

Good Neighbour Behaviour Policy [H03]

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline how YWCA will foster and support positive relationships between neighbours, and the characteristics of being a good neighbour.

2. Scope

This policy applies to YWCA Australia (YWCA) staff responsible for working with YWCA residents and properties.

This document is a national policy covering YWCA Housing and YWCA National Housing. All references to YWCA Housing include both unless specifically stated otherwise. Where state-based variations exist in policies and procedures, these will be identified in this document.

This policy applies to all forms of housing owned and/or managed by YWCA including community and affordable residential rental properties and rooming houses.

Where other YWCA policies also need to be considered, these are identified in this policy and supporting procedures.

3. Definitions

EPA Vic, NT EPA, DESI	Environment Protection Authority Victoria, Northern Territory Environmental Protection Authority, Queensland Department of Environment, Science and Innovation. State based environmental regulator and an independent statutory authority, operating under the state based environmental protection legislation.
Rental agreement	A lease agreement under the applicable legislation, which sets out the rights and duties of the resident/renter/tenant and the rental provider/landlord.
RTA/RTRAA	The Residential Tenancies Act 1997 (Vic), Residential Tenancies Act 1999 (NT), Residential Tenancies & Rooming Accommodation Act 2008 (QLD), Residential Tenancies Act 1995 (SA). The principal legislation governing rental housing in Victoria, Northern Territory, Queensland and South Australia respectively.
Resident	For brevity, the term 'resident' refers to renter and tenants of rented premises, and residents of rooming houses.
VCAT/QCAT/NTCAT/SACAT	State/Territory based Civil and Administrative Tribunal. A legal institution set up to administer several Acts. For residential tenancies, the Tribunal administers the RTA/RTRAA.
Resident	For brevity, the term 'resident' refers to residents and tenants of rented premises, and residents of rooming houses.

4. Responsibilities

4.1 Leaders –General Manager Housing Operations

- Assisting housing staff to follow this procedure. Ensuring good management of evidence in the tenancy management system.
- Recommending any changes to this procedure.

4.2 People and Culture

- Incorporating this procedure into staff induction and training.

- Ensuring staff are aware of and have access to this procedure.
- Escalating feedback about this procedure to the document owner/writer.

4.3 Employees – Housing staff and Community Housing Officers

- Informing tenants of their rights and responsibilities in accordance with this document.
- Keeping records of the process in the relevant systems.
- Recommending improvements to this policy and procedure.

5. Policy

YWCA is committed to building respectful, positive, and constructive relationships with neighbours and, where the opportunity exists, for neighbours to learn about our work, to contribute to an improved understanding of the issues that affect our residents and community housing generally.

In applying this policy YWCA will ensure:

- Allegations of antisocial behaviour are promptly responded to.
- Where tenancies are at risk, intervention will occur as early as possible to attempt to rectify any issues.
- Decision making is person-centred, and tenancies are sustained where possible.
- A collaborative approach when dealing with neighbour disputes.
- Consistent, fair, and accountable processes are followed, and residents are provided with information about processes that impact their tenancy.
- Proper consideration is given to the human rights of residents under the applicable state Human Rights legislation.
- Compliance with the state based Residential Tenancies legislation (RTA/RTRAA).
- A commitment to respond to matters that may be family violence related, that is trauma informed and promotes the wellbeing and safety of residents and their families.
- All contractual, legal and regulatory duties are met.

5.1 Good neighbour behaviour

Most YWCA residents are good neighbours, but the behaviour of some residents can make life in local communities less enjoyable and unsafe for others.

Local communities work best when neighbours:

- Respect each other's rights and privacy.
- Take responsibility for their actions and those of family or friends.
- Respect communal areas and others' rights to use these spaces.
- Are considerate and tolerant of others.
- Keep noise to a minimum, especially late at night. Further information can be found below:

- EPA Victoria's website about [Residential noise and the law](#).
- [Complain about noisy neighbours](#) via the Queensland Government website.
- How NTEPA addresses [noise](#).
- EPA South Australia guidance on [neighbourhood nuisance and noise](#).

5.2 Un-neighbourly behaviour

Residents who interfere with the neighbours' rights are not good neighbours.

