

Good Neighbour Policy

Location	Operations NSW/ACT
Policy Type	Social Housing Policy
Version	1.1
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National Regulatory Code	Performance Outcome 1 - Tenant and housing services

1. Objective

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy is to set out Argyle Housing's approach to create, foster, and support positive relationships between our Clients with neighbours and local communities.

2. Background and Scope

- 2.1 Argyle Housing promotes and respects the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all persons with a disability and provides a service to Clients in line with the principles of the NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014, Disability ACT and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).
- 2.2 Argyle Housing supports and encourages a person-centred and culturally sensitive approach to service delivery.
- 2.3 Argyle Housing promotes and respects the rights and freedoms of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- 2.4 This policy applies to all Clients, household members and visitors. Through this policy Argyle Housing aims to balance the responsibilities of Clients and the rights of neighbours and the surrounding community with the need to support clients to sustain their tenancy.
- 2.5 This policy applies to all Argyle Housing social housing tenancies.
- 2.6 This policy is aimed at promoting a more peaceful environment in community housing by dealing with issues of nuisance and annoyance, harassment, violence, and criminal behaviour that may occur in our housing, in a fair and consistent manner.

3. Policy Definitions

Good Neighbour	A person who behaves in a friendly, respectful, and kindly manner towards his or her neighbours.
Anti-Social Behaviour	Behaviour which disturbs the peace, comfort or privacy of other Clients, neighbours or the surrounding community.
Neighbour dispute	A private disagreement between Clients or residents. We usually encourage Clients to deal with neighbour disputes by talking to each other first.

4. Policy Details

Minimising Neighbourhood disputes

- 4.1** To get along with neighbours, and the community, Argyle Housing Clients and visitors are encouraged not to disturb their neighbours – and neighbours are encouraged not to disturb you in return. Argyle Housing Clients have the right to peace and quiet enjoyment of their home and within the community. Argyle Housing encourages their Clients to respect their neighbours and not participate in behaviour that would disturb or disrupt the peace within the community.
- 4.2** Argyle Housing Clients have obligations which are outlined in their Residential Tenancy Agreement (Lease) about not causing or permitting a nuisance, and not interfering, with the reasonable peace, comfort, or privacy of neighbours.
- 4.3** Argyle Housing Clients must respect other people’s privacy. It is good to have a friendly chat with your neighbours but remember that most people like their privacy.
- 4.4** Keep your place looking nice. If you live on an estate or in a block of flats, we will look after shared areas, like stairways and common gardens. If you live in a stand-alone house, you will be responsible for maintaining your lawn and garden area. You can also help to keep things clean and tidy by putting your rubbish in the bins. Vehicles should be parked in driveways legally and not on the front lawn of your home.
- 4.5** Argyle Housing Clients are responsible for their own conduct as well as the behaviour of other occupants and visitors to their property. By signing the Residential tenancy agreement, the Client agrees to sustain a successful tenancy and meet all their tenancy obligations. Argyle Housing Clients must look after their children and visitors. Children have the right to play and be safe and to make sure they do not trespass onto other people’s property.

Dealing with Neighbour Disputes

- 4.6** Argyle Housing will encourage neighbours to resolve or attempt to resolve their disputes by talking to each other first. This is because we know from experience this is the most effective way to resolve a matter.
- 4.7** Argyle Housing will not act in the following situations:
- one-off parties, loud music or BBQs (unless concerns for safety arises)
 - untidy gardens (unless attracting pests) where minimal work is required to restore the garden
 - small disagreements between households
 - children falling out with one another
 - parking disputes
 - day-to-day disagreements about matters like cooking smells, noise of children playing, noise of washing machines and vacuums etc.
- 4.8** Argyle Housing will act in the following situations:
- Intimidation/harassment
 - breach of tenancy agreement
 - violence
 - criminal behaviour
 - illegal activity
 - repetitive noise complaints

- abusive language
- threats

4.9 Argyle Housing will investigate allegations of anti-social behaviour or neighbourhood disputes comprehensively and only where there is an alleged breach of the tenancy agreement. This includes contacting all parties involved to gain their perspective and reviewing evidence from external agencies, such as police, if they have been involved. We will ensure the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness are followed in the decision making process. We will inform all parties of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days.

