# Tenancy Management Support Services Handbook

Supply of Remote Tenancy Management Support Services to 30 June 2023



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Terms/ Acronyms	Full form
Ancillary Property	The yard or garden which is considered to be the "Ancillary property".
AIS	Asset Information System
ATP	Agreement to Pay
сс	Co-Client
СНО	Community Housing Officer
Department	Department of Territories Families, Housing and Communities
Dwelling/Asset	The "dwelling or asset" is the house or unit. It includes the exterior and roof of the house, but not the yard or garden which is considered to be the "property".
HIP	Housing Information Portal – where all policies, procedures, forms and letters are located
НМС	Housing Maintenance Contractor
НМСО	Housing Maintenance Contract Officer
HML	Housing Maintenance Levy
HRG	Housing Reference Group
мнвн	Maintaining Houses for Better Health
MRF	Maintenance Request Form
NPARHNT	National Partnership for Remote Housing Northern Territory
OID	Occupancy Information Document
PC	Primary Client
PCR	Property Condition Report
Periodic Tenancy	As defined in the RTA, tenancy with no end date
Property	The dwelling and Ancillary Property, together known as the "property"
R&M	Repairs and maintenance
RTA	Residential Tenancy Act

Terms/ Acronyms	Full form
Service Provider	Contractor
тсо	Tenancy Contract Officer
Tenancy	A tenancy is an agreement between the tenant and landlord (The Department of Territory Families, Housing and Communities) to live in public housing property.
TMS	Tenancy Management System – Database used by the Department to manage all tenancies and tasks
TR	Tenant Responsibility
WHS	Work Health and Safety (National Uniform Legislation) Act 2011 and Work Health and Safety (National Uniform Legislation) Regulations (WHS).

# Contents

1. Background Information	6
1.1. Standard Forms	6
1.2. Healthy Homes and the 9 Healthy Living Practices	6
1.3. Family Support Services	7
1.4. Maintenance Types and Conditions	7
1.4.1. Fair Wear And Tear	7
1.4.2. Planned Maintenance	7
1.4.3. Special needs and Disability Modifications	7
1.4.4. Alterations, Additions and Modifications to the Dwelling by the Tenant	8
1.4.4.1. Cost for Alterations by Tenant	8
1.4.5. Identification of Tenant Damage or Domestic and Family Violence Damage	
1.5. IT Hardware and Software Requirement	8
2. Scope of Works and Specifications	
2.1. Description of Services	
2.2. Tenancy Management Support Services	10
2.3. Provision of Office Space for Visiting Officers	11
2.4. Ad Hoc Visits and Tasking	11
2.5. Services to be provided by the Department	11
3. Procedures	12
3.1. The Living Strong Program	
3.1.1. Record Invitations and Attendances	12
3.2. Tenancy Management Support Services	12
3.2.1. Maintenance Requests	12
3.2.2. Tenant Responsibility and Family Violence	13
3.2.3. Applications, Allocations and Waitlists	13
3.2.4. Security Deposits	14
3.2.5. Property Condition Report	14
3.2.6. Tenancy Agreement and Occupancy Information Document	15
3.2.7. Transitional Housing Arrangements	16
3.2.8. Housing Reference Groups	16
3.2.9. Targeted Support Visits	17
3.2.10. Tenancy Support Services Referral	18
3.2.11. Routine Inspections	18
3.2.12. Follow Up Inspections	19
3.2.13. Paying Rent or Housing Maintenance Levy	19
3.2.14. Rent Calculation	20
3.2.15. Leaving Tenancies	20
3.2.16. Transferring Tenancies	21
4. Standards of Work	21

	4.1. Legislation and Standards	21
	4.2. Conduct of Employees	21
	4.2.1. Housing Maintenance Contractor	22
	4.3. The Issuing of Tasks	22
	4.3.1. Updating Tasks	22
	4.4. Access to Dwellings	22
	4.5. Completion of Works	23
	4.6. Delays and Extension of Timeframes	23
	4.7. Critical Incidents and Emergency Responses	23
	4.7.1. Critical Incidents – Definition	23
	4.7.2. Emergencies	24
	4.7.2.1. In the Case of an Emergency	24
	4.7.3. Fire Risk, Asbestos Damage and Asbestos Containing Material	24
	4.8. Reporting and Performance	25
	4.8.1. Monthly Activity Report	25
	4.8.2. Key Performance Indicators	25
	4.8.3. Monthly Meetings	26
5	Appendices	26
	5.1. APPENDIX A – Employee Report	27
	5.2. APPENDIX B – Delivery Model Workflow	28