Examples of un-neighbourly behaviour include:

- Vandalism or destruction of others property or common areas.
- Aggressive or violent behaviour including but not limited to:
 - Acts of physical violence – hitting, kicking, punching, slapping or any act that causes physical hurt.
 - Shouting, swearing and harsh language.
 - Insults, cruel or unkind remarks intended to cause pain and distress.
 - Bullying.
 - Any act with specific intent to hurt someone or destroy something.
- Illegal activity.
- Preventing access to parking and/or blocking common driveways/areas.
- Excessive noise (see above for EPA guides).
- Failing to keep the rented property, including outdoor areas, in a reasonably clean condition.

Keeping a property reasonably clean could include such things as:

- Maintaining the garden, including lawns, garden beds and removal of clutter in the front and back yards.
- Not storing unroadworthy or unregistered vehicles on the property.
- Properly disposing of rubbish which could otherwise lead to odours or risk of vermin.
- Not storing, inside or outside, excessive amounts of furniture, household goods or paper which could create a fire risk.

5.3 Responding to neighbourhood disputes

YWCA may receive reports about resident behaviour from other residents, staff, body corporate representatives and members of the public, including neighbours who are not YWCA residents.

Only where it is safe to do so, YWCA will encourage neighbours to first speak with each other to try and come to a solution and to resolve the issues. This can be helpful as often people are not aware of their behaviour and the effect that they are having on their neighbours.

It's a good idea to keep a record of antisocial behaviour; write down what happened and the time it happened. This could be used as evidence if there is a need to take legal action against a neighbour causing problems for other people.

Disputes between neighbours may also be referred to the [Dispute Settlement Centre of Victoria](#), [Dispute Resolution Centre Queensland](#), [Community Justice Centre \(NT\)](#), or [Community Mediation \(SA\)](#) for mediation.

Where nuisance is caused by pets, YWCA will encourage neighbours to contact the local council in the first instance.

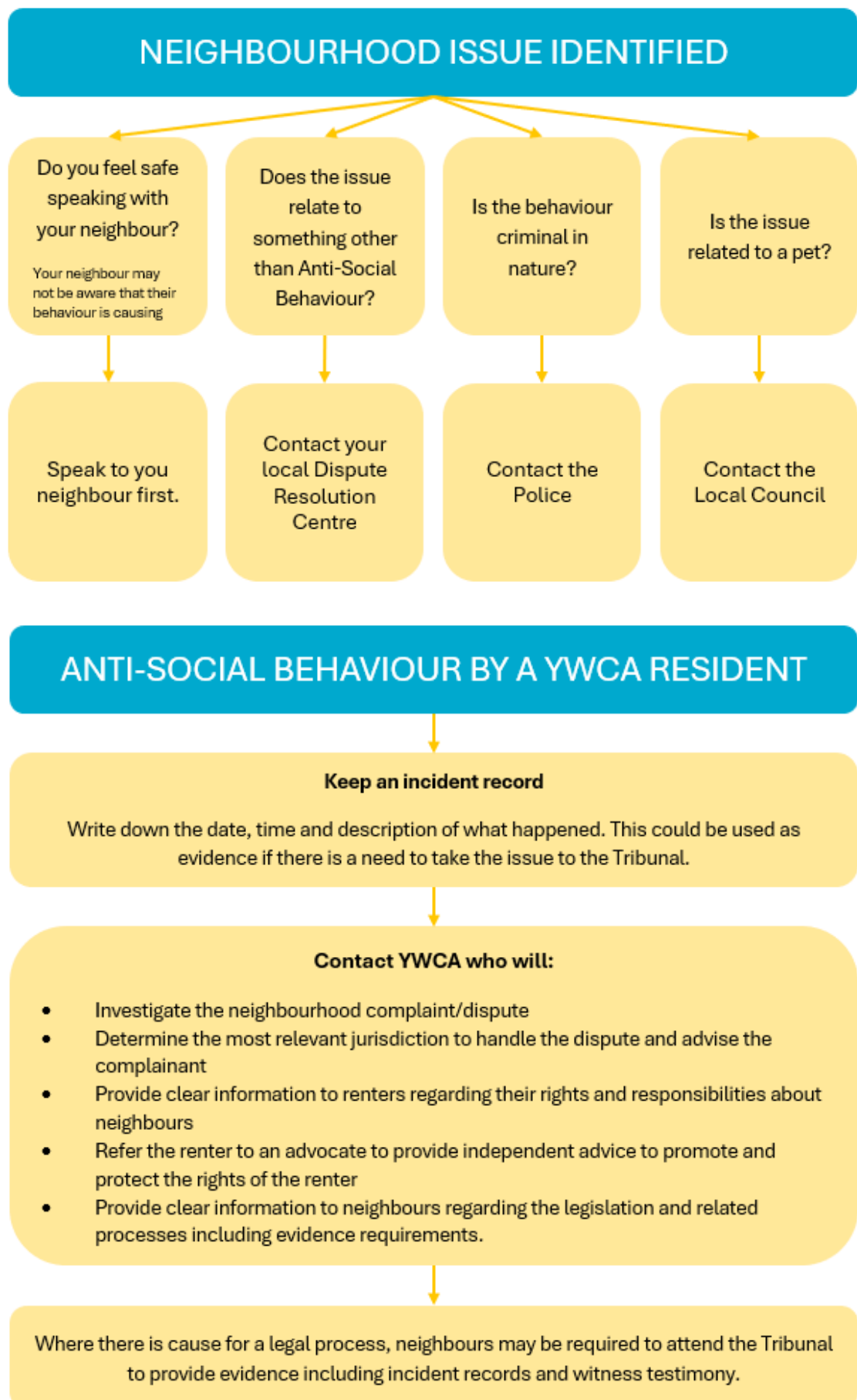
If the behaviour is criminal in nature, YWCA will encourage the witness to contact the police in the first instance.

