

Planned maintenance

Overview

This policy outlines how we manage our planned maintenance program.

Scope

This policy applies to all properties owned or managed by St George Community Housing and its subsidiaries (**we, our and us**).

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Plan and budget for a program of scheduled maintenance to maximise the life of dwellings.
- Optimise our budget by achieving the best possible balance between planned and responsive maintenance.
- Make sure that we comply with our legal and contractual responsibilities.

Types of planned maintenance

There are 3 categories of planned maintenance:

- **Programmed maintenance** – programmed maintenance is based on the condition of a property. We assess our properties regularly and identify the highest priority based on function, safety, and appearance. This category forms most of our planned work by volume and value each year and is captured in the annual asset management plan. The highest priority works are scheduled in our Annual Asset Management Plan.
- **Cyclical maintenance** - We plan regular maintenance on works that are undertaken on a regular cycle e.g. compliance inspection of fire safety equipment. These are also budgeted in our Annual Asset Management Plan.
- **Special projects** - We have a range of special projects that are also planned and budgeted in the annual asset management plan, including: security upgrades, upgrades to core infrastructure, and alterations.

Programmed maintenance

To assess the condition of a property, we undertake a standard Property Assessment Survey (PAS) as designed by the NSW Land and Housing Corporation.

Where a property becomes vacant within 12 months of any programmed maintenance being due, we will consider bringing the work forward to minimise the impact on future tenants. For example, if the component is rated and therefore nearing replacement, it will be upgraded during the vacant term. Priority will be given to items that improve the safety and security of tenants.

Cyclical maintenance activities

Termite inspections

We conduct termite inspections on selected capital and owned properties annually (undertaken by specialist contractors). We also look for signs of termite infection/damage during property inspections.

Smoke detectors

We install smoke detectors in all our owned properties and inspect and test them in all our properties annually.

If a leasehold property has no smoke detector installed, the Leasehold Acquisitions Manager must ask the owner to install a smoke detector immediately. We will not accept properties that do not have smoke alarms.

Residual Current Devices (RCDs)

All new properties have RCDs included as part of construction. We install RCDs in existing buildings if they are not present. We test RCDs annually at the same time as testing smoke alarms. Any decisions about RCD's must be made in accordance with LAHC's RCD policy.

Window locks

We install keyed window locks in all our properties to lock windows closed and to allow partial opening for safe ventilation (required by the Strata Schemes Management Act and LAHC Window Lock policy for managed properties). We ensure keyed window locks are installed prior to occupation.

Essential Fire Safety Measures

We conduct essential fire service maintenance annually to all Class 2 buildings to meet legislative requirements. We employ fire maintenance specialists to provide an annual certificate of compliance.

Core Infrastructure maintenance

We undertake regular maintenance on lifts, stormwater drains, and water tanks based on the lifecycle of each component. We engage specialist contractors to plan and undertake these works.

We repair driveways and pathways as required.

Cleaning & Vegetation management

For all owned and managed properties we specify a regular cycle of works for common area cleaning, lawn mowing, and regular pruning/trimming of trees and shrubs. This work is undertaken through our multi-trade contractors. We regularly audit the quality standard of the work undertaken by the contractors to ensure compliance with Lawns Grounds & Cleaning contract terms and conditions. Tenants must not plant or remove trees or plants in common areas, except in space nominated as a community garden.

For leased strata properties, the Owners Corporation is responsible for the common areas landscape and grounds management. When we become aware of common area maintenance issues, we will advise the Owners Corporation.

Private yards

Our tenants are responsible for maintaining private yards, including lawn mowing, pruning manageable size trees and cleaning gutters of single storey houses.

Special Projects

Core Infrastructure upgrade

We replace or upgrade all utilities within the property boundary, including lifts in multi-storey buildings, Building Essential Services (BES) relating to fire, electrical, mechanical, plumbing and/or building structure systems to ensure that our properties meet our Safe and Sustainable Homes (SASH) standard at all times. We plan for these upgrades on a life-cycle basis and include estimates of the planned works in our 10 Year and Annual Asset Plans.

Security upgrades

Cameras

We may install security cameras if we believe that it will help with customer safety and building security or to reduce illegal activity or unacceptable behaviour at our properties. The relevant Homes and Customers team members are jointly responsible for determining if security cameras are appropriate on a case-by-case basis. A business case will then be prepared pending delegation limits for approval.

We will inform our tenants when we are going to install security cameras at their property, and we will install signage at our properties where we have security cameras installed.

We will make sure that we meet our duties under privacy laws and Local Planning Policies. Access to security camera footage will be restricted to our staff or staff of partner organisations who have a business need for access.

Most of our security cameras will be activated when there is movement. Digital recordings will be available for a 4 week rolling timeframe to allow review of reported incidents. Recordings from security cameras will only be accessed by our authorised employees as needed.

We will only provide footage to external parties as permitted by privacy or other relevant laws. This may include providing footage to an enforcement body for enforcement related activities (as defined by the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth)). The Privacy Officer will be responsible for making decisions about releasing footage from our security cameras.

Tenants may request approval to install security cameras under our [Alterations policy](#).

Other security features

We will install intercoms, door locks, security gates, fencing and signs. The relevant Homes and Customers team members are jointly responsible for determining the level and extent that these security features are appropriate for the property.

