

## **FOLLOW-UP REVIEW OF THE MANAGEMENT OF NSW PUBLIC HOUSING MAINTENANCE CONTRACTS**

**Organisation:** Department of Communities and Justice

**Date Received:** 7 May 2021

The Chair  
Public Accounts Committee  
Parliament of New South Wales  
6 Macquarie Street  
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Via email: [PublicAccountsCommittee.PAC@parliament.nsw.gov.au](mailto:PublicAccountsCommittee.PAC@parliament.nsw.gov.au)

Ref EAP21/6363

Dear Mr Piper

**Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) submission regarding their role in maintenance management on behalf of the Land and Housing Corporation (LAHC)**

Thank you for the opportunity to submit information regarding DCJ's involvement in tenancy management with specific regards to maintenance management to the Public Accounts Committee's inquiry - Follow-up review of the Management of NSW Public Housing Maintenance Contracts. Please find **attached** a table setting out DCJ Housing Managing Maintenance in Public Housing Properties.

The main role in relation to maintenance is exercised by the Land and Housing Corporation. DCJ housing staff to have a role in managing maintenance expectations and explaining to tenants how maintenance is prioritised. It is not easy for our tenants to understand the complexities of the maintenance system, such as what constitutes urgent maintenance or repair work (responsive maintenance) and what is deemed non-urgent work (planned maintenance).

DCJ staff are responsible for educating and assisting tenants to understand that responsive maintenance is for repair work that places the tenant or the property at risk in some way (health, safety and well-being or asset damage), and must be repaired within a fixed period of time. Whereas planned maintenance is non-urgent work where there is no risk to tenants or property, and can be placed in a queue of work to be completed when funds become available. Table 1 attached to this letter outlines the role that DCJ plays in responding to tenant requests for maintenance and other asset management matters.

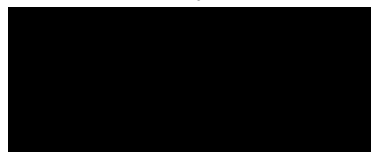
DCJ also introduced an electronic system to help tenants request repairs. This is a pictorial system which is particularly helpful for tenants who do not speak English as they can click on the relevant part of the property which needs repair – e.g. click on the kitchen, then click on the sink, then a click on leaking tap and then the request goes into the maintenance system.

Later in 2021, DCJ will be conducting a workload assessment across the tenancy management teams, the results of which will be shared with LAHC. It is intended that the findings of this assessment will be used to further improve the experience for our tenants concerning maintenance enquiries and other tenancy management issues.

DCJ is actively engaged in several key projects with LAHC including Set for Success, which is aimed at improving the way both agencies respond to maintenance requests, re-shaping tenant and staff expectations and actively working with tenants to better identify problems with property care early in tenancies, and refer them to appropriate services to support them.

If you would like to discuss anything further, please contact

Yours sincerely

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature area.

**Michael Coutts-Trotter**  
**Secretary**

6 May 2021

## DCJ – HOUSING MANAGING MAINTENANCE IN PUBLIC HOUSING PROPERTIES

### Acronyms:

HCC – Housing Contact Centre

CCC – Contractor Contact Centre

DCJ – DCJ Housing Services

LAHC – Land and Housing Corporation

Action	Role	Responsibility	Process	Outcomes	Systems used
Tenant or third party requests maintenance/ repairs to a LAHC property	HCC  DCJ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transfer tenant enquiries the CCC or refer tenants to self-service</li> <li>Refer or transfer tenant enquiries the HCC or refer tenants to self-service (Telephone, Counter, client service visit)</li> <li>Identify potential hazards during client service visits and report to the CCC on behalf of the tenant</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Calls are automatically forwarded to CCC based on post code of property</li> <li>Calls are automatically forwarded to CCC based on post code of property</li> <li>Urgent repair work reported to CCC by DCJ including WH&amp;S</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CCC records maintenance request and triages for response</li> <li>CCC records maintenance request and triages for response</li> <li>CCC records maintenance request and triages for response</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Telephony, eRepair</li> <li>Telephony, eRepair, Tenancy Hub</li> <li>Telephony</li> </ul>
Tenant enquiries regarding progress of maintenance/ repairs (including complaints)	HCC  DCJ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Answer tenant enquiries (Telephone)</li> <li>Answer tenant enquiries (Telephone, Counter, client service visit)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Utilise technology systems to determine status</li> <li>Utilise technology Systems to determine status</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explain status of repair work, escalate if necessary to either CCC or LAHC</li> <li>Explain the process of appealing maintenance decisions or contacting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Telephony, Ariba,</li> <li>Telephony, Ariba, HOMES, OneTRIM, DCJ/LAHC Exchange Guidelines, existing DCJ policies, <a href="#"><u>Residential Tenancy Act 2010</u></a></li> </ul>

