

Good Left Behind Policy [M15]

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline how YWCA will deal with personal belongings or documents left behind at a property by a resident at the end of a tenancy.

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

Fair wear and tear	The deterioration of the property caused by reasonable use and natural environmental forces.
Goods left behind	Personal belongings or documents left behind at a property by the resident at the end of a rental agreement.
RTA/RTRAA	The Residential Tenancies Act 1997 (Vic), Residential Tenancies Act 1999 (NT), Residential Tenancies & Rooming Accommodation Act 2008 (QLD). The principal legislation governing rental housing in Victoria, Northern Territory, and Queensland respectively.
Resident	For brevity, the term 'resident' refers to renters and tenants of rented premises, and residents of rooming houses.
VCAT/QCAT/NTCAT	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.

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 aims to avoid the need to handle goods left behind wherever possible by ensuring residents are made aware of their duty remove all their items from the property at the end of their tenancy. This also ensures that the property can be re-let to an eligible housing applicant as soon as possible.

Where goods are left behind, YWCA will take reasonable steps to notify the former resident so that they can collect their goods as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Where goods must be stored or disposed of YWCA will do so in line with all applicable state-based tenancy legislation and regulations requirements.

In applying this policy YWCA will ensure:

- Consistent, fair, and accountable processes are followed, and residents are provided with information about processes that impact their tenancy.
- Compliance with the applicable residential tenancy legislation and regulations as they relate to goods left behind.
- All contractual, legal and regulatory duties are met.

5.1 What are goods left behind?

Residents have an obligation to leave their property in a reasonably clean condition at the end of their tenancy. The property should be in the same condition as when the resident moved in except for fair wear and tear.

Fair wear and tear is the deterioration of the property caused by reasonable use and natural environmental forces.

Residents must remove all their belongings and rubbish to leave the property in the same condition as when they moved in. Where this does not occur, former residents may be charged the reasonable costs related to the removal, storage, and disposal of goods.

5.2 How goods left behind will be dealt with

Goods left behind will be stored and disposed of in accordance with the following table.

Items	Storage and disposal	Costs
Personal documents	All reasonable steps will be made to inform the resident. Goods will be stored for 90 days before disposal.	The former resident may incur a fee for reasonable costs related to the notification, removal and storage of the documents.
Goods of monetary value	All reasonable steps will be made to inform the resident.	The former resident may incur a fee if the goods prevent the

	Goods will be stored for 14 days before disposal.	property being re-let to another resident.
Labelled urns containing human ashes, specialised medical devices, medals and trophies	All reasonable steps will be made to inform the resident. Goods will be stored for 14 days before disposal.	The former resident may incur a fee if the goods prevent the property being re-let to another resident.
Goods of no monetary value not listed above	Goods will be immediately disposed of.	The former resident may incur a fee for the removal and disposal of the goods.

In circumstances of personal or financial hardship and where leaving goods at the property was beyond the control of the former resident, YWCA will consider all relevant circumstances and may waive any fees that would normally be incurred.

5.3 Notification

When notifying the former resident, the forwarding address and email address YWCA provided for the former resident will be used. YWCA may also contact support workers and next of kin or emergency contacts.

The prescribed Notice of goods left behind form will be used to make notifications.

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

Goods Left Behind Policy				
Responsible Body			Director, Development and Housing	
Accountable Officer			General Manager, Housing Operations	
Supersedes			Abandoned Items Policy	
Associated documents			Ending a Tenancy Policy Financial Hardship and Temporary Absence 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
Jun 2022	Jun 2022	1.0	-	Jun 2024
Aug 2024	Aug 2024	2.0	Revised based on recommendations from CHIA Vic	Aug 2026