# Introduction

The Department of Territory Families, Housing and Communities (the Department) manages and maintains public housing dwellings in remote communities, the Alice Springs town camps and the Tennant Creek community living areas under the National Partnership Agreement for Remote Housing NT (NPRHNT). This agreement aims to improve remote housing outcomes for Aboriginal people living in remote communities, town camps and community living areas of the NT, with a focus on improved living conditions for stronger families, sustainable local employment and economic development.

The Department is responsible for maintaining a liveable home for tenants while also maintaining a valuable, publicly owned asset. Managing and maintaining housing is underpinned by the Northern Territory <u>Housing</u> <u>Act</u> and <u>Residential Tenancies Act</u>, and also reflects current urban public housing policies.

This handbook provides the Tenancy Management Support Services Contractor and their employees, the Community Housing Officers (CHO), with information about the Department necessary for the CHOs to perform their role and also an outline of their roles and responsibilities.

This handbook is a living document and will be updated as required in accordance to changes to operational and administrative procedures.

## 1. Background Information

## 1.1. Standard Forms

The CHO will from time to time be requested to deliver and assist tenants with completing certain standard forms. These forms are available from the Housing Information Portal and can be searched using the Form Name in the left column. The list below is not exhaustive and is a sample of the most frequently used only.

The CHO is advised to download a form from the portal each time it is required to ensure that the most up to date and compliant form is used.

Form Name	Description
SF09	Alterations and Additions form
SF11	Income Confirmation Scheme Active Consent Authority
SF14	Intention to keep a pet form
SF20	Rental Rebate Application form
SF27	Property Condition Report (PCR)
SF33	Parental/Guardian consent form
SF39	Statement of Income
SF54	Government Payroll Deduction form
SF66	Rent Deduction form
SRF40	Family Rent/Maintenance Levy Agreement
SRF48	Occupancy Information Document (OID)
SRF53	Remote Public Housing Application form
SRF38	Family Security/Deposit form
SRF52	Non-Government Payroll Deduction form
SRF80	Inspection Report
SRF72	Transitional Housing Tenancy Arrangement

## 1.2. Healthy Homes and the 9 Healthy Living Practices

The Department has established the Healthy Homes preventative maintenance program to guide the investment in new housing that promote the nine Healthy Living Practices (HLPs), an evidence based approach to housing and health across remote communities and selected town camps and community living areas. The program is supported through sector capacity building, community education initiatives, and a monitoring and evaluation framework.

Nine Healthy Living Practices:

- Washing people;
- Washing clothing and bedding;
- Removing wastewater safely;
- Improving nutrition, the ability to store prepare and cool food;
- Reducing the negative impacts of overcrowding;
- Reducing the negative impacts of animals, insects and vermin;
- Reducing the health impacts of dust;
- Controlling the temperature of the living environment; and
- Reducing Hazards that cause trauma.

Healthy Homes will promote preventative repairs and maintenance models that focus on ensuring the houses' health hardware is functioning to support HLPs. This includes testing the functionality of safe electricity and water supply, toilets, showers, washing areas and food preparation areas. The Heathy Homes program will deliver an enhanced approach to repairs and maintenance by integrating HLPs into the delivery of PTM services.

### 1.3. Family Support Services

Family Support involves providing support and assistance to families to help them keep their children safe and at home. The Department works closely with a number of organisations funded to deliver Family Support Services throughout the Northern Territory.

Currently, these service providers are funded by Commonwealth grants.

If the Contractor identifies a need within a family to strengthen family and parenting capacity, a list of Families and Communities Intensive Family Support Services providers is available at: <u>https://serviceproviders.dss.gov.au/.</u>

The Department is releasing grant funding for family support services to commence in the second half of 2021. Further information pertaining to these upcoming services can be requested at <u>TFHC.Operationalsupport@nt.gov.au.</u>

All such referrals and any discussions with tenants in relation to family support should be recorded in the Tenancy Management System.

## **1.4.** Maintenance Types and Conditions

Under the Residential Tenancies Act, the Department as a landlord must maintain public housing dwellings in a structurally sound and functional condition.

