

## April 2020

The Australian Government has announced strict measures to limit the spread of the coronavirus in the community. People are advised to limit their movements to essential things like grocery shopping or getting to and from work, and to maintain “social distance” by avoiding close contact with other people.

### What we are doing:

- We are reducing the face-to-face contact of our services. New processes have been implemented to meet social distancing requirements and for the health and safety of staff and customers.
- We will continue to post important information about any service changes and assistance you may access on our website [www.housingplus.com.au](http://www.housingplus.com.au) and Facebook page.
- We have sent all tenants an SMS with their Housing Officers mobile number, so it is easier for you to contact your Housing Officer directly. If you have not received this message please contact your local office, and we will confirm that number for you.
- We will continue to provide a normal repairs service, if you need a repair please contact us on 1300 435 144.

### What you should do:

- If you are feeling unwell please contact your doctor and listen to their advice. Updated information about the coronavirus is available at [www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au) or from the National Coronavirus Health Helpline on 1800 020 080. The line operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
- If you have been diagnosed with the coronavirus, please let us know by calling or emailing your housing officer. This will ensure we can advise staff and contractors to help contain the spread of the virus.
- You can contact your Housing Officer by phone or email in the usual way. If you need to come into the office, please make an appointment beforehand by phone: 1800 603 300
- If you have a new mobile phone number or email address please phone 1800 603 300 to update your details.
- If you are moving out of your house, each Housing Plus office has a key return mailbox for you to leave paperwork and keys.
- If you are concerned about your wellbeing or the wellbeing of your neighbours, please let us know immediately by contacting your Housing Officer on 1800 603 300
- For all of our contact numbers please see over

### Sustaining your tenancy:

Now more than ever, your home is vitally important to your health and safety. We urge you to keep paying your rent to ensure that you sustain your tenancy. Housing Plus relies on your rent to be able to provide services such as maintenance to our tenants. We also know how difficult it is to get back on track with rent if you fall into arrears.

- If your household income has reduced, or you are having trouble paying your rent, please let us know as soon as possible so we can discuss your circumstances with you. Rent can be paid from Centrepay, Direct Deposit or bank deposit. Cash will no longer be accepted at our Branches
- If you are struggling to pay your rent as a result of COVID-19, please contact us. We will work with all households to tailor arrangements based on their needs.
- If you plan to change your Centrelink arrangements, you should let us know. We will be in touch to discuss any new arrangements and plans.
- For our customers in social housing, where rent is assessed based on income, we will not include Coronavirus Supplements, Special Payments or the Government Stimulus Payment as assessable income. These payments are provided to help you to meet additional costs during the crisis, and Housing Plus will not take them into account in setting your rent. This means around 90% of our customers will have more money in their household budget to meet expenses whilst continuing to pay social housing rent.

## Making Payments at the Bank

- There are still tenants who prefer to pay at their Bank. Given the changes to bank opening hours we would encourage tenants to set up a regular direct debit and be sure to include your Housing Plus Customer Number for reference so we can allocate to your account. Our bank details are:

**Westpac**

**BSB: 032-833**

**Account Number: 379429**

## Good Neighbour Service (Vulnerable Tenants)

Housing Plus has introduced a new service for its most vulnerable tenants. This new telephone-based service will contact our tenants to make sure they are OK during these difficult times. We will agree with them if they want to be contacted in the future and how often.

We think it's important that our tenants do not become isolated. If we can help bring in other support, we will. We will also be encouraging tenants who live alone or are self-isolating to call us on 1800603300 or to send an email to [tenancy@housingplus.com.au](mailto:tenancy@housingplus.com.au)

## Important information/links you should know

Given the substantial interest in the media about COVID-19 and the amount of information circulating, we suggest sticking to these reputable information sources:

- Department of Health <https://www.health.gov.au/>
- World Health Organisation <https://www.who.int/countries/aus/en/>
- Stay Smart Online - Coronavirus Scam Watch <https://www.staysmartonline.gov.au/>

Thank you for helping us to keep our community safe

## Contact Us

Orange Branch/Reception	1800 603 300	<a href="mailto:Tenancy@housingplus.com.au">Tenancy@housingplus.com.au</a>
Bathurst Branch	6331 7059	<a href="mailto:Tenancy@housingplus.com.au">Tenancy@housingplus.com.au</a>
Mudgee Branch	6372 7816	<a href="mailto:Tenancy@housingplus.com.au">Tenancy@housingplus.com.au</a>
Report a Repair	1300 435 144	<a href="mailto:Repairs@housingplus.com.au">Repairs@housingplus.com.au</a>
Domestic Violence Services	1300 384 357	<a href="mailto:DV@housingplus.com.au">DV@housingplus.com.au</a>
Homelessness Services	1800 674 474	<a href="mailto:hsm@housingplus.com.au">hsm@housingplus.com.au</a>
Opportunity Pathways	1800 940 409	<a href="mailto:op@housingplus.com.au">op@housingplus.com.au</a>