internal or external painting;
- full or part replacement of floor coverings;
- major window and other carpentry works;
- re-stumping;
- re-roofing;
- upgrades to kitchens or bathrooms; and
- aids, adaptations and disability modifications.

### 1.17.1 Communication with tenants regarding planned maintenance

When scheduled work is programmed, AHV contacts affected tenants to advise them that their properties have been included on the works program. AHV takes all reasonable steps to meet any special tenant requirements and to resolve any tenant issues relating to scheduled works.

### 1.17.2 Preventative works

Preventative works form the basis of a planned works contract. As far as possible, AHV will repair or replace existing attributes within a property to maintain the property in good repair. For example, in planning the scope of structural programmed works, consideration is to be given to trees or shrubs which may cause or contribute to structural damage of the property in the future.

### 1.17.3 Use of contractors

AHV seeks quotes from head contractor and/or casual contractors for the delivery of planned maintenance works.

### 1.17.4 Fencing works

The *Fences Act 1968* (FA) applies to fencing matters in Victoria. AHV observes all applicable legislation when negotiating and undertaking fencing works.

AHV's obligations under the RTA to ensure that rented premises are maintained in good repair includes the maintenance of fencing between AHV owned or managed properties and adjoining properties.

A *Notice to Fence* and an *Agreement to Fence* is obtained and served prior to the commencement of fencing works. A *Notice to Fence* is a formal notice served under the FA. An *Agreement to Fence* is a legal agreement between adjoining property owners or occupiers, and may be used in legal proceedings between disputing parties, if necessary.

#### *Pool fencing*

AHV is fully compliant with all pool security regulations under the *Building Regulations 1994*. The pool security regulations stipulate that fences and other securing devices such as door and window locks

must be installed for pools over 300mm deep. The legislation applies to both in-ground and above-ground pools and spas.

Pools and spas are non-standard fixtures in AHV managed properties. Generally, AHV does not approve the installation of pools and spas in its properties.

Where a tenant has installed a pool without the consent of AHV and the pool cannot be easily removed, the AHV will seek to recover the costs from the tenant of making the pool fencing compliant through the TRMC policy. See Chapter 4 of the Housing Services manual, *Tenancy management* for further details.

The tenant may lodge an appeal against the claim or make arrangements to pay for the pool fencing. Otherwise, AHV will make an application to VCAT for compensation.

### **1.18 Policy Details - Maintenance contractors**

In order to meet AHV's duty under the RTA to "ensure that the rented premises are maintained in good repair", unplanned or responsive maintenance and planned maintenance and improvements are delivered through professional contractors to ensure:

- properties are well maintained;
- maintenance is undertaken in a timely manner; and
- maintenance work is undertaken by suitably qualified contractors or consultants.

AHV requires contractors performing works on AHV properties to:

- hold and maintain all necessary public liability, property damage and public risk insurance;
- be appropriately trained, and hold current licences, permits, certificates, registrations and qualifications for activities they perform and any plant and equipment they operate to complete works;
- comply with or ensure that there is compliance with all permits, approvals and all requirements of local councils or other authorities;
- carry out works in a proper and workmanlike manner; with the professional skill, care and diligence expected of a competent and experienced contractor;
- complete works within the times specified; and
- complete works so that the works and any materials used are fit for purpose, achieve their purpose and comply with all laws.

AHV also requires contractors performing works to act respectfully toward tenants, their families and neighbours and abide by AHV's *Code of Conduct for Contractors*.

#### **1.18.1 Contractors' attempts to access properties**

Contractors are required to make up to two attempts to contact and arrange with the tenant to carry out the maintenance work on the property. Contractors are required to leave a calling card at the property if their attempts to gain access to the property are unsuccessful.



## 1.19 Policy details - Tenants' responsibilities to look after their homes

Tenants' duties under the RTA that are relevant to the *Maintenance Services Policy* include:

- maintaining the property in a clean condition;
- avoiding damage to the property;
- reporting all property damage and defects to AHV for action;
- keeping appointments with AHV and AHV contractors and allowing access to the property by AHV and AHV contractors;
- signing and dating "inspection and test plans" when they are requested to do so by the contractor, and indicating whether maintenance and repair works were completed or not; and
- obtaining AHV's consent before installing fixtures in the property.

Tenants are responsible for looking after their home and doing small routine repairs like keeping their homes in a clean and safe condition, and looking after the internal and private external areas of the property, for example, replace light bulbs, test smoke alarms, pest control, maintain grassed areas, tidy the garden and paths, and dispose of rubbish appropriately.

### 1.19.1 Tenant damage to properties

Tenants are liable for the cost of repairing any damage, accidental or deliberately caused to the property, which results from their actions or those of their visitors and/or household members. An inspection may be arranged by AHV to investigate the repair required and to confirm evidence that the damage to the property was caused by the tenant or a resident/visitor.

See Chapter 4 of the Housing Services manual, *Tenancy management* for further details.

### 1.19.2 Assisting contractors

Tenants can assist AHV contractors to complete works at the property by restraining pets, being polite and courteous and behaving in a way that makes contractors feel safe and not threatened or intimidated.

## 1.20 Policy details - Tenant communication with AHV regarding maintenance and repairs at their properties

Tenant communication is an integral part of AHV's commitment to delivering quality housing services for Aboriginal Victorians. AHV considers tenant feedback to be a valuable source of information for contract management purposes, and can provide evidence for identification of contractor performance issues.

If tenants are concerned about maintenance and repairs works at their property or the behaviour of AHV contractors they can contact AHV's call centre. Tenants can raise concerns if contractors have not:

- completed or carried out works in a timely way;
- carried out works to the required standard; or,
- followed the *Code of Conduct for Contractors*.

Any complaints received in relation to maintenance and other housing services are investigated by AHV and resolved wherever possible.

For further details, refer to AHV's Complaints and appeals policy in Chapter 1 of the Housing Services manual *Client rights and advocacy*.

#### **1.20.1 Tenant maintenance satisfaction survey**

Following receipt of invoices from contractors, AHV follows up with a minimum of 10% of tenants who requested the maintenance repairs, to seek their views on the performance of contractors. Tenant feedback is sought on:

- the timeliness and quality of the repair work; and
- whether contractors were courteous and respectful in their dealings with tenants.

### **1.21 Policy log**

| Version | Approval date | Approved by | Changes  | Review Date |
|---------|---------------|-------------|--|-------------|
| 1       |               |             | New policy format  | June 2015   |
| 2       |               |             | Consolidation and re-formatting of Tenancy Services manual | August 2015 |
| 3       | 28 June 2019  | AHV Board   | Updated format for inclusion on AHV website                | June 2021   |