#### 1.4.1. Fair Wear And Tear

The Department will meet the costs of maintenance due to fair wear and tear, which is related to the normal lifespan of items within a dwelling. Any damage to an item will be assessed by Housing staff in accordance with the expected lifespan and depreciation. Damage considered to be beyond normal wear and tear will require the tenant to replace or repair the item at their own expense.

#### 1.4.2. Planned Maintenance

The Department has a responsibility to provide public housing as efficiently as possible. To this end, maintenance is usually carried out as part of an ongoing cycle across all public housing dwellings. Some maintenance requests from tenants will be considered as part of this cycle, and may not occur in the timeframe expected by tenants.

#### 1.4.3. Special needs and Disability Modifications

The Department may undertake alterations for tenants with special needs. These needs must be essential to the comfort and safety of the client. The tenant will need to provide documentation to prove their needs. Modifications will not be carried out unless a detailed report of the modifications is provided by an Occupational Therapist or other Department approved specialist.

Minor alterations (such as handrails, hand held showers, lever taps and door handles, or door ramps) will generally be approved. Major alterations (such as structural changes to the dwelling) may be refused if a transfer to a special purpose dwelling is possible.

#### 1.4.4. Alterations, Additions and Modifications to the Dwelling by the Tenant

The Department has a responsibility to allow only alterations which do not have a negative effect on the value, life expectancy or future use of the dwelling.

Under the <u>Residential Tenancies Act 1999</u> and relevant Department policy, tenants must seek the written consent of the Department prior to erecting any structures or making alterations (including additions, modifications, improvements, removal of structural or other items and structural changes) to the dwelling. The Department encourages tenants to regard their public housing dwelling as their home and will therefore approve most reasonable requests.

Tenants are responsible for maintaining any alterations made to the dwelling by them, even if the alterations have been made without the permission of the Department. This policy applies to all tenants living in a public housing dwelling.

Final discretion on what constitutes an alteration lies with the Department.

#### **1.4.4.1.** Cost for Alterations by Tenant

The cost of installation, ongoing maintenance and removal of alterations at the end of the tenancy agreement, or earlier if the Department requires it (for example, if the addition has been made without the Department's approval) is always the responsibility of the tenant. If the tenant requires alterations due to special needs, the Department will consider these on a case-by-case basis.

#### 1.4.5. Identification of Tenant Damage or Domestic and Family Violence Damage

The Tenant is obliged, under the conditions of their tenancy agreement and the *Residential Tenancies Act* 1999, to maintain the dwelling in a clean or not unreasonably dirty state and not to cause any damage.

Tenant damage is considered to be any intentional or negligent damage caused or permitted to be caused to the dwelling, ancillary property or common property by the tenant, a recognised occupant of the household, pets or a visitor the tenant has given consent to being on the premises.

Reasonable wear and tear is defined as deterioration or damage that happens as the result of normal use or ageing of the dwelling.

When reporting on requests for property repairs and maintenance, it is important that the Contractor identifies if any repairs are due to damage caused by Tenants or by Domestic or Family Violence and inform the Department.

Contractors should remain aware of their mandatory reporting obligations for the <u>Care and Protection of</u> <u>Children Act 2007</u> and the <u>Domestic and Family Violence Act 2007</u>.

#### 1.5. IT Hardware and Software Requirement

Please note in the event that access to the Northern Territory Government's business information systems is granted:

- It will be provided with limited support in the use of the system; and
- Internet connectivity is to be maintained by the external user via their own Internet Service Provider (ISP).

Contractors will be directed to the Department's publicly available Housing web page in order to view current policy and procedure documents as well as the relevant forms and templates required to deliver the Services under this Contract.

Specific IT hardware and software requirements may change during the course of the contract. The Contractor should liaise with the Department to ensure that the Contractor's infrastructure is correct and suitable throughout the contract period.

