



# **Ngoonbi Community Services Indigenous Corporation**

## **Tenant Information Booklet**



Monna Mona taken in 1913



## Tenant Information

**Welcome!** Ngoonbi Community Services Indigenous Corporation is a 'not-for-profit' community organisation that offers long term affordable housing for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community in the Kuranda Region.

Originally established in 1975, Ngoonbi has grown from a cooperative society to a Corporation, facilitating and delivering a range of programs and services that include Housing, Sports and Recreational, Home and Community Care, The Parents and Community Education (PACE) Program, Alcohol & Other Drugs Program, Mechanic Shed and the Construction Team.

The Staff at Ngoonbi, are committed to assisting tenants with any information regarding private rentals and government housing services and referrals to health, work and social programs.

We ask you to treat staff respectfully and to speak to staff without aggression.

Ngoonbi is an aboriginal word meaning Platypus.



Designed by Leandra  
Cannon

**Office Hours: Monday - Friday 8:30 am – 4:30 pm.**  
**2/40 Coondoo Street, Kuranda**  
**Ph: (07) 40937177 / Fax: (07) 40937466**

**Housing Coordinator: 0434 742946 (Please call first to arrange an appointment)**  
**Office Hours: Monday to Thursday 8.00am – 4.00pm**





## Housing Applications

If you are currently seeking community or social housing there is an application process to be completed. A Ngoonbi housing application form is provided at the housing office, but you are also required to fill out an application form with the Department of Housing & Public Works.

You can download an Application Form 7 and review the Department of Housing Selection criteria from their website using this link;  
<https://www.qld.gov.au/housing/public-community-housing/apply-for-housing/>

The department's fact sheet on Housing Entitlement provides additional information and can be downloaded from the department's website at:

<http://www.hpw.qld.gov.au/aboutus/ReportsPublications/FactSheets/Pages/default.aspx>

Ngoonbi also requires that you become an annual member of the Corporation and continue your membership during your tenancy.

To be an approved member of Ngoonbi Community Services you must be an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander who resides in the Mareeba Shire Council area and over 18 years of age. The cost of membership is \$5 per year and needs to be paid each year as part of your tenancy.

## Brief Overview of the Allocation Process

The following is a brief overview of the allocation process:

- The Department of Housing and Public Works processes housing applications, assess applicants' housing needs and maintains the housing register.
- Ngoonbi will notify the housing service centre that it has or will soon have a vacant property.
- The Housing Service Centre identifies eligible applicants on the housing register whose application may match the available property.
- The housing service centre provides a shortlist of applicants to Ngoonbi on a referral report.
- The CEO determines the final match of an applicant to the property and an offer of accommodation is made to an applicant.





- The applicant will be given the opportunity to view the dwelling before deciding to accept or decline the offer.
- Ngoonbi notifies the Housing Service Centre of the applicants on the referral report that will not receive an offer of housing.
- Ngoonbi advises the Housing Service Centre of applicant's acceptance or rejection of the offer. The Housing Service Centre records the outcome of the allocation process.
- Once the applicant has accepted the offer, the applicant pays a bond and two weeks rent, then signs a General Tenancy Agreement (form 18a) in accordance with Residential & Rooming Accommodation Act, RTA and Community Housing requirements. The bond amount is equivalent of 2 weeks rent.
- The applicant then becomes a tenant of Ngoonbi.





## Ongoing Eligibility for Community Housing with Ngoonbi

From the 1st July 2014 all tenants entering long term social housing managed by Ngoonbi will be housed according to their ongoing eligibility. Tenants will be offered assistance for a period of time based on the eligibility criteria being met and in accordance with the requirements of the Department of Housing Social Housing Eligibility Criteria Policy.

A tenant's need for long term social housing will be reviewed annually from the date of the signed tenancy agreement. All tenants are required to complete the rent review and eligibility forms and return the information to the office by the date specified. The tenant will be informed if their tenancy ends and offered assistance to find a new home.

These Policies can be downloaded from the department's web site at <http://www.hpw.qld.gov.au/SiteCollectionDocuments/SocialHousingEligibilityCriteria.pdf> Refer to section 4.

## Changing Tenants Needs

Ngoonbi will respond to the changing housing needs of its tenants fairly and flexibly within the capacity of the Organisation. The Housing Coordinator will assist tenants who need to transfer into another social housing property or apply to mutually exchange a property with another tenant of the Organisation.

The intent of social housing is to provide affordable rental housing for vulnerable Queenslanders, particularly those who have difficulties accessing and sustaining accommodation in the private market. An eligibility criteria, is to determine whether or not a household has a continued need for a social housing service. This is monitored on an annual basis by asking each tenant to provide their:

1. Household income
2. Property Ownership information
3. Household needs and match to property details.

Ngoonbi will assist ineligible households to exit the property into the private rental market or other longer term accommodation if they do not meet the ongoing eligibility criteria.

Applications for Transfer and other information is available at the Department of Housing website using the following link:  
<http://www.hpw.qld.gov.au/aboutus/ReportsPublications/FormsTemplates/Pages/SocialHousingforms.aspx>



## Ending Tenancies

Tenancy agreements can only be ended in accordance with the Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008 and tenancies may be voluntarily ended by the tenant.

The Board and staff will ensure that tenancies are ended in a way that is legal and minimises the impact on tenants. Ngoonbi may offer assistance and referrals where possible in finding a new home.

Your lease term is periodic as set out at the bottom of the front page of your general tenancy agreement. If you wish to end your lease and want to move to private rental or relocate to another area we require two weeks' notice in writing.

