



BEYOND THE LETTERBOX

AUTUMN 2015



Can I Keep A Pet?

Your pet is welcome if you ensure that:

- Your home has a yard enclosed by fences that are sufficient to prevent your pet escaping. If the property does not have an enclosed yard, your pets are fish or small birds!
- You comply with the laws of your local council and, if applicable, with the by-laws of the property's strata scheme.
- You keep your yard tidy and clear of animal waste.
- Your pet does not damage the property or disturb your neighbours.

The conditions are to ensure that you, your neighbours and your pet are kept safe and content.

The Department conducts regular inspections of all its properties and it would be appreciated if you could assist by making sure that all dogs are confined or restrained on the outside of the property during the inspection.

If you have any questions, please contact your local Department of Housing office.

Restricted Dog Breeds

Dogs can be much-loved family members, however, there are a few breeds listed on the Dog (Restricted Breeds) Regulation 2002 which are NOT permitted to be kept at your property.

Restricted breeds include:

- Dogo Argentino
- Fila Brasileiro
- Japanese Tosa
- American Pit Bull Terrier
- Pit Bull Terrier
- Any other breed of dog, the importation of which is prohibited absolutely by the Customs (Prohibited Imports) Regulations 1956
- Any dogs that are a cross of the above breeds.

Restricted breed dogs may not have attacked a person or animal or even displayed signs of aggression but they are considered a higher risk to community safety than other breeds.

Cat Sterilisation

The Department would like to remind all tenants that pet cats are required by law to be sterilised, micro-chipped and registered with your local council by the time that they reach 6 months of age.

As well as reducing the large numbers of unwanted kittens, sterilising cats makes them healthier, more companionable, less likely to stray or get into fights that annoy the neighbours or wander.

The National Desexing Network is a nationwide referral system for discounted desexing made available to pet owners in financial need. Their goal is to end pet overpopulation by making this service more affordable. Please call 1300 368 992 or email info@ndn.org.au for more information. Your local vet can also provide advice.

Comments or feedback?

customerfeedback@housing.wa.gov.au or Locked Bag 22, East Perth WA 6892.



Services Pop Up for a Trial Run

The Department is participating in the City of Melville's Free Pop-Up Support event in Willagee. This event aims to provide the community with easy access to health, housing and welfare information, support and resources.



Department of Housing staff will be available to answer questions from applicants, tenants and members of the public who require information and assistance but may have difficulty attending their local office. Staff can answer questions about tenants' accounts, housing maintenance, tenancy support programs such as the Support and Tenant Education Program (STEP) and even homelessness. People are free to ask about other housing options too, such as bond loans for private rentals and Keystart Home Loans.

The Freo Street Doctor is providing free, confidential and non-judgmental health services for those who may not have access to mainstream general practice.

An Aboriginal health service, Moorditj Djena (Strong Feet) is providing podiatry and diabetic services.

Centrelink is assisting people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness with accessing Centrelink services. They will also link people with other government and community service providers to help with other priority needs.

Pop-Up Support is located between the Willagee Community Centre and the Library. The trial will be run for three months and may be extended by the City of Melville if the event proves popular. Bookings are not required.

Provider	Time	Date
Department of Housing	9:30am to 11:30am	Monday (20 April, 4 May, 18 May)
The Freo Street Doctor	9:30am to 12:30pm	Every Monday (ongoing)
Moorditj Djena (Strong Feet)	9:00am to 12:30pm	Wednesday (15 April, 20 May)
Centrelink	9:30am to 11:30am	Monday (30 March, 13 April)

SHARED HOME OWNERSHIP

With Shared Home Ownership, buying your own home may be more affordable than you expect.

THE BENEFITS

- Only \$2,000 deposit required or 2% of the purchase price (whichever is greater)
- No genuine savings required
- Reduced monthly home loan payments
- Reduced up-front costs
- Opportunity to buy out the Government's share



Money Matters

Living costs, including the price of electricity and gas, are going up and are leaving many people feeling the pinch.

If you need help managing your money the following valuable services are available:

Centrepay is a direct bill-paying service offered by Centrelink. Simply allocate an amount of money to be deducted from your Centrelink payments and sent directly to the nominated provider as full or part-payment. Centrepay is free and you can start or stop deductions at any time.

There are many types of bills you can pay, including home care services, child care, ambulance and medical equipment, telephone, electricity, gas and water. Contact the business or organisation you need to pay to find out whether it offers Centrepay.