Initial Requirements include:

Requirement	Description	
An active Internet Connection/Account	<ul> <li>A stable, high-speed connection to the Internet.</li> <li>A dial-up or Satellite Internet connection is unlikely to provide sufficient bandwidth for the satisfactory operation of the NT Government's business information systems.</li> </ul>	
Microsoft Excel	Full version of Microsoft Excel v 2013 or higher	
Web browser for Virtual Desktop access	Currently <b>Google Chrome</b> provides a better user experience with some accessibility options.	
Access to NTG business information systems	<ul> <li>Access to NTG business information systems will be provided by the Department as required.</li> <li>The Contractor is responsible for advising the Department in writing when individuals no longer require access to these systems.</li> </ul>	
Individual User Access	• Each user accessing NTG business information systems will be issued with a unique user ID as required, these will be created upon application (by the regional TFHC office).	
Password resets	The account password will expire every 30 days. Resets will be performed using 2 factor authorisation, with the mobile phone number nominated in the Contract.	
System training	Initial training in NTG business information systems will be provided by the Department's regional office, the onus will then be on the Contractor to provide subsequent training to any additional staff employed. A training package will be provided by the Department's regional office to the Contractor for this purpose.	
Consumables – paper, ink cartridges, electricity, phone line rental	All consumables or ongoing charges in relation to any equipment used to comply with Contractor Specific Hardware and Software Requirements will be borne by the Contractor.	
Email Address	A valid email address, to allow the Department to send advices, forms and reports electronically for service notification and billing processes.	
Office Hardware and Equipment	Equipment to undertake the operational, administrative and management processes of the Contract. Examples include printers, scanners, etc.	
Mobile Phone	This is to be a dedicated mobile phone number for the Contract, not the personal phone number of the Contractor's employees as it will be utilised for 2 factor security checks for systems access.	

## 2. Scope of Works and Specifications

## 2.1. Description of Services

#### Community and tenancy engagement activities

In conjunction with the Department's overarching Tenancy Management Service, undertake community and tenancy engagement work, including:

- a) Liaise with tenants across the Community, Town Camp or Community Living Area as identified in the Contract.
- b) Accept (receive) tenancy forms and documents from residents, on behalf of the Department.
- c) Deliver letters and notices to residents on behalf of the Department.
- d) Assist residents to understand and complete tenancy forms and documents.
- e) Assist the Department in locating residents and facilitating conversations.
- f) As scheduled by the Department, attend and assist at meetings of the Housing Reference Group, or alternative housing forums as identified through the Local Decision Making Framework.
- g) Provide advice to the Community relating to tenancy management, their obligations and responsibilities as a tenant.
- h) Support tenants to develop knowledge and skills to successfully maintain a safe and healthy home and living environment.
- i) Maintain records of all engagement and interaction with residents.
- j) Keep adequate records in order to provide advice to the Department, in accordance with the Contract.
- k) Provide a point of contact for repairs and maintenance and liaise with the Remote Housing Maintenance Contractor to enable them to carry out works as per response times.

## 2.2. Tenancy Management Support Services

(a) Deliver the Living Strong program to all households over the period of the contract to develop skills to maintain a successful tenancy, including an understanding of tenants' rights and responsibilities.

The program is to focus on a proactive, culturally appropriate and engaging experience for tenants. The key outcomes of this service is to improve the quality of tenancies, improved health outcomes for households and engagement in the tenancy management process. The services are to provide support and information on topics including, but not limited to:

- their rights and responsibilities as a tenant;
- o maintaining a safe and healthy home;
- managing finances to pay rent and other financial obligations;
- reporting maintenance;
- how to manage visitors; and
- responsible pet ownership.

The Living Strong program is also designed to engage tenants in the process of integrating a preventative focus to repairs and maintenance work and health hardware to focus on the nine (9) Healthy Living Practices (HLPs).

The Department will supply resources on the policies and programs to be included in the Living Strong sessions. It is the responsibility of the Service Provider to ensure that it is being delivered in a culturally appropriate manner. It is expected that at a minimum, the Primary Client in the tenancy group for each dwelling in the Community will have completed all sessions of the program within the period of the contract.

- (b) Replicate as necessary and provide to all Primary Clients in the tenancy group for each dwelling in the Community a copy of the standard Tenancy Information Pack.
- (c) With the support of the Department and as directed, provide targeted delivery of support services by identifying tenancies that are at risk of poor tenancy outcomes and assist tenants in maintaining their tenancies through the provision of education and support.

## 2.3. Provision of Office Space for Visiting Officers

The Department of Territory Families, Housing and Communities seeks to remove barriers between Contractors delivering housing services, to better enable a more streamlined and client focused service.

Where possible and in the first instance, the Department seeks an arrangement where the client interface for tenancy support and maintenance services are co-located within the community and provided by the remote housing maintenance services (RHMS) Contractor.