Please use an RTA Form 13 - Notice of Intention to leave form which can be either downloaded from the RTA website or provided by your Housing Coordinator. We do require you're forwarding residential address.

<https://www.rta.qld.gov.au/Forms-and-publications/Forms/Forms-for-general-tenancies>

If Ngoonbi requests you to leave, we will give you 2 months' notice in writing using RTA Form 12, unless there is a breach involved and it will be in accordance to the timeframe given.

If a tenant is given a notice to leave, RTA form 12, a tenant is required to leave by the date listed in item 6. Minimum notice periods apply.

If you have not vacated by the required date, Ngoonbi will apply to QCAT (Queensland Civil & Administrative Tribunal) to apply for the General Tenancy Agreement to be terminated and a warrant of possession to return the property to Ngoonbi. If this occurs, it will be at the boards discretion if a tenant will be re-housed in the future after a court attendance.

There are various reasons a tenant is given a notice to leave, a few examples are:

- ✚ Rent Arrears
- ✚ Objectionable Behaviour
- ✚ Unremedied Breach
- ✚ Repeated Breaches
- ✚ The property is unliveable or being demolished – Compulsory acquisition
- ✚ Sale contract
- ✚ Ending Housing Assistance
- ✚ Serious Breach – Unapproved Pets, Behaviour, Damage, Illegal behaviour
- ✚ Death of a sole tenant



When moving out, please leave the property in a clean and tidy state. Use the cleaning checklist as a guide. The cost will be charged to you if Ngoonbi have to employ contract cleaners or tradesmen to do cleaning or repairs to the property. Ngoonbi will apply to QCAT to retrieve money owed and expenses incurred.

## Privacy and Confidentiality

We understand that tenants are concerned about their privacy, confidentiality and security of information that is provided to us. The information regarding your tenancy is confidential; however, with your written permission by signing a consent form, we may pass on some information to the Department of Housing or other Community Services, to assist you with your tenancy. We are committed to protecting your privacy and collect, store, use, and disclose personal information responsibly and transparently when we deliver housing services and conduct business.

All staff, management, committee members, volunteers and contractors, carrying out duties on behalf of Ngoonbi, will observe professional duty of care with regard to keeping confidential any information about tenants. Personal information will not be collected unless the information is for a lawful purpose that is directly related to the Corporations operations. Ngoonbi manages personal information in accordance with the Information Privacy Principles described in the Information Privacy Act 2009.

<https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/view/whole/html/inforce/current/act-2009-014>

## What are your Tenant Responsibilities?

The tenant/s are required to:

- Pay the rent on time and in the way outlined in the general tenancy agreement.
- Be two weeks rent paid ahead at all times.
- Abide by the terms of the general tenancy agreement & special terms or house rules.
- Keep the property clean and tidy and undamaged.
- Report any repairs or maintenance in a timely manner.
- Prevent damage to the property.
- Use premises for legal purposes only.
- Respect your neighbour's right to peace and quiet.
- Seek approval for all tenants and occupants living in the premises. The tenant is to remain living at the property to be eligible for ongoing housing.



## Keys

You will be provided with one complete set of keys for the property plus keys necessary for entry for any additional tenant named on the tenancy agreement. If you lose your keys or lock them in the property or car, contact the office during office hours to borrow the office set of keys to retrieve your keys or have a replacement set cut by a locksmith at your expense. If you lose your keys during the weekend or after office hours, you are required to contact a locksmith directly. Do not break windows, screens or doors to enter the property as you will be responsible for any repair expense.



## Entry Condition Report

It is essential to complete an Entry Condition Report (Residential Tenancy Authority, or RTA, Form 1a) before you move in so we can record the true condition of the premises at the start of the tenancy. This will be given to you at the time of signing the general tenancy agreement.

You should inspect the premises, complete and sign the form and return the report to our office *within 3 working days*. You will be given a copy for your records to be kept in a safe place. If you do not complete the entry condition report you could risk your bond payment at the end of your tenancy.

## Bond

Ngoonbi requires a bond of 2 weeks equivalent of the rent amount. You are still required to pay the rent and be paid two weeks ahead. All bonds are lodged with the RTA. This helps protect the interest of both parties in a fair manner.

Bond loans are obtained through the department of housing and public works by applying online or at the Cairns office. Kuranda Neighbourhood centre also assist in obtaining bond loans.

To apply online follow the links:

<https://www.hpw.qld.gov.au/blarga/>



## Rent

The rent is based on your household income and calculated using the Department of Housing and Public Works Rent Calculator. Rent can be paid directly by Centrepay deductions (at no extra charge to the tenant), Direct Debit with your bank, Cash payments at the office or Direct Deposit to Ngoonbi's bank account as these are reliable and efficient ways to ensure your rent is paid promptly and regularly. You can ask for a copy of the rent ledger at any time and it will be provided within 7 days.

The tenant must report any changes to the income or household structure as it occurs or to discuss financial circumstances to the Housing Coordinator. You will be asked to provide evidence of all income for yourself and occupants of the house. Your rent may increase or decrease from the findings of your rental review.

### What types of income are used to assess rent for the rent review?

Ngoonbi considers all assessable income types when assessing a tenant's rent calculation as part of a tenants rent review. There are some types of income it does not consider to be assessable income such as:

- Specific purpose payments including Pension Supplement, Pharmaceutical Allowance, Telephone Allowance, Family Tax Benefit Part B, Carer Allowance and Disability Pension paid by the Department of Veterans' Affairs for any country.
- Work allowances such as leave loading and allowances for travel, training, tools, meals and clothing. Australian Government Pension Reform increases as implemented in 2009.