If a YWCA resident is engaging in anti-social or nuisance behaviour, YWCA may take appropriate action under the Residential Tenancies legislation, and in accordance with YWCAs Anti-Social, Destructive and Dangerous Behaviour Policy.

Following receipt of evidence of anti-social behaviour YWCA will:

- Investigate the neighbourhood complaints/disputes.
- Determine the most relevant jurisdiction to handle the dispute and advise the complainant (e.g., noise complaints that can be dealt with by local council).
- Provide clear information to residents regarding their rights and responsibilities about neighbours.
- Refer the resident to an advocate to provide independent advice to promote and protect the rights of the resident.
- Provide clear information to neighbours regarding the legislation and related processes including evidence requirements.

The below flow chart outlines the process for managing neighbourhood disputes.



6. Transparency and accessibility

This policy is made available on the YWCA Housing website www.ywcahousing.org.au/policies.

7. Appeals

Staff will inform residents of their right to appeal organisational decisions and to complain about the services of YWCA in accordance with the appeals and complaints process.

8. Record keeping

Staff will maintain all relevant information associated with in the tenancy management system.

Document Data Control

Good Neighbour Behaviour Policy				
Responsible Body			Director, Development and Housing	
Accountable Officer			General Manager, Housing Operations	
Supersedes			Neighbours and Community Policy	
Associated documents			Sustaining Tenancies Policy	
Legislation			Housing Act 1983 (VIC)	
			Housing Act 2003 (QLD)	
			Housing Regulations 2015 (QLD)	
			Housing Act 1982 (NT)	
			Residential Tenancies Act 1997 (VIC)	
			Residential Tenancies Regulations 2021 (VIC)	
			Residential Tenancies & Rooming Accommodation Act 2008 (QLD)	
			Residential Tenancies Act 1999 (NT)	
			National Affordable Housing Agreement	
			Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006	
			Queensland Human Rights Act 2019	
			National Community Housing Standards	
			Social Service Standards (VIC)	
			Guidelines for registered housing agencies	
			Performance Standards for Registered Housing Agencies.	
			Consumer Charter for Community Managed Housing and Homelessness Services (VIC)	
			National Community Housing Regulatory Code	
Victorian Community Housing Regulatory Code				
State based agreements between YWCA and statutory bodies				
Approval and Amendment history				
Review period – 2 years				
Approval date	Effective date	Version	Amendments	Next review
UNK	UNK	1.0	First version	Apr 2022
Apr 2022	Apr 2022	2.0	Superseded Neighbours and Community v1.0	Apr 2024
Aug 2024	Aug 2024	3.0	Reviewed to align with CHIA recommendations and WHF principles.	Aug 2026