The infrastructure to be provided by the RHMS Contractor must include:

- (a) An office and front desk at an acceptable location within or nearby the Community, open between 8.00am 4.00pm Monday to Friday, except Public Holidays.
- (b) Provision for a hot desk (and ICT) for use\_by the TFHC Tenancy Management staff and a suitable space to hold interviews, in private as required.
- (c) Provision for the co-location of Tenancy Support Services Contractors to be co-located in this office.

Where this co-location is not possible, the Tenancy Contractor is responsible for the provision of the following infrastructure:

- (a) Maintain and resource an office and front desk at an acceptable location within or nearby the Community, open between 8.00am 4.00pm Monday to Friday, except Public Holidays.
- (b) Office space should include provision for a hot desk (and ICT) by the Department's Tenancy Management staff and a suitable space to hold interviews, in private as required.

## 2.4. Ad Hoc Visits and Tasking

The Contractor will receive regular work requests (tasks) from the Department, advising of required tenancy management support activities with households and the required timeframes. The Contractor will schedule required activities during the period, and will report progress to the Department regularly.

While it cannot be predicted exactly how many ad-hoc requests will be received, it is expected that (over a 12 month period) each tenancy will require at least:

- one (1) tenancy inspection;
- one (1) rebate application; and
- one (1) other change to tenancy information.

Each of these requirements may involve multiple contacts with the tenant through delivering letters, confirming appointments or assisting with documents.

## 2.5. Services to be provided by the Department

The Department will:

- a) Manage the waitlist and support the allocation process in the Community.
- b) Conduct tenancy inspections for every dwelling every six (6) months.
- c) Assess and process rental rebate applications including arranging of Agreements To Pay (ATP) if rebate not backdated.
- d) Conduct property inspections at the start and end of all tenancies.

- e) Monitor and address rental arrears and other debts, including maintenance debts, for all tenancies.
- f) Maintain up to date tenancy information for all dwellings in the Tenancy Management System (TMS).
- g) In conjunction with the Contractor, case manage problematic tenancies including visitor management and anti-social behaviour (ASB) as required.
- h) Consult with residents through regular Housing Reference Group (HRG) Meetings or alternative housing forums identified through the Local Decision Making Framework, with a minimum of four meetings held per year; this includes record keeping of all meetings and actions.
- i) Provide a point of contact for all repairs and maintenance and liaise with the Housing Maintenance Services Contractor to enable them to carry out works as per response times.
- j) Maintain a key register and hold spare keys in a secure facility.

## 3. Procedures

## 3.1. The Living Strong Program

The Contractor is required to report in TMS all instances of the Living Strong Program being delivered in a Community by creating a task against the Community (for time/labour hours claimed), and against each group where a Primary Client or Co-Client attended (no time claimed, marked for attendance).

#### 3.1.1. Record Invitations and Attendances

Contractor	Department
Provide a delivery plan to the Department as part of their tender.	Refer to the delivery plan when assessing completeness.
Take attendance at each session. Recording which Primary Client or Co-Client was invited to attend and who actually attended.	Verify the session against the plan.
<ul> <li>Create Task for each group:</li> <li>Living Strong - Attendance</li> <li>Living Strong - Non Attendance</li> <li>Do not create a task where a Primary Client or Co- Client group was not invited to attend.</li> <li>Ensure Task includes the module covered at that session.</li> </ul>	Ensure that task time is only claimed on the Community Level task, not at each individual group.
Mark the task complete.	Ensure all reporting requirements are met and close the tasks.

## 3.2. Tenancy Management Support Services

The role of the Community Housing Officer (CHO) is to provide tenancy management support services to public housing tenants in the Community in accordance with the Housing Operational Policy.

#### Housing Policies, Forms and Publications

#### 3.2.1. Maintenance Requests

From time to time the CHO may receive a request for maintenance from a tenant or carer.

The CHO should notify the Housing Maintenance Contractor directly of all maintenance requests received, and in return should receive a job registration number.

The Housing Maintenance Contractor may seek the support of the CHO to gain access to properties to undertake works, to liaise with tenants about required work and to keep tenants informed of the status of their maintenance request.