## How is my rent calculated as part of a Rent Review?

Ngoonbi's properties are part of the social housing system with the Department of Housing and Public Works and the organisation is committed to ensuring that:

- Rent in each of the properties remain affordable to tenants
- All rents will be calculated using the same method for all tenancies
- The method of calculating rent is clearly explained to all tenants
- Tenants are provided with a number of rental payment options
- Rent accounts are managed to prevent serious rent arrears.
- The Organisation will assess rent of the household income as per the Department of Housing and Public Works, Community Housing Rent Policy using the Community Housing Rental Calculator.

Your rent is calculated based on the assessable income of everyone living in your household and is calculated on 25% of the gross assessable income. See the table below.

Occupant	Income included in Assessment
Tenant and their spouse	All assessable income assessed at 25 %
All household members aged 25 and over	All assessable income assessed at 25%
All household member aged under 25	All assessable income assessed at 10%
All household members aged under 18 who are attending full time studies at any educational facility (e.g. school, traineeship, TAFE or university)	No casual earnings are assessed

However, if the current market rent rate is lower than the assessed rate, then that will be the amount charged as rent.

Market rent is evaluated by assessing prices of similar properties offered by rental agents in the area and averaging at least 3 properties to determine the current market rent and by the RTA median rents data.



## **What if my income changes?**

If there is a change in your household circumstances, which affects your household's income, you need to let your Housing Coordinator know as this may mean your rent needs to be adjusted. This can result in an increase or decrease to your rent.

If your income regularly changes because of casual work, or other income changes, Ngoonbi will average your earnings over a four-week period. Ngoonbi will review your rent to take into account Centrelink rate increases and changes in work circumstances. You can also request a review of your rent at any time if your circumstances change, or if you become aware of a discrepancy in the rent calculation.

## **What is the Market Rent of my property when a rent review is being carried out?**

Market rent is the amount of rent that a tenant in the private rental market would pay for a similar property in your area. Ngoonbi is responsible for determining the market rent for your property.

You have a right to appeal the market rent for the property that you are renting. Appeals relating to market rent should be made at our office and discussed with the CEO. However, the governance requirements must be followed to continue your tenancy.

## **What if I can't provide all required information to my Housing Coordinator for the Rent Review on time?**

If you do not provide the required information to your Housing Coordinator within the required time frames, then Ngoonbi can assess your rent to be calculated at Market Rent. If you are having difficulty providing the information required for a rent review to be carried out, you should discuss this with your Housing Coordinator before the required time frame expires.

Once a market rent has been applied to your rent, Ngoonbi will continue to charge this rent until your household provides the required documentation to carry out a complete rent review on your household. If you do not provide the required information, it could result in a notice to leave being issued for non-eligibility for social housing.



## **What if I don't want to provide all of the required information for the rent review?**

It is a condition of your tenancy with Ngoonbi that you provide the information requested within the required time frame. If you do not provide all the information required, then we can charge you the current market rent and could take steps to end your tenancy. If you are having difficulty with meeting these requirements you should discuss this with your Housing Coordinator who may be able to assist.

## **What if I don't agree with the Rent Calculation from my Rent Review?**

If you do not agree with the rent calculation you should discuss the matter with your Housing Coordinator, first to determine if the rent calculation is correct. If after discussing with your Housing Coordinator, you still disagree with your rent calculation, you have the option to end your tenancy.

If any members of the household have moved out, we require their new address is verified, either by a Centrelink statement or general tenancy agreement.

## **Where can I get more information?**

Your Housing Coordinator will explain how your rent review is calculated and discuss any concerns or questions you have. Ngoonbi has in place a process for complaints and appeals which assists with reviewing of decisions and resolving disputes. If you have any concerns relating to how your rent was calculated as part of your rent review you should contact your Housing Coordinator in writing:

Ngoonbi Community Services Ltd, PO Box 26, Kuranda Q 4881

Housing Program - Telephone: (07) 40937177

Email: [housing@ngoonbi.org.au](mailto:housing@ngoonbi.org.au)

The Department of Housing and Public Works' Community Rent Policy is located on the department's website at: <http://www.hpw.qld.gov.au/SiteCollectionDocuments/CommunityHousingRentPolicy2013.pdf>

## **Rent Arrears**

Always ensure your rent is paid by the due date. If you let your rent fall behind, you will be issued with a Notice to Remedy Breach (Form 11) to pay the rent arrears. Your tenancy will be at risk if the rent arrears are not paid within the timeframe.

A payment plan should be entered into and continued until the rent is in credit.

If you receive more than 2 breaches in one year, that are not remedied, we can apply directly to QCAT without advising the tenant concerned for a warrant of possession of the property.

Chronic late payers will not be tolerated.





## **Rent Assistance**

To receive the correct rent assistance, at the beginning of your tenancy and also after any rent increases/decreases, you need to advise Centrelink promptly by taking your Tenancy Agreement (new tenants) or a rent increase/decrease letter or rent certificate to the Centrelink office. This is the responsibility of the tenant.

## **Rent Reviews**

Rent reviews are conducted annually or whenever there is a change in household occupants or household income. A copy of the rent calculation sheet can be provided to the tenant.

## **Changes in Household Members**

You need to let Ngoonbi know immediately, if the number of occupants, names, or income of household member's change. The rent is based on your income and the income of everyone who lives with you. If the number of household members drops or increases, so does your rent.

## **Approved Occupants**

Approved occupants are those persons who are members of the household who have applied for accommodation at Ngoonbi and whose income is included in the rent calculations applicable to the tenancy. There are standards on how many people are allowed to reside at a property. Any unapproved occupants may mean that you are in breach your tenancy agreement.

