



## Neighbours Policy

Policy Number: 3.8	Version: 1
Date approved by Board:	11 July 2019
Scheduled review date:	11 July 2021

### Contents:

1. Purpose .....	1
2. Basis for Policy .....	1
3. Scope.....	1
4. Policy and Procedures.....	2
4.1 Communication .....	2
4.2 Principles.....	2
4.3 Minimum Expectations for being a good neighbour.....	2
4.4 Procedure for dealing with issues that arise with a neighbour who is a member/tenant .....	3
4.5 Support Workers.....	3

### 1. Purpose

To document Eastern Suburbs Rental Housing Co-operative's (ESRHC) approach to create, foster and support positive relationships between our members/tenants with neighbours and local communities. The policy intends to balance the rights of members/tenants with the rights of neighbours.

### 2. Basis for Policy

This policy implements the obligations of ESRHC under:

- Residential Tenancies Act 1997
- Housing Act 1983 (Vic) - Performance Standards for Registered Agencies
- Guidelines for Registered Housing Agencies published by DHHS

### 3. Scope

This policy applies to all members/tenants and staff of ESRHC under all relevant programs.

## 4. Policy and Procedures

### 4.1 Communication

ESRHC will ensure this policy is readily available to all members/tenants and staff. This policy will also be made available to neighbours who raise concerns or complaints about ESRHC's members/tenants.

### 4.2 Principles

This policy outlines the process for managing complaints about antisocial behaviour of any member/tenant who is a neighbour of yours.

There is no precise definition of antisocial behaviour or neighbour nuisance. Broadly, it is acting in a way that causes or is likely to cause alarm or distress to one or more people in a neighbouring household.

To be antisocial behaviour, the behaviour must be persistent.

The term is used to describe actions that unreasonably interfere with or could interfere with a resident's/occupier's normal use and enjoyment of their home, garden or neighbourhood. The definition extends to behaviour that can create a nuisance or annoyance to another person connected with the property.

### 4.3 Minimum Expectations for being a good neighbour

- Keep noise to a minimum  
ESRHC members/tenants are requested to keep noise to a minimum, especially late at night and early in the morning. This includes music, human voices, pets, construction, lawnmowers, air conditioners and vacuum cleaners (in apartments). EPA Victoria has a list of prohibited times for different noise types on their website. They also have advice on how to deal with noisy neighbours. Local Government Websites also have information and list prohibited times for various noise types.
- Look after children and visitors  
Children have a right to play and be safe. Members/tenants are requested to ensure children and visitors don't negatively impact on their neighbours.
- Respect other people's privacy  
Members/tenants are encouraged to develop friendly relationships/connections with their neighbours, but at the same time members/tenants and neighbours need to be respectful of each other's privacy.
- Keep property clean and tidy  
If a member/tenant lives on an estate or in a block of units, ESRHC will look after shared areas, like stairways, lawns, gardens and other shared areas. Members/tenants can help to keep things clean and tidy by putting rubbish and recycling in the bins provided and reporting faults and damage.

#### 4.4 Procedure for dealing with issues that arise with a neighbour who is a member/tenant

- If you are experiencing any problems with your neighbour, it is very important that you calmly deal with it as soon as you can. Sometimes a dispute may occur because of a misunderstanding between you and your neighbour.
- Early action is encouraged for neighbours in dispute. Your first step should be to approach your neighbour to resolve the situation between yourselves.
- If you feel you cannot speak with your neighbour directly, ESRHC can assist you to manage that conversation, including how to explain the problem from your point of view, the impact that it is having on you and how it could be resolved.
- You may be asked to keep a nuisance and annoyance diary. This is a document that records the date, time and details of any incident that occurs. If the problem relates to any type of harassment or abuse, we may refer you to specialised services that can offer you support and assistance.
- You can also ask about mediation where a trained and independent person can speak with you and your neighbour to discuss how to try to resolve the problem.
- If the problem relates to a breach of tenancy that is negatively affecting you, you can log a formal complaint as a *neighbour nuisance complaint* directly with ESRHC. Complaints about the way neighbour nuisance complaints have been managed by ESRHC should be dealt with under the Complaints and Appeals Policy. Complaints to ESRHC can be made via the telephone, in writing, in person or via the ESRHC website.
- ESRHC commits to building respectful, positive and constructive relationships with neighbours and, where the opportunity exists for neighbours to learn about our work, to contribute to an improved understanding of the issues that affect our members/tenants and community housing generally.
- ESRHC cannot take direct action where the problem in your neighbourhood or block of units involves criminal activity. You can report this directly to the police.

#### 4.5 Support Workers

If the affected member/tenant has a Support Agreement in place the support worker from that agency will be notified to support the member/tenant.