Government funding agreements support financial counsellors throughout Western Australia to provide free and confidential advice and support to low-income members of the community experiencing financial hardship. Your privacy is always respected. Call the Financial Counselling Helpline on 1800 007 007 or visit their website at www.financialcounsellors.org for more information.

MoneySmart is an initiative of the Australian Securities and Investments Commission. It offers tips, tools and resources to help you make the most of your money. The website covers a broad range of topics including planning for retirement, having a baby and buying a mobile phone. There is also information on loans for people with low incomes, a budget planner, calculators and quizzes. Visit www.moneysmart.gov.au for more information.

HUGS (Hardship Utilities Grant Scheme) is a State Government scheme that provides grants to help people who are experiencing difficulty paying their gas and electricity bills and are at risk of having the supply cut off.

You must first contact your utility provider (for example, Synergy, Horizon Power or Alinta Energy) to discuss payment of your bill. If the utility believes that you are eligible for HUGS they will refer you to an independent financial counselling service for an assessment and application. For more information, contact HUGS on 08 9222 2739.

New Helpline to Combat Elder Abuse

Advocare now provides a helpline, which is the first of its kind in Western Australia, offering older people experiencing abuse an easy way to access information, support and resources.

Elder abuse is a social epidemic that involves the mistreatment of older people, typically in their homes, at the hands of family, friends and neighbours.

Abuse can range from financial mistreatment, psychological pressures and neglect to physical and sexual assault. Common examples include the misuse of another person's money, living or taking control of a person's home and verbal threats and harassment.

In the years he has spent dealing with such cases Mr Mahney, Chief Executive Officer of Advocare, has seen how easily an older person can become vulnerable to abusive situations.

"It may be due to the lack of understanding with technology, medication issues or perhaps they are too trusting and don't want to create any problems". This, coupled with fear and shame, often prevents an older person asking for help or not knowing who to turn to.

The helpline is staffed by professional advocates, the service is confidential (you can remain anonymous if you wish), free of charge and provides:

- Someone to talk to
- Support
- Options

The helpline can be accessed by calling 1300 724 679, 8.30am – 4.30pm, Monday to Friday.

Key Facts

1 in 20 older people may be experiencing elder abuse

Financial abuse is the most common form of abuse

Over 500 elder abuse cases were reported to Advocare last year

Over 60% of perpetrators were sons and daughters



Safety device testing

The Department of Housing has installed a number of safety devices in your home.

The first one is a combined Residual Current Device/Miniature Circuit Breaker (RCD/ MCB), which provides protection against electrocution and the overloading of all circuits in the property.

The second is a smoke alarm, which alerts you to smoke presence in the property.

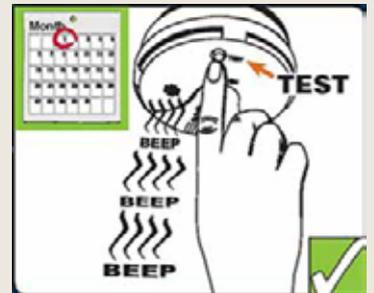
How to test your RCD/MCB

- Press the **TEST** button on the RCD/MCB; you should hear a click.
- The lever will flip downwards in the 'off' position.
- If the RCD/MCB doesn't flip downwards, you need to contact Housing Direct on **1300 137 677**.
- If the lever does flip downwards, then it works.
- Flip the lever upwards to 'on' and this will turn the power on.



How to test your smoke alarm

- To test your smoke alarm turn your power off at the mains. Press the **TEST** button on your smoke alarm (as illustrated); you should hear the alarm activate.
- The smoke alarm will automatically reset once the button has been released after testing. If you are unable to reach the test button, please use a broom handle. If the Smoke Alarm continues to beep after testing or the red light stays on the battery may be recharging, This could take approximately 20mins. If the beeping continues or the red light does not disappear after this time contact HD on 1300 137 677
- **DO NOT use a screw driver or put tape over the alarm.**
- If you don't hear a sound, contact Housing Direct straight away on **1300 137 677**.
- Once the test is complete, remember to turn your power back on at the mains.



DO TEST



**DO NOT paint,
remove or cover up**

If you notice a problem with your RCD/MCB or
smoke alarm please call
HOUSING DIRECT on 1300 137 677.

This publication is available in alternative formats.

Contact us through the National Relay Service (NRS):1800 555 677 (TTY) or 1800 555 727 (Speak & Listen)