## **Visitors**

Each tenant may have visitors who stay overnight from time to time. If a tenant wishes to invite a visitor (relative, child, friend) to stay with them for a period longer than an occasional overnight stay, and is staying at the property more than 3 nights per week, the tenant must first complete a New Household Member form at the office and that person to be available for an interview. This may mean that your rental charge may change and that this person be asked to contribute to rent determined for that property.

Each tenant is responsible for their visitor's behaviour. Objectionable behaviour, excessive noise or disturbances of any nature by tenant's visitors may constitute a breach of the tenancy and a notice to remedy may be issued.

## **Parking**

Vehicles are to be parked in the carport/garage and not on the lawns, footpaths, garden areas or common areas in units or duplexes. Ensure your visitor's vehicles do not block other tenants or neighbours' parking areas and driveways. We do not authorise un-roadworthy car bodies to be stored or left on the premises without prior approval. It can be a health and safety issue if the vehicle



is left in one spot for a prolonged period. These vehicles will be removed at the tenant's expense and if not removed, may result in a breach notice being issued.

## **Respecting your Neighbours**

You and your neighbours are entitled to quiet enjoyment of the properties, and you are responsible for your children and guest's behaviour. Anti-social behaviour, such as loud music, abusive language, harassment of neighbours, and wilful damage to property or other such disturbances is unacceptable.

A breach notice will be issued if you fail to provide peace and quiet enjoyment to your neighbours and further disturbances could place your tenancy at risk.

## **Safety in the Home**

### ***What's the difference between an emergency repair and a routine repair?***

The RTA lists a variety of situations that are considered emergency repairs. If a problem that is dangerous or health threatening occurs and the housing coordinator cannot be reached or outside office hours, please call the nominated repairer that is listed on your tenancy agreement. However please leave a message on our telephone message bank, Tel: 40937 177 to advise us what has happened. If the nominated repairer can't be contacted, you can arrange for a suitably qualified person to carry out the repairs, to a maximum value of 2 weeks rent.

## **Emergency Repairs**

Urgent repairs need a response with 24 hours and are for health, safety and security issues, for example:

- a burst water service or a serious water service leak
- a blocked or broken lavatory system
- a serious roof leak
- a gas leak
- a dangerous electrical fault
- flooding or serious flood damage
- serious storm, fire or impact damage
- a failure of the gas, electricity or water supply to the premises
- a failure of any essential service or appliance on the premises
- for hot water, cooking or heating, and a fault/damage that is likely to cause injury, undue inconvenience or which makes the premises unsafe or insecure (for example broken stairs).

Tenants who call and arrange for repairs after hours, other than for emergency repairs, may be charged for the cost of the afterhours call out fee. If the situation is not listed as an emergency repair, it is considered a routine repair.



## Reporting Routine (Non Urgent) Repairs and Maintenance

Things go wrong from time to time in any home. If you need to report a repair, contact the office and it will be dealt with as quickly as possible. Repairs can be reported in a number of ways

- in person (2/40 Coondoo St, Kuranda)
- by telephone (07 40937177 or 0434 742946)
- in writing (PO Box 26, Kuranda, Q 4881)
- fax (07 40937466)
- email ([housing@ngoonbi.org.au](mailto:housing@ngoonbi.org.au))

Report any damage or fault quickly, so maintenance/repairs can be organised promptly. In some cases, housing staff may wish to inspect the problem to see what is needed before the right contractor can be contacted. All job orders are to be issued by the housing staff and tenants cannot add extra work or jobs to the job order. Unauthorised work may become the financial responsibility of the tenant or undone at the expense of the tenant.

The Housing coordinator will assess the urgency of the works and whether they are urgent, priority or routine/non-urgent maintenance work. Any urgent repairs will be attended to as soon as possible after they have been reported. Do not attempt to do any repairs yourself.

By advising Ngoonbi of a repair or maintenance you are giving permission to enter your property to undertake the repair. Entry notices will only be given if you are uncontactable by the contractor and keys used for entry.

## Major Leak or Burst Water Pipe

If a major leak or burst water pipe occurs at your unit/house, please turn off the water at the mains and then contact Ngoonbi (in office hours) or the plumber stated on your general tenancy agreement (outside office hours). Turning the water off at the mains prevents property damage and water wastage.

If you believe you may have a water leak, do an overnight test for leaks:

1. Turn off all household and garden taps
2. Read and record both black and red numbers on your meter
3. Take into account if a toilet is flushed (approximately 9 litres)
4. Read and record the reading first thing in the morning.

If any of the numbers have moved, this indicates that you may have a leak and you need to have this investigated by a licensed plumber. Contact the Ngoonbi office.

## Reduce your water use

Tenants are responsible for any excess water charges which commence when you start the lease and are recorded on your condition report.

Here are some helpful ways to save water and your money:

- Report any leaking taps, leaking toilets, pipes or garden irrigation systems immediately. A small drip from a worn washer can waste more than 200 litres of water per day.
- Short showers save water and power – showers use 10 to 20 litres of water every minute.
- Turn off the tap when brushing teeth. A tap left running while brushing your teeth wastes 5 litres.
- Don't leave the tap running while you wash the car – use a bucket and sponge.
- Put the plug in the sink when shaving, rinsing dishes or washing vegetables.
- Hand water your plants in the morning or evening so the water has time to soak in and won't evaporate before it gets down into the soil.
- Sweep paths and driveways rather than using the hose.
- Wash in cold water and use the washing machine only when you have a full load.







## Electricity Connection

Telephone Ergon Energy on **Tel: 131046** to connect the electricity in your name.

