

Tenant Recharge Protocol

1. Purpose

Uniting Housing Australia complies with all relevant legislative requirements, including the *Residential Tenancies Act 1997 (Vic)* in respect of its residential tenancy practices. Uniting Housing Australia is committed to the provision of safe and functional properties for our tenants and expects that tenants will take all reasonable care in regards to their tenancy and will report any property damage to Uniting Housing Australia in a timely manner.

The aim of all tenancy management practices is to model for our tenants the normal community standards they will be expected to follow, to prepare them for their likely return to independent living in the private rental marketplace. Therefore, if a tenant or their visitor damages our property we give them the opportunity to repay costs of repair, so when they vacate we can give them a positive rental reference to assist them in their efforts to secure their chosen future housing.

The purpose of this protocol is to outline how Uniting Housing Australia will assess and determine a tenant recharge and the process to be followed to recover costs from our tenants. This protocol applies to all employees working with Uniting Housing Australia properties.

2. Protocol

2.1 General principles

- Tenancy staff complete condition reports at the commencement of all new tenancies that act as a record of the state of the property. Wherever possible photos are taken.
- Tenancy staff aim to conduct Inspections every 12 months to monitor current conditions under the terms of the tenant's lease, which states that tenants are responsible for any damage caused or allowed to occur by themselves or their visitors, fair wear and tear excepted.
- Tenants must report any repairs or damage to a Uniting Housing Australia property to their Tenancy Worker.
- When damage is reported the Tenancy Worker will first inspect if they suspect it may have been caused by the tenant not taking appropriate care of the property.
- Depending on the determination of the cause, the tenant may be asked to pay for the repairs which Uniting Housing Australia will undertake to ensure that the property is restored to a clean, safe and functional standard.
- Repairs may be instigated before a decision is made on tenant responsibility at the housing managers discretion.
- Repayment plans may be entered into, to recover costs without placing the tenant in financial distress, in consultation with the tenant and any support worker or agency involved as applicable.

2.2 Uniting Housing Australia responsibilities

- Abide by the terms and conditions of the Residential Tenancy Agreement and ensure that the property is safe, clean and functional

- Conduct a final inspection when the tenant vacates the premises. Depending on the condition of the property at this point, the Tenancy Worker may make a claim against a tenant's bond, if one has been paid, to recover Uniting Housing Australia's costs in repairing the property to a fit condition for the next tenant to use, in line with the provisions of the *Residential Tenancies Act 1997 (Vic)*.
- Collect and record information, including photographs, showing the type of damage to the property and how the damage may have occurred.
- Ensure cost recovery through tenant recharges are dealt with transparently and efficiently.
- Provide tenants with written notice when Uniting Housing Australia considers the tenant is responsible for tenant repair or service costs. This notice will be provided, and recovery action instigated.

3. Definitions

Term	Meaning
Fair wear and tear	Damage that happens to a property through ordinary day-to-day use of the property by a tenant, for example, carpet becomes worn over time from people walking on it.
Tenant	Resident or occupant of Uniting Housing Australia managed property
Tenant damage	Damage that is the result of the deliberate action or negligence of a tenant, household member or visitor.

4. Related Policy, Instructions and Advice

Guidelines for Registered Housing Agencies (DHHS)
Housing Registrar Performance Standards for Registered Housing Agencies

5. Related Legislation/Regulations

Residential Tenancies Act 1997 (Vic)
Housing Act 1983 (Vic)

Revision Record			
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1.0	21/05/2019	Uniting Housing Australia	Approved document.