The following urgency cat	tegories are noted fo	r the CHO's information:
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Categories	Definition	
Immediate	Emergency/Make <b>Safe</b> within 4 hours of notification – electrical danger, gas leakages, significant water loss and sewer overflow into premises, where significant security threat exists to premises or persons.	
Urgent	Attend and complete within 5 business days – urgent works required due to health, safety, or security failure and/or where further damage could be expected if action is not taken.	
Routine	Attend and satisfactorily complete by a specified date (within 25 business days)	

Contractor	Department
Record the receipt of a maintenance request in the tasking system. Send a copy of the maintenance request form to the maintenance Contractor and email a copy to the Department.	Inform the Housing Maintenance Contract Officer of the task to ensure that it is being monitored.
Record who it was reported to, and the job registration number in the task.	Update the task to record who was informed.
Keep tenant informed of progress, noting any updates received from the maintenance Contractor or tenant.	Monitor task to ensure work is progressing. Liaise with Housing Maintenance Contract Officer as required.
Complete task once repair work is completed.	Ensure the maintenance request has been finalised appropriately. Close the task.

#### 3.2.2. Tenant Responsibility and Family Violence

Where the Contractor identifies or suspects that damage is other than fair wear and tear, and suspects either tenant responsibility damage or family violence damage, the Contractor is to inform the Department and provide all evidence as reported to them.

If the damage causes any aspect of the dwelling to be unsafe or could potentially cause harm, contact the Housing Maintenance Contractor immediately.

Contractor	Department
Record the receipt of a maintenance request in the tasking system.	Inform the Housing Maintenance Contract Officer of the task to ensure that it is being monitored.
Identify if the items is suspected Tenant Responsibility or Family Violence and any information provided by the tenants.	
If the damage make the premises unsafe, record who it was reported to, and the job registration number in the task.	Update the task to record who was informed.
Escalate the task to the Department.	Ensure the maintenance request has been referred appropriately. Close the task.

## 3.2.3. Applications, Allocations and Waitlists

Applications may be done initially as a group or individually when moving into a house already occupied, as an additional tenant.

The purpose of an application is to provide information and documentation to show proof of identification and to establish need and eligibility for services.

Allocations are undertaken in consultation with the Housing Reference Group.

Contractor	Department
Initiated by CHO	
Create new Application Task in System against the community asset.	Ensure all requirements are noted in the task.
	Initiated by Tenancy Contract Officer.
	Create Application task in system.
Assist applicants with filling out Application Form (SRF53).	Enter new applicants into the system.
Assist tenants with the collection of all required information and documentation.	Update applicant's information as informed by the CHO.
Explain the Application and Allocation process to tenants.	Task the Contractor to seek out updated information as required.
Inform the Department of changes to applicant's circumstances and details as they become known.	Perform interviews and manage the waitlist.
Record interactions with applicants through the tasking system.	Review and close tasks once all requirements are met.

#### 3.2.4. Security Deposits

A security deposit or bond is an amount of money held in trust by the landlord that will be used in the event that a tenant breaches the terms of their tenancy agreement and are required to pay for the cost of the repairs or cleaning or rent arrears after they vacate. Tenants are allowed to make regular payments towards their bond in accordance with Housing Operational Policy (Fact Sheet FS06 Bond Assistance and SF30 Bond Assistance Application form).

Contractor	Department
	Create Security Bond Task in the System.
Assist tenants with the completion of the Family Security/Deposit Form (SRF38).	Review the Security Deposit Requirements in line with Department Policy.
Assist tenants with the completion of their Method of Payment form (SF66).	Update TMS with the method of payment details.
Record interactions with tenants through the tasking system.	Review and close tasks once all requirements are met.

#### 3.2.5. Property Condition Report

A Property Condition Report (SF27) is a report that is made in writing on the condition of the premises and will be provided to the tenant no later than three (3) business days after the tenant has taken possession of the premises.

The tenant must then return a signed copy of the Property Condition Report (PCR) to the landlord within five (5) business days, confirming their acceptance of the PCR or having made modifications.

If the tenant does not return the PCR within this time frame it is taken that the tenant accepts the PCR provided by the landlord at the commencement of the agreement.

The PCR is to specify the condition of the walls, floors and ceilings in each room and to itemise and specify the condition of any fixture or fitting on the premises both internally and externally.

At the end of the tenancy, a final inspection is conducted using the ingoing PCR as evidence of the condition of the property at the commencement of the tenancy.