Non-dedicated roads, pathways and driveways

We undertake maintenance or repair works to these features where those works are not provided by a local council or LAHC. We will engage a specialist contractor for these works as needed – mainly trip hazards and potholes.

Hazardous materials management

We repair, replace or make good building elements as required to meet legislative and/or LAHC requirements. This includes actions required to be undertaken for lead paint, asbestos and other hazardous materials.

If tenants become aware that these substances have been disturbed, they contact our maintenance helpline so that we can arrange for any risk to be managed. For more information, refer to our Asbestos Management Policy.

Gutter cleaning

We clean gutters on attached dwellings or multi storey residential buildings.

For freestanding properties including houses, townhouses and villas, tenants are responsible for making sure that their gutters are cleaned. If a tenant is elderly or has a disability, we will arrange and pay for the gutters to be cleaned. At no time do we expect a tenant to climb on a roof.

Alterations

Our tenants may request modifications and or additions to a property that are non-disability related. Refer to our Alterations policy for more information.

Pest control

As a landlord, we are responsible for:

- Fumigation of vacant properties
- Fumigation for household pests within six months of the tenancy starting
- Fumigation to common areas
- Treatment to prevent bird and possum access

Pest control is deemed a reactive maintenance function, and the urgency of these requests will be determined based on the Responsive Maintenance Matrix.

We have limited the annual termite inspection program (through external specialists) to those properties deemed at highest risk as the cost of the entire portfolio program was significantly greater than the annual rectification expenditure.

Fences

All properties that we manage have dividing fences that meet the Land and Housing Corporation (LAHC) Asset Performance Standards for safety, function, and appearance. If a fence does not meet these requirements, we will arrange repair or replacement of the fence.

If the owner of a neighbouring property requests to replace a fence that divides a property that we manage, they will be required to submit a written request which includes the following information:

- The addresses of both properties and proof of property ownership in the form of a rates notice.
- Evidence that the existing fence is not of an adequate standard (for example, to maintain sufficient privacy or security, or the fence needs replacing).
- The boundary line where the proposed fencing work will be carried out.
- The type, length and height of the proposed fence.
- The cost of the proposed fencing work, including at least two quotes for the proposed work.

If the owner of a neighbouring property wants to install a fence which is better than the standard required, we will only pay half of the cost of the standard fence type in accordance with the *Dividing Fence Act 1991* (NSW).

When assessing or initiating requests to replace dividing fences, we will meet our responsibilities under the *Dividing Fences Act 1991* (NSW), *Residential Tenancies Act 2010* (NSW), *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (NSW), *State Environmental Planning Policy (Exempt and Complying Development Codes) 2008* (NSW), Local Environmental Plan of the relevant Council and LAHC's Dividing Fences Policy (where relevant).

Trees

Most properties we manage have trees of varying scale either within the curtilage or adjacent. Whether they are considered significant depends on the local government area where the property is located.

Trees that are not considered significant but are likely to damage our property will be pruned or removed.

If a significant tree is located on our property and is likely to damage our property, we will obtain consent from council to prune or remove the tree.

If a significant tree is located on a neighbouring property or council land, and is likely to damage our property, we will notify the owner of the land and obtain consent to prune or remove the tree. This may include obtaining consent from council (as required)

Where the property is owned by LAHC, we may apply to LAHC for an authorisation letter granting approval to lodge with council a tree pruning and removal application on behalf of LAHC.

In cases where the trees are likely to cause injury or damage and the owner of the land will not provide consent, we will comply with the requirements of the *Trees (Disputes Between Neighbours) Act 2006*.

All pruning or tree removal costs are to be paid by the party who is commissioning the work.

Audits of work undertaken

Planned maintenance and modification works will be audited through a site visit or desk top audit to confirm acceptability and to ensure the correct work has been carried out to the requested standard.

At that point once the audit is completed – the contractor is requested to invoice for the works (unless the program is significant warranting interim monthly progress

payments based on the auditing officer being satisfied with the quantum of the program being undertaken from month to month).

Relevant laws, regulations or standards

- [Residential Tenancies Act 2010 \(NSW\)](#)
- [Disability Discrimination Act 1992 \(Cth\) \(Disability Discrimination Act\)](#)
- [Community Housing Provider \(Adoption of National Law\) Act 2012 \(NSW\) \(CHP Act\)](#)
- [National Regulatory System for Community Housing \(NRSCH\)](#)
- [National Construction Code \(NCC\)](#)
- [Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Control Act 1999 \(Cth\) \(EPBC Act\)](#)
- [Heritage Act 1977 \(Heritage Act\)](#)
- [Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 \(NSW\) \(EPA Act\)](#)
- [Swimming Pools Act 1992 \(NSW\) \(Swimming Pools Act\)](#)
- [Strata Schemes Management Act 2015 \(NSW\) \(Strata Schemes Act\)](#)
- [Work Health and Safety Act 2011 \(NSW\) \(WHS Act\)](#)
- [Work Health and Safety Regulations 2011 \(NSW\) \(WHS Regulations\)](#)
- [Dividing Fences Act 1991 \(NSW\)](#)
- [Housing Act 2001 \(NSW\)](#)
- [Home Building Act 1989 \(NSW\)](#)

Policy Information

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