If you are concerned about your bill there are a couple things you may need to check;

- Check if the reading is accurate as at times, the Ergon Inspector will estimate your bill. If you find that the reading is larger than what is on the meter, contact Ergon to rectify the bill to the correct meter reading.
- If you are struggling to pay your bill, please contact us for advice or also contact the Energy & Water Ombudsman Queensland on Tel: 1800 662 837 or email to [investigation@ewoq.com.au](mailto:investigation@ewoq.com.au). Or go to the website: [www.ewoq.com.au](http://www.ewoq.com.au) They can assist in giving advice on payment schemes and grants available if you're experiencing financial difficulties.
- You can also make fortnightly instalment payments on your bill to reduce the amount when the bill is due.

## Safety Switches Protect Lives

Safety switches cut the power instantly - before you even know that you're in danger. All homes have circuit breakers or fuses. These are designed to protect the wiring and appliances within your home, but they may not work quickly enough to save a life. All it takes is a faulty appliance or power tool, amateur electrical work, clumsy home 'do it yourself' handy work or a curious child playing with a power point to be a victim of electrocution.

### **TESTING YOUR SAFETY SWITCH (also called RCD - Residual Current Device)**

**STEP 1:** To test a safety switch, go to the electrical switchboard and simply press the TEST button on the safety switch or RCD. This should automatically trip the switch to the 'off' position.

**STEP 2:** Reset by pushing the switch back to 'on'. If it doesn't work, contact our office immediately.

1. Test your Safety Switch every 3 months.
2. Test your Smoke Detectors every 3 months. Mark it on the calendar.

## Faulty Electrical Appliances

If your power supply goes off, and you find the safety switch on the power board has tripped to the OFF position, please remember it could be caused by a faulty appliance.



## Before you call our office or an electrician after hours, follow this procedure:

1. Unplug all the appliances including refrigerator, toaster, and power boards from the power points. Having all plugs removed will allow you to turn the power back on.
2. Reset the safety switch back to the ON position.
3. Plug back in, one appliance at a time to check each appliance. Turn the appliance on and use it e.g. toaster, TV.
4. If the appliance is faulty, it will trip the safety switch to the OFF position.
5. Remove the faulty appliance and plug in all the remaining appliances and reset the safety switch. This should fix the problem.
6. If this doesn't resolve the problem, repeat the procedure to double check.
7. Call Ergon Energy to check if there are problems in your area. Some hot water systems are on a tariff that is connected to the whole suburb and if you have no hot water, it may mean there has been a drop out in an electricity tariff in the area.
8. If Ergon Energy can't assist, call our office during opening hours or electrician after hours.
9. Call the electrician listed on your lease for after hour emergencies. Ensure though, that it is not an appliance electrical fault before doing so as you may be responsible for the cost of the afterhours call out.

Please contact our office if any of this information is not clear and we can explain it to you. (**Note:** Tenants will be charged for the cost of calling out an electrician, if it is caused by a tenant's faulty appliance, so it is wise to check appliances first.)

## Tips for reducing your energy use:

- Replacing regular light bulbs with compact fluorescent bulbs – this reduces pollution as well. Compact fluorescent lights are now available in a range of sizes and 'tones' of light – from cool, bright light to warm and cosy.
- Turn the fans and lights off when you leave the room.
- Keep the fans clean so they don't have to work hard.
- Turn off electrical appliances at the power point.
- Reduce your hot water consumption with shorter showers, using cold water in the washing machine etc.
- Turn off computers at night.
- Don't preheat your oven for a long time when you're baking.
- Where possible, close off your living space for winter heating and open it up for air circulation in summer.
- Draught-proof your house and close gaps using door sausages or draught stoppers.

## Tips for reducing your energy use continued:

- Reduce heat transfer through windows by using heavy and/or lined, closefitting curtains.
- Choose the cheapest tariff available for electric hot water systems and other applicable connected equipment: Tariff 31 Night Rate (Super Economy). This is the cheapest tariff available for electric hot water systems because Ergon Energy supplies electricity when demand on the electricity network is low.
- Electricity is made available for a minimum of eight hours per day during time periods set at the discretion of Ergon Energy but usually between the hours of 10pm and 7am. This tariff is recommended for electric hot water systems that only need to reheat at night to meet the needs of your household throughout the day. The recommended minimum size of an electric hot water system on this tariff is 250 litres.
- You can also receive information, payment assistance and rebates by contacting Energy & Water Ombudsman. [www.ewog.com.au](http://www.ewog.com.au) Freecall: 1800662837



## Smoke Alarms

Ngoonbi engages a Smoke alarm company to check the smoke alarms annually and to make sure the property is compliant to the QLD property laws.

If the battery needs changing, the smoke alarm will begin to "chirp" every 20 seconds or so. This is most likely to start in the middle of the night (when the temperature in the house drops).

Most smoke alarms installed in a house are operated from the household electrical power and do not need battery replacement.

Some smoke alarms run on house power but also have a 'back up battery' in case the main power fails. Smoke alarms need cleaning to work effectively. Regular vacuuming of dust, tiny insects or cobwebs on the outside of the smoke alarm is important.

It is an offence to remove any smoke alarm off of the ceiling of any property. The QLD Fire and Emergency Services can impose hefty fines to anyone removing a smoke alarm.



## Contents Insurance

You are responsible for insuring your personal contents such as furniture, electrical goods like computers, televisions and other personal effects. If there is a fire or flood on the premises, these items are not covered by the landlord's insurance.

## Caring For the Property

As a tenant it is your responsibility to keep the property in good condition. If something is damaged or broken you must contact our office as soon as possible to discuss how it will be fixed. No blue-tack or sticky tape on the walls, ceilings or doors is permitted due to damage occurring to the paint.