Action	Role	Responsibility	Process	Outcomes	Systems used
				NCAT for independent decisions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain status of repair work, escalate if necessary to either CCC or LAHC</li> <li>• Explain the process of appealing maintenance decisions or contacting NCAT for independent decisions</li> </ul>	
Educate tenants and service agencies on common maintenance topics	DCJ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss with tenants on common maintenance problems such as mould, pests, and other non-urgent repair work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make referrals to the Tenancy Hub maintenance videos or send out Fact Sheets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tenants understand there are some maintenance issues that they can either prevent or are responsible for</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tenancy Hub, referral pathways to support services etc.</li> </ul>
Tenant Initiated NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NCAT) matters regarding maintenance	DCJ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Represent LAHC at NCAT Tribunal Hearings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Try to resolve the matter prior to the Hearing date by liaising with LAHC and tenant</li> <li>• Collate information relating to the matter</li> <li>• Participate in conciliation at</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tenant's concerns are addressed as soon as possible to prevent the need to attend Tribunal Hearings.</li> <li>• Maintenance works order to occur by the Tribunal are completed prior to follow up Hearing date</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HOMES, OneTRIM, Ariba, District database monitoring TI NCAT matters</li> </ul>

Action	Role	Responsibility	Process	Outcomes	Systems used
			<p>Tribunal to resolve the matter</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Represent LAHC and present their decision to the Tribunal.</li> <li>• Keep records of the matter in technology systems</li> <li>• Communicate Tribunal findings back to LAHC and monitor progress of the work performed</li> </ul>		
Tenant requests modifications to LAHC property based on recommendations from an Occupational Therapist (OT)	DCJ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitates the request from either the tenant/Occupational Therapist (OT) directly with LAHC</li> <li>• Respond to appeals regarding declined modification requests</li> <li>• Facilitate transfers of tenants for whom modifications have</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follow DCJ and LAHC's policies, processes and guidelines on the process for completing modification requests</li> <li>• Communicate progress to tenant/OT</li> <li>• Collate information and review the request to decline</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Properties that are able to be modified by LAHC are approved and prioritised</li> <li>• Tenants and OT are kept informed of the progress throughout</li> <li>• Tenants are identified for properties that either are modified or can be modified</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HOMES, OneTRIM</li> </ul>

Action	Role	Responsibility	Process	Outcomes	Systems used
		been declined by LAHC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Follow approved DCJ policies, processes and procedures on arranging a transfer</li> <li>Arrange temporary accommodation for tenant if required</li> </ul>		
Tenant requests to make self-funded alterations to a LAHC property or reimbursement for alterations already made	DCJ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tenants or third parties have submitted a formal request to alter a property (install air conditioning, linoleum not carpet etc)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitates communication, issue letters and explains policy and process to the tenant regarding alterations</li> <li>Facilitates approvals/declines between tenant or third party and LAHC</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alterations that are approved are completed by qualified, licensed tradespeople</li> <li>If LAHC have determined that the tenant can be reimbursed for the alternation, DCJ advise tenant and facilitate payment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HOMES, OneTRIM</li> </ul>
Manage unauthorised (by LAHC) alterations to a LAHC property	DCJ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>LAHC or DCJ identify an unauthorised alteration and requests removal or replacement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitates communication between Tenant and LAHC regarding removal or rectification</li> <li>Initiate NCAT action should the tenant not comply</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tenant removes or replaces the alteration in according with the Residential Tenancy Act and Tribunal orders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HOMES, OneTRIM</li> </ul>

Action	Role	Responsibility	Process	Outcomes	Systems used
Arrange temporary accommodation for tenants due to ongoing maintenance issues	DCJ  HCC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tenant is unable to occupy their LAHC premises during maintenance work</li> <li>Urgent 'at risk' issue is identified out of hours and tenant must leave property</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitate communication to the tenant on the issue</li> <li>Communicate between LAHC and the tenant on the duration</li> <li>Arrange temporary accommodation for duration of maintenance work</li> <li>Facilitate out of hours temporary accommodation for the tenant and request they attend the local office the next day</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tenant is provided with suitable temporary accommodation to enable maintenance works to be completed</li> <li>Safety of tenant and family for any urgent, at risk maintenance that occurs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HOMES, OneTRIM</li> </ul>
Manage vacant properties	DCJ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tenant gives notice of moving out of the property</li> <li>A property is found to have been vacated.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inspect the property before it becomes vacant or once it has been identified as vacant , discuss any damage identified with the outgoing tenant and arrange to re-inspect the property.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tenants are able to move into a clean, safe, habitable property where all components of the property are functional</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HOMES, OneTRIM, IVY</li> </ul>



Action	Role	Responsibility	Process	Outcomes	Systems used
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete a Property Condition Report and raise an initial clean order with any issues identified that need to be addressed e.g. maintenance, vandalism, sharps, rubbish removal</li> <li>• Communicate to CCC any work that has not been completed as part of the initial clean</li> <li>• Communicate to incoming tenant as part of the sign-up of the new tenancy agreement any ongoing maintenance work that will occur after the tenancy lease is signed</li> </ul>		
Arrange access for Statutory Servicing	DCJ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LAHC is required by law to complete statutory servicing (e.g. smoke alarm testing)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide written notice to the tenant of any statutory work occurring at their property</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All statutory servicing is completed as required by law</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HOMES, OneTRIM</li> </ul>

