



Public Housing Landscaping Management

Policy Intent

This policy is designed to give guidance to how Housing Tasmania should manage ongoing landscaping of public housing properties.

This policy should primarily be referred to in cases where the public housing tenant cannot adequately maintain their front and/or back yard or garden. Legally, all plants, gardens and structures within the boundaries of a public housing property site are owned by Housing Tasmania, despite whether the tenant has planted the garden themselves.

This policy applies to public housing unit complexes and stand alone properties. It also covers communal areas in unit complexes and gardens or yards that are generally maintained by public housing tenants as part of the lease agreement.

Stand Alone Properties and Unit complexes

Generally, public housing tenants are responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of their home, including front and back yards and garden beds (such as in the case of unit complexes). Unit complexes usually have a mixture of communal and specific yard or garden areas for each property within the complex.

As with stand alone properties, tenants are required to maintain any front and rear yards or gardens (including garden beds) that are specifically connected with the property they occupy. If tenants are unsure what they are required to maintain, the issue should be discussed with the relevant Tenancy Officer.

Requests made by tenants to have their front and/or back garden maintained by Housing Tasmania will generally not be approved. Approval will only be granted in exceptional cases with supporting documentation and is only available when all other options have been exhausted by the tenant.

Approval for Housing Tasmania to maintain a tenant's yard or garden/s will usually coincide with a Single Transfer application so that more appropriate housing may be located. Although not essential in all cases, this option should be strongly encouraged.

The option of a [Mutual Transfer](#) can also be discussed with the tenant.

If approved, the landscape maintenance will be completed by Housing Tasmania contractors only. How often any gardening maintenance is completed will be determined by Housing Tasmania alone.

Other options relating to ongoing support will be thoroughly explored by the tenant in the first instance. A [Coordination plan](#) may be required if the issues impact on the ability of the tenant to sustain a successful tenancy.

Unit Complex Communal Areas

Housing Tasmania gardening contractors will maintain communal garden areas that are not the responsibility of any individual tenant or areas that is connected to a specific public housing property.

Tenants living in a unit complex may wish to maintain specific communal areas themselves. For example, a tenant may wish to maintain a garden bed that is located close to their unit or property that is officially considered communal garden. This may be requested through written permission by Housing Tasmania. Other tenants may need to be informed of the arrangement to ensure the unit complex is aware of the decision made by Housing Tasmania. However, it must be noted that Housing Tasmania will make the final decision in relation to these matters and permission can be revoked at any time and the maintenance returned to Housing Tasmania contractors.

Tenancy Officers should manage this process and request support from the Tenancy Team Leader if problems arise with an agreed arrangement relating to upkeep of communal garden areas.

Clients with a disability or mobility issues

Housing Tasmania recognises that some clients are unable to maintain their yard/garden themselves and may need additional support to do so.

Clients with a physical disability or mobility issues may require assistance in maintaining a yard to sustain a successful tenancy. Family support and/or more formal arrangements from support organisations should be encouraged and pursued in the first instance.

If other issues are identified that prevent the tenant from maintaining a successful tenancy, a [coordination plan](#) may be investigated or discussion regarding a [transfer](#) to a more suitable public housing property may occur.

Support for tenants to maintain their yard

Family or networks support should be should be explored thoroughly in the first instance. Tenants that have family members, friends or other support living in Tasmania will be required to demonstrate that this option is not available eg the tenant's family may live in the north of the state, have disabilities or may be elderly. Written support from a support organisation or health professional will be required before Housing Tasmania will consider a request for garden/yard maintenance support.

If family or network support is not readily available, referrals to support organisations will be required as the next step. The [Making Referrals Policy](#) should be consulted.

Housing Tasmania tenants may be able to access HACC services on an annual basis in relation to gardening services, provided there is a genuine need. Pending eligibility, other HACC services such as showering and cleaning may be available more frequently.

If an appropriate support organisation cannot be engaged, the Area Manager may approve short or longer term periodical landscaping management assistance. The North or South Coordinator of Maintenance Services (whichever relevant) should be advised if this occurs.

The tenant must provide written support from a support organisation or a letter from a medical professional to have their case considered by the Area Manager. The written support documentation should include details of the limited family or network support options for the tenant.

Written support will not automatically certify approval by the Area Manager.

Where approved, the client's situation will be reviewed periodically (as determined by the Tenancy Team Leader and Tenancy Officer) to determine ongoing need. This is particularly important if a tenant's condition is a temporary injury.

Short term assistance

Tenants that are significantly incapacitated for a fixed term and have no family/friends support and where referrals have been unsuccessful may apply in writing to the Area Manager to have their yard/garden maintained by Housing Tasmania. This will only be approved for exceptional cases and requests must include supporting documentation from a medical professional and/or a case worker.

The North or South Coordinator of Maintenance Services (whichever relevant) should be advised if approval occurs.

Review period

For those tenants on a fixed term lease, the need for ongoing landscaping or garden maintenance should be reviewed when the lease is renewed at a minimum. A lease renewal may involve a condition of property inspection and yard maintenance should be discussed at this time.

Referrals should be explored and if necessary, assistance with landscape maintenance should be included in a Coordination Plan if relevant. Please refer to [Making Referrals](#) and [Coordination Planning](#) policies for further information.

Revoking Support

Housing Tasmania may revoke the support at any time if the Area Manager determines that support to maintain the garden/yard is no longer required and/or for budgetary reasons.

Additional supporting documentation from a health professional or similar may be requested to determine current and/or ongoing need. If supporting documentation is not supplied by the tenant within the requested timeframe, the support provided by Housing Tasmania may be revoked with limited notice.

Other Tenant responsibilities

Housing Tasmania may require tenants to remove any noxious weeds or trees which they have been planted inappropriately. Noxious weeds or trees are those as declared under the *Noxious Weeds Act 1964*. Refer to www.dpiwe.tas.gov.au for further information.

If the tenant does not or is unable remove the tree or noxious weed when requested, Housing Tasmania will arrange removal. The costs for removal may be passed onto the tenant if it can be determined that the plant/tree was planted by the residing tenant.

Other Housing Tasmania responsibilities

Housing Tasmania is responsible for tree lopping where trees are a danger to life, a hazard to property or close power lines. Housing Tasmania retains the right to, and will arrange tree removal/lopping/pruning, where trees pose a danger or may cause future structural damage to a public housing property or adjoining properties.