## Making Alterations or Improvements

Tenants cannot make changes to the property unless written consent from the Ngoonbi Housing Coordinator is given. You may be asked to have these alterations done by a professional tradesman at the tenants cost. This includes

- Putting in hooks.
- Putting up shelving.
- Planting trees or shrubs and making new garden beds or sand pits.
- Concrete, rocks of any sort, anywhere.
- Painting or wall papering.
- Installing air-conditioning.
- Adding of structure to outside of the building eg. shade awning.
- Installing irrigation.

## Preventing Damage to the Property

A tenant is responsible for intentional negligent or malicious damage to the premises, either by themselves or invited guests. If you or your guests have caused damage to the property, we can arrange to repair the damage and you can pay off the account by instalments. Doing repairs yourselves, e.g. patching holes in doors, will cost you more because the repairs will be redone by a qualified tradesperson. Call the office as soon as any damage occurs to the property.

## Protecting Vinyl Flooring

Vinyl flooring can have a long life and withstand years of use and some abuse, but it can be permanently damaged if it is not cared for properly. To prevent damage to the vinyl flooring when moving heavy furniture or kitchen appliances in and out of the house, lay down plywood or carpet and "walk" the item across it to avoid scuffing and tearing the vinyl. The heavier the item, the wider the floor protector you need. Furniture with metal protectors can leave deep indentations and leave rust stains. Some rolling casters can also do damage. Use floor protectors/caster cups on furniture to reduce indentation. These can be purchased at a hardware store. Tenants will be charged for repair costs if the vinyl is damaged during the tenancy..



## Pay TV

Prior permission is required for pay TV satellite installations. If there is a T.V. satellite already installed at the premises, you can pay for a reconnection without consulting us. All permission must be in writing.

## Pets

Pets are allowed **only** if it is written in your general tenancy agreement, and Ngoonbi has given written approval to have pets and they are also registered with the local council. Ngoonbi will not be providing fencing for your pet.

Your pet must not interfere with the safety, reasonable peace, comfort and privacy of neighbours. If pets have been allowed, a professional flea treatment must be carried out by the tenant, and paid for when you vacate the premises. If your lease states **NO PETS**, that is what it means. Having a pet in this case is a breach of your lease agreement and you will be asked to remedy the breach.

When a pet is authorised, it must be cared for properly as any visible neglect or abuse will be reported to RSPCA.

Another very important fact to consider is that we live in a high tick area. Please ensure for your pet's safety and your wallet, that pets are treated properly for ticks and fleas. The cheapest way is to buy a good quality tick collar from the vet.



## Termites

Ngoonbi will engage a Pest Control Company to conduct annual termite inspections. All tenants must ensure there are no wood or rubbish piles around the house as this will attract termites to nest.

## Rats, Mice, Ants & Cockroaches

Vermin control is the tenant's responsibility, by keeping your house and yard clean of rubbish and maintain overgrowth in your yard, will help prevent nesting areas. Avoid any damage to the property from rats and mice by setting baits, especially during the colder months. Failure to do so may mean the tenant is responsible for any repairs due to the negligence of housekeeping. It is also a tenant's responsibility to control cockroaches, fleas, ants etc. It's in your best interest in having a healthy home to keep pests under control.



## Property Inspections

Ngoonbi will inspect the property after a month of a new tenancy, and then regular inspections throughout your tenancy but not more than once every 3 months.

You will be notified with an Entry Notice (Form 9) at least 7 days before an inspection. The inspection is not to judge your lifestyle except where it causes or may cause damage to the property. Don't leave cleaning until the day of the inspection. When you receive an Entry Notice, it is suggested that you begin preparing straight away. It is very important for the property and inclusions (yard etc) to be clean and tidy, as this is part of your tenancy agreement. Failure to do so will result in a breach notice. A cleaning checklist may be sent to tenants with the form 9. Entry notices will be mailed to tenants; it is the tenants responsibility to check the mail box.

## Cleaning Checklist

Please ensure the house and yard is clean and tidy to prevent damage to the property. This means:

- Stove top, stove top element trays and oven cleaned regularly to prevent rust forming. Don't forget to clean behind the stove.
- All vinyl and tile floors swept and mopped regularly & carpets vacuumed all skirting boards cleaned regularly walls and doors spot cleaned to remove mildew, mud or and other stains.
- Spider webs removed from ceilings, walls and doors – both the interior and exterior of the house.
- All windows and inside and out including the window tracks washed.
- All sinks and shower/bath scrubbed to prevent mildew. Tiles in shower/bath sprayed with bleach to remove black mildew stains. Once the mould is in the sealant around the shower/bath, it will need to be re-sealed and the tenant may pay the cost.
- Toilet scrubbed inside and outside - in the bowl, under the rim, the toilet seat, at the back and under the toilet to prevent staining.
- All surfaces including cupboard doors and light switches wiped for dust/mildew.
- Fans wiped to remove dust and prevent rust forming.
- Light fittings cleaned to prevent rust forming window screens cleaned.
- Carports swept and hosed out. If your car leaks oil, place cardboard under the vehicle so the oil doesn't stain the carport.
- Lawns mowed, edges cleared and gardens weeded.
- Rubbish inside the house and in yard to be removed to prevent vermin.
- Bleach & abrasive cleaners can cause damage to carpets & fibreglass surfaces, so be careful with use and follow the instructions on t



## Final Inspection & Exit Condition Report

Arrange a time with the office for a final inspection, completion of the exit condition report (provided to you by housing staff) and return of all the keys (including any you have had cut).