Action	Role	Responsibility	Process	Outcomes	Systems used
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitate communication between LAHC and the tenant on allowing access to property</li> <li>Escalate matter to NCAT to obtain an access order if the tenant doesn't comply</li> </ul>		
Arrange Access for LAHC contractors to survey property for asset surveys or authorised (planned) maintenance (e.g. kitchen upgrades)	DCJ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tenant to give access to LAHC contractors to conduct annual property assessment surveys (PAS) on properties to determine asset condition for future planned works or to complete planned works</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide notice to tenants of intent to conduct property surveys or authorised maintenance</li> <li>Escalate matter to NCAT to obtain an access order if the tenant doesn't comply</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>LAHC properties are surveyed for future property upgrades</li> <li>LAHC properties are brought up to standard as part of asset management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HOMES, OneTRIM</li> </ul>
Identify issues/improvements as part of community regeneration	DCJ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DCJ identified issues/improvements to common areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DCJ notified LAHC of improvements/issues and an outcome is negotiated</li> <li>DCJ may contact tenants of affected</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All common areas adhere to AMS contract requirements and Health and Safety</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HOMES, OneTRIM, Email</li> </ul>

Action	Role	Responsibility	Process	Outcomes	Systems used
			areas to advise outcomes		
Inform the CCC of issues with lawns, grounds and cleaning	DCJ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Either tenants notify DCJ or DCJ identifies issues with common area servicing such as overgrown grass, dirty common areas, rubbish dumping</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DCJ reports the issue to the CCC</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Common areas are cleaned in accordance with AMS contract</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HOMES, OneTRIM, telephony</li> </ul>
Tenant requests safety by Design/Security Assessments for their property	DCJ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tenants require safety/security maintenance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DCJ to liaise with tenant, NSW Police or Domestic Violence Support Services on the types of security required via a formal safety assessment</li> <li>Safety Assessments are presented to LAHC for review and approval</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>LAHC approvals are granted and maintenance arranged for security work to commence or advise DCJ that the property is not suitable and DCJ will liaise with tenant and/or their authorised advocate and/or support services to find alternative accommodation and additional supports</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HOMES, OneTRIM, Email</li> </ul>
Tenant Relocation	DCJ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tenant needs to be relocated, either on a temporary or permanent basis for management purposes, including the redevelopment of LAHC properties to</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Liaise between tenant and LAHC regarding the relocation of a tenant for temporary or permanent basis.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tenants understand why they are being relocated, for how long and what DCJ and LAHC will provide for them</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HOMES, OneTRIM, DCJ Forms</li> </ul>

Action	Role	Responsibility	Process	Outcomes	Systems used
		improve the quality of housing stock	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assist the tenant to prepare for relocation by identifying their housing needs.</li> <li>Facilitate relocation to a new property or accommodation provider</li> </ul>		
Manage client feedback and/or complaints relating to maintenance	HCC  DCJ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Receive calls from tenants or third parties regarding feedback or complaints about maintenance</li> <li>Respond to feedback on any matters related to the DCJ management of a tenancy, including tenant complaints regarding maintenance.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enters a client feedback form and sends it to the appropriate District team to investigate</li> <li>Liaise with the CCC an LAHC on any maintenance complaints</li> <li>Communicate with tenants on outcomes</li> <li>Educate tenants on LAHC processes and procedures as well as DCJ's policies</li> <li>Advise tenants of their rights to escalate the matter if required</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Service Level Agreements are in place to ensure requests are responded to in a timely manner.</li> <li>Complaints or feedback address at a local level by DCJ and LAHC</li> <li>Formal records are kept of the complaint outcomes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HOMES, OneTRIM, DCJ Forms</li> </ul>

Action	Role	Responsibility	Process	Outcomes	Systems used
Tenant appeals a decision related to maintenance	DCJ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collate all information regarding the decision rationale</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Liaise with LAHC on the decision and discuss any potential outcomes</li> <li>Communicate outcomes with tenants</li> <li>Educate tenants on LAHC processes and procedures as well as DCJ's policies</li> </ul> <p>Advise tenants of their rights to escalate the matter to the Housing Appeals Committee if required</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appeal is either overturned or upheld according the information on hand</li> <li>Formal records are kept of the complaint outcomes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HOMES, OneTRIM, DCJ Forms</li> </ul>
Tenant has lodged a complaint with the Minister for Housing, Local Member of Parliament or the Ombudsman regarding maintenance	DCJ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collate all information regarding the complaint matter</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Liaise with LAHC on the matter and discuss any potential outcomes</li> <li>Communicate outcomes with tenants</li> <li>Educate tenants on LAHC processes and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outcomes of the matter are clearly communicated to tenants</li> <li>Formal records are kept of the complaint outcomes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HOMES, OneTRIM, DCJ Forms</li> </ul>

Action	Role	Responsibility	Process	Outcomes	Systems used
			<p>procedures as well as DCJ's policies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advise tenants of their rights to escalate the matter if required</li> </ul>		