4.10 If the problem relates to anti-social behaviour which is a potential breach of tenancy by another Client and this is negatively affecting you, you may be asked to keep an Incident Diary Sheet, or complete a neighbourhood impact statement. Argyle Housing will explore with you whether mediation would be appropriate.

Where a breach has been substantiated and where appropriate, Argyle Housing will work closely with Clients, service providers and external mediation services to resolve any issues as quickly as possible. We aim to assist neighbours to resolve disputes early to prevent them from escalating.

4.11 Argyle Housing will exercise discretion and consider the safety of victims of antisocial behaviour when making decisions surrounding action to be taken for substantiated incidents. Where there is reasonable suspicion that a child or young person is at risk of harm a report to the NSW Department of Family and Community Services, or ACT Child & Youth Protection Services will be made. Any criminal investigations in relation to antisocial behaviour are the responsibility of the NSW Police.

4.12 If the situation is unable to be resolved, Argyle Housing will escalate the matter to the New South Wales Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NCAT) or the ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal (ACAT) for formal performance orders or to end the tenancy. Argyle Housing may also engage with external stakeholders to resolve the ongoing issues.

Argyle Housing will respond to antisocial behaviour in the following ways

5. Minor and moderate antisocial behaviour

5.1 In the first substantiated instance of minor or moderate antisocial behaviour resulting in a breach of tenancy, Argyle Housing will facilitate early intervention and referral to appropriate support services.

5.2 If a further breach occurs Argyle Housing will request a Client to provide a written undertaking, by way of an acceptable behaviour agreement not to engage in specified antisocial behaviour.

5.3 For any further breaches Argyle Housing may apply the strike notice provisions of the Residential Tenancies Act 2010.

Serious antisocial behaviour

5.4 In the first substantiated instance of serious antisocial behaviour resulting in a breach of tenancy Argyle Housing will request a Client to provide a written undertaking, by way of an acceptable behaviour agreement not to engage in specified antisocial behaviour.

5.5 For any further breaches Argyle Housing will apply the strike notice provisions of the Residential Tenancies Act 2010 – where three strikes are recorded within a 12 month period Argyle Housing may make an application to NCAT seeking termination.

Severe or illegal behaviour

5.6 In substantiated instances of severe or illegal behaviour Argyle Housing will seek termination of tenancy through NCAT.

6. Appeals

- 6.1** If a Client believes Argyle Housing has made a wrong decision, they can ask for a formal review of the decision. To do this, they can complete an Appeals Form stating why they disagree with the decision. An appeal can be lodged by completing the 'I Want to Appeal Form' found on the website www.argylehousing.com.au or available from any Argyle Housing office. The form, or a letter, can be emailed, posted, or delivered in person to any Argyle Housing office or submitted online via the Argyle Housing website.
- 6.2** If the appellant remains unsatisfied with the outcome of the first appeal, they can appeal to the Housing Appeals Committee (HAC) which is an independent appeals body specifically set up to consider appeals made by social housing tenants in NSW. An appellant can access HAC by calling free call 1800 629 794 or can get more information from their Tenancy Officer.

Matters that the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NCAT) or the ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal (ACAT) can resolve are not able to be appealed. For example, if Argyle Housing issues a Notice of Termination for breaches of the tenancy agreement.

See Argyle Housing's Appeals Policy for further information.

7. Related Policies and Documents

- 7.1 Delegation of Authority Schedule
- 7.2 Policy Definitions Policy
- 7.3 Argyle Housing Appeal Policy
- 7.4 Argyle Housing Procedures
- 7.5 Property-specific Complaints Policies, Procedures and Tools

Version Control

Version	Review Date	Author	Positions	Next Review Date
1.0	26/4/2022	C.Tizzoni	Operations Manager	26/04/2023
1.1	05/12/2023	C.Tizzoni	Client Services Manager	05/12/2025