**You will be charged rent until the date of the final inspection and/or return of keys.**

If the handover date is in the middle of a rent period, you will need to make a final rent payment covering the days you are living in the property. When you move out, you are required to give your new forwarding address to the office and your bank details, so the bond refund can be organised and any rent credit owed to you can be returned.

## Redirecting Your Mail

Don't miss any of your mail. You can redirect it to your new address, if you go to the Australia Post and complete and lodge an *Application to Redirect Mail*.

## Goods Left Behind

It is the tenant's responsibility to remove all of their belongings from the property by handover day. If the tenant leaves behind personal documents, we will return them to the tenant within seven days. If we can't contact the tenant, Ngoonbi will give the documents to the local Office of the Public Trustee within seven days. If the tenant leaves behind other goods, Ngoonbi can dispose of them for any of the following reasons:

- They are worth less than \$1500.
- Storing them would be unsafe.
- Storing them would substantially reduce their value.
- The cost of moving and storing them is more than the proceeds from selling them.

If belongings are left behind do not fit under one of these categories, we will store them for at least one month and then follow a set procedure for selling them by auction. Ngoonbi can keep money from the sale equivalent to the reasonable costs of removing, storing, and selling the goods, and then give any money that is left to the Public Trustee. Ngoonbi may also apply to QCAT to have the sale proceeds applied to rent or other money owing to the agreement. If the tenant asks in writing for the things to be returned to them before the sale, we will do so. The tenant will have to pay for the reasonable costs of moving and storing the items. If there is a dispute about any goods that the tenant leaves behind, the tenant can apply directly to QCAT.



## Tenant Feedback

Ngoonbi are required to report annually to the Department of Housing and Public Works on feedback from tenants about the positive and negative aspects of the service. You can share your thoughts and experiences with us in person, by phone, by mail or through the Tenants Survey which is available at Tenant Information Meetings or at the Housing Office. You can remain Anonymous when filling out the feedback survey.

At any time, you can fill out a tenant survey or a Ngoonbi Suggestion Form which is available at the office reception. A form will also be provided to you at the commencement of your tenancy.

## Complaints, Grievances & Appeals

The staff and Management of Ngoonbi endeavour to resolve any complaints and appeals to improve our accountability and efficiency. Any tenant grievance will be promptly acknowledged and investigated. Tenants will not be penalised in any way and will continue to receive respectful service.

You can lodge a written complaint to Ngoonbi by using a form or writing an email or letter. The complaint forms are available at the front reception of our office or on the website. The Housing Coordinator and CEO will review the complaint/grievance, as soon as practical after receiving the notice. You may arrange for a special grievance meeting or dispute hearing, when appropriate, to investigate and consider matters related to the dispute.

<http://ngoonbi.org.au/housing>





## Tenancy Advice Services

Tenants can receive free tenancy advice from the Tenants Union of Qld, QStars or the Residential Tenancies Authority (RTA) if you are having any housing problems. Tenants can be assisted with tenancy disputes including dispute resolution representation through advocacy and assistance with QCAT matters.

- QStars – Telephone: 1300 744263
- RTA – Residential Tenancies Authority Telephone: 1300 366 311
- Tenants Union of Qld Telephone: 1300 744 263



## Fire Safety in Your Home

- Fire...it is an ever-present danger. Most fires are caused by accidents that could be avoided.
- Hold a household meeting to make sure that everyone knows what to do if there is a fire and that children know to tell you immediately if there is a fire.

**EXIT PLAN:** Make and practice a fire escape plan with at least two ways out, and arrange a safe meeting place outside your home for all household members. This could be the car park, a playground or another building.

### If there is a Fire:

- Alert all occupants so all the household members evacuate the house at the same time.
- Contain the fire by closing doors as you make your escape.
- If in a room with the door shut, feel the door with the back of your hand. If it is hot, do not open it. Keep low and try to signal for help.
- Learn to crawl low in smoke. Smoke rises, so the freshest air to breathe is close to the ground.
- Once out of your home, stay out. Never go back into a burning property.
- Evacuate to the safe meeting point. Call the Fire Service immediately. The emergency contact number for Fire, Ambulance and Police is: 000 or for mobiles dial 112.

## Fire Prevention

- Many fires in the home start in the kitchen, and can be caused by hot cooking fat. Be careful when cooking with oil. Heat the oil slowly and be watchful.
- Never leave hot oil or pots on the stove unattended. If you must leave the kitchen, turn off the stove or appliance.
- Do not throw water onto a fat or oil fire because it will cause an explosion of flame. Turn off the stove and throw a fire blanket over it. This will smother the oxygen required by the fire to continue.
- Cook with the pot handles turned away from the edge of the stove so they won't be knocked over.
- Fire blankets should be readily accessible in the kitchen area and you should know how and when to use them. Do you? Ask us if you need advice.
- Make sure there's plenty of space to allow air to flow around televisions, portable heaters, stereos and computers. If your electrical equipment gets hot it may cause a fire. If possible, turn equipment off properly and do not leave them on standby as evidence is shown it can catch on fire.
- Do not use double-adaptors to piggy-back a number of electrical items from the one power point. This could cause a short circuit and a fire.
- Never place electrical cords or wires under carpets or rugs, as they can overheat and cause a fire.
- Children are attracted to matches and cigarette lighters. Keep them out of reach of young children.
- Smoking in bed is another cause of fire in the home. Avoid smoking in bed or in the house as this will also set off the smoke alarm.
- Do not leave candles or oil burners near open windows. The flame could come in contact with the curtains and set them alight. Don't leave your home while a candle or oil burner is alight.
- Queensland Fire & Rescue Service offers a Safe home service to assist householders to conduct a safety and fire awareness inspection of their home. This free service can be arranged by phoning 1300 369 003. Keep your home winter fire safe.
- Check electric blankets for damage or frayed cords before placing on the bed. To test an electric blanket, lay it flat on top of the bed then switch it on for five minutes before putting it on the bed for use to confirm it is okay.
- Take care to keep curtains, tablecloths and bedding away from portable heaters.
- Keep wet clothing at least 1 metre from heaters or fireplaces and never leave unattended.
- Always extinguish candles or any other open flames before going to bed.
- Don't drape shawls or fabrics over lamps.





## Prepare for the Cyclone and Storm Season

Report any cyclone damage to the office as soon as possible.

Before a cyclone, prepare an **Emergency Kit** (and keep it somewhere handy in the home) including:

- Portable radio and torch with fresh batteries
- Candles and waterproof matches
- Reasonable stocks of fresh water, canned food, can opener and self-contained cooking gear.
- First Aid Kit and essential medications
- Emergency contact numbers local council, SES, Police, Fire and Ambulance.
- Severe Storm or Cyclone Warning
- Listen to your local radio or television station for information and advice.
- If not using the car, fill it with fuel and park it somewhere safe and secure.
- Store all loose items inside.
- Lock up your pets at home.
- Gather some tools which might come in handy for emergency repairs such as a hammer, nails, rope, saw and tarpaulins.
- Batten down the house where practical. Secure doors, tape windows.
- Then remain indoors.
- In the event of lightning, disconnect electrical appliances.
- Freeze water for alternative refrigeration in case of power failure.
- *Prepare an Evacuation Kit. This should include your emergency kit and personal valuables, documents, family mementos, photo albums, placed in a waterproof bag, and then secured in a suitcase to avoid damage.*
- *Essential spare clothing (warm tough clothes and covered footwear) packed in a waterproof bag.*





## Evacuation

- Take heed of any warnings or advice given by police or emergency service personnel.
- Switch off electricity, gas and water. Be careful not to touch any wet switches.
- Lock up your home. Remember your evacuation kit.
- If you leave your home before any official evacuation, be sure to let a neighbour, friend, family member or emergency service personnel know when and where you are going.

## Cyclone Strikes

- Continue listening to your portable radio.
- Disconnect all electrical appliances.
- Stay inside, clear of windows, and move to the safest, strongest part of the house - usually the bathroom, cellar, internal toilet or passageway.
- If your home starts to break up, protect yourself using strong tables or beds, mattresses, blankets or tarpaulins.
- Beware the calm 'eye' of the storm.
- If driving, pull off the road, stopping well clear of trees, power lines, creeks or rivers.
- After the Cyclone
- Listen to your portable radio.
- Do not venture outside until advised officially that it is safe. A cyclone can turn back across the same path.
- If you have to evacuate, do not go home until advised that it is safe. Then use the recommended route and remain calm.
- Avoid making unnecessary phone calls, and don't make demands upon emergency services unless there is a serious problem, such as injuries or lost roof.
- Beware of fallen power lines and trees, damaged buildings, sharp debris and flooded water courses.
- Do not turn on power or gas if damaged, unless checked by the authorities.
- Again, do not touch wet electricity switches.
- Do not go sightseeing - leave the road clear for emergency service vehicles.
- Contact our office to report necessary repairs.

## (SES) - State Emergency Service Flood and Storm Assistance

For flood and storm emergency assistance, telephone: 132 500. You can this number when you have:

- Damaged roof
- Fallen trees on buildings
- Storm damage
- Rising flood water



## Useful Emergency & Community Contacts

- Ambulance, Fire and Police, Tel: 000
- Kuranda Police Station, Phone: 4093 7356
- Alcohol and Drug Information Service, Phone: 1800 177 833
- Child Support Agency, Phone: 121272
- Crisis Pregnancy Counselling, Phone: 1300 737 732
- Commonwealth Carelink Centres, Phone: 1800 052 222. To help you live independently – free information about community, aged care, disability and other support services.
- Disability Information Service, Phone: 1800 177 120
- Domestic Violence - 24 hour helpline DV CONNECT Women, Tel: 1800 811 811; DV CONNECT Men, Tel: 1800 600 636
- Uniting Care Community, 07 40504 955
- Family Planning, Cairns, Tel: 4051 3788
- Family Relationship Advice Line, Tel: 1800 050 321
- Gambling Helpline, Tel: 1800 222 0505
- Gambling Counselling Service, Cairns, Tel: 4050 4955
- Gay & Lesbian Counselling and Community Services, Tel: 1800 184 527
- Homeless Persons Information QLD, Tel: 1800 474 753
- Kid's Help Line, Tel: 1800 551 800
- Legal Aid Queensland, Tel: 1300 651 188
- Legal Centre, 07 40317688 , 1800 062 608
- Lifeline, Tel: 131114 (24 hours) Lifeline offers a telephone crisis counselling service for people suffering depression, thoughts of suicide and self-harm and life skills advice for coping with everyday problems.
- Men's Help Line, Tel: 1300 789 978 (24 hours. This help line is for men with family and relationship concerns.
- Parent line , Tel: 1300 301 300
- Pregnancy Help Line, Tel: 1300 139 313
- Poisons Information Centre, Tel: 13 11 26
- Relationships Australia, Tel: 1300 364 277
- Salvo Care Line, Tel: 1300 363 622
- Victims Counselling & Support, Tel: 1300 139 703 Programs offered include physical, social and emotional wellbeing, personal development, support groups focusing on specific issues, art & craft groups, youth issues, career guidance, parenting programs & small business development.





**Have a beautiful Kuranda day.**