Contractor	Department
	Create PCR Task in the tasking system.
Attend the premises with the TCO.	Attend the premises for the purpose of the PCR.
Provide advice as to whether an interpreter is required.	Make arrangement for the interpreter if required.
Ensure that the Primary Client and Co-Client are present.	Update the task for Contractor to arrange the presence of the Primary Client and Co-Client.
Assist the Tenancy Contract Officer to explain the PCR and what it is for.	Explain the PCR and what it is for.
Assist the Tenancy Contract Officer to explain the use of all the fixtures and fittings of the dwelling.	Explain the fixtures and fittings.
Follow up with the tenant to return the signed PCR.	Ensure compliant PCR process is followed.
Record interactions with tenants through the tasking system.	Review and close tasks once all requirements are met.

#### 3.2.6. Tenancy Agreement and Occupancy Information Document

A Tenancy Agreement is a written document outlining the terms and conditions of the tenancy as per the *Residential Tenancies Act (NT)*. This agreement must include the following details:

- Standard terms and conditions set out in the Act;
- The name and address of the landlord and tenant (and Agent if there is one);
- Details of the premises;
- Start date (Periodic Tenancy only); and
- The amount of rent and security deposit payable.

Some tenancies may not have a tenancy agreement and will have an Occupancy Information Document (OID) instead. The OID (SRF48) is a document used for people occupying dwellings that have not yet met the requirements for the signing of a formal tenancy agreement, however outlines the management arrangements.

The OID contains the details of the Community, Lot number and Housing Maintenance Levy for this Community. The Information Document will provide contact information for occupants so they are able to report maintenance or to discuss any Housing related matters.

The Tenancy Agreement and OID, along with the Rights and Responsibilities Booklet outlines the terms and conditions and the rights and responsibilities of the tenant and the landlord (the Department).

Contractor	Department
	Create Task in the tasking system.
Provide advice as to whether an interpreter is required.	Make arrangement for the interpreter if required.
Ensure that the Primary Client and Co-Client are present.	Update the task for Contractor to arrange the presence of the Primary Client and Co-Client.
Assist the TCO to explain the Tenancy Agreement or OID and Public Housing Rights and Responsibilities Booklet to the tenants.	Explain the Tenancy Agreement or OID and Public Housing Rights and Responsibilities Booklet to the tenants.
Ensure that the Primary Client and Co-Client are provided a copy of the signed agreement/document and receive a copy of the Public Housing Rights and Responsibilities Booklet.	Once the Tenancy Agreement has been signed by the Department, provide a copy of the signed agreement and Public Housing Rights and Responsibilities Booklet to the tenant.
Record interactions with tenants through the tasking system.	Review and close tasks once all requirements are met.

## 3.2.7. Transitional Housing Arrangements

Transitional Housing is utilised when maintenance works are being undertaken on a dwelling and it is not safe or practical for the occupants to remain in the dwelling for the duration of the works. Transitional housing is to be used as temporary accommodation during housing works and there is an obligation on both the occupants and landlord in terms of maintaining Transitional Accommodation.

Contractor	Department
	Create Task in the tasking system.
Provide advice as to whether an interpreter is required.	Make arrangement for the interpreter if required.
Ensure all tenants listed on Transitional Housing Tenancy Arrangement are available.	Update the task for Contractor to arrange the presence of required tenants.
Assist the Tenancy Contract Officer to explain the Transitional Housing Tenancy Arrangement to the tenants.	Explain the Transitional Housing Tenancy Arrangement to the tenants.
Provide tenant with "Looking after your home" booklet.	Once the Transitional Arrangement has been signed by the Department provide a copy of the agreement to the tenant.
Record interactions with tenants through the tasking system.	Review and close tasks once all requirements are met.

#### 3.2.8. Housing Reference Groups

The Department consults advisory and reference groups, called Housing Reference Groups (HRGs), to ensure community and cultural issues are taken into account when making decisions regarding housing in these areas. The purpose of an HRG is as a primary engagement point for the Department, to provide information on all public housing related activity in these areas.

The HRG provides advice and recommendations on a range of issues to inform future programs, program implementation and policy development. The Department will also seek advice of the HRG on social, cultural and local political issues that need to be considered in respect to housing.

It is a requirement that the HRG meet a minimum of four times per year, in compliance with overarching lease agreements between the NT Government and individual Land Councils.

Contractor	Department
	Create Task against the Community in the tasking system.
Advise HRG members of scheduled meetings and ensure other relevant community service representatives are also informed, including community notices to inform the Community of time, date and venue of the meeting.	Provide Agenda and date of meeting 14 days in advance.
Provide advice to the Department on community/cultural issues to ensure effective consultation between the HRG and the Department.	Discuss Talking points with CHO prior to meeting.
Distribute minutes.	Ensure minutes are taken and distributed.
Record interactions with tenants through the tasking system.	Review and close tasks once all requirements are met.

#### 3.2.9. Targeted Support Visits

Targeted support is additional support provided to tenants through CHOs and Regional Department staff. Targeted tenant support can run concurrently with the Living Strong program. The need for targeted support is identified by the Department where a tenancy is at risk in one or more areas.

Targeted support can include:

- Ensuring that household understands the repairs and maintenance process and can identify and report repairs and maintenance when it is required;
- Where health and safety issues are identified by households or identified through inspections, ensuring that the tenants/occupants understand what will be required to prevent injury to people in the house until the problem has been fixed;
- Answering general questions from tenants regarding property and tenancy management;
- Assisting tenants/occupants to complete tenancy related forms, such as applications or requests for approval of a pet;
- Providing advice to tenants/occupants on their rights and responsibilities, how to look after the house and yard, manage visitors and access other support services as required, including Centrelink and salary rent reduction, repairs and maintenance requests, alterations etc; and
- Identifying the need to refer tenants to additional wrap-around services, either provided by the Department or external agency.

Contractor	Department
Identifies the need for targeted support and creates a task.	
Commence the Task.	Ensure all requirements are noted in the task.
Assist or Provide advice to tenants based on required support.	Evaluate success of support and whether further support is required.
Record interactions with tenants through the tasking system.	Review and close tasks once all requirements are met.

## 3.2.10. Tenancy Support Services Referral

Support Services are additional support provided to tenants through an external agency. The Contractor will identify whether the tenancy appears to have one or more vulnerabilities that may or may not be specifically tenancy related.

Support Services can include but is not limited to:

- Family and Relationship Services
- Children and Parent Support Services
- Financial Counselling

Contractor	Department		
Identifies the need for target	Identifies the need for targeted support and creates a task.		
Commence the Task. Completion date should estimate the time taken to complete any courses or appointments under the referred service.	Ensure all requirements are noted in the task.		
Assist or Provide advice to tenants based on required support. Facilitate the referral to the support service. Task remains open until referred case is closed. Advise Department of required extensions to completion date. Refer to TMS Guide for managing this task type.	Evaluate the advice/referral to ensure that the appropriate action has been taken. Update with further information as required.		
Record interactions with tenants and referral service through the tasking system.	Review and close tasks once all requirements are met.		

#### 3.2.11. Routine Inspections

Routine Inspections are carried out on a dwelling a maximum of four times per year. These inspections are an opportunity for the tenant to advise the landlord of any repairs or maintenance that requires attention and to advise of any changes to a household make up or financial circumstance. It is also an opportunity for the landlord to discuss the way in which a dwelling is being maintained by the tenant and any issues in general in regards to the tenancy.

Contractor	Department
	Create Task in the tasking system.
Make an appointment time with the tenant. Deliver a confirmation Inspection letter and an Inspection guide.	Provide the travel dates and inspection time.
Provide advice as to whether an interpreter is required.	Make arrangement for the interpreter if required.
Print out Inspection Report (SRF80) and complete the tenant's details. Attend the inspection with the Tenancy Contract Officer.	Carry out inspection with the tenant and complete the inspection report, taking photos if required/ requested.
Provide assistance with maintenance reporting.	Record and report any maintenance items.
Assist with arranging follow up inspection if required.	Tenant and Tenancy Contract Officer to sign inspection report.

Contractor	Department
Record interactions with tenants through the tasking system.	Review and close tasks once all requirements are met. Update Inspection Screen in TMS.

## 3.2.12. Follow Up Inspections

During a routine inspection Tenant Responsibility damage may be identified or the standard of cleanliness of a dwelling may not be considered appropriate, which case a follow-up inspection is required.

Contractor	Department
	Create Task in the tasking system.
Deliver follow up inspection letter to tenant that has been provided by the TCO. Include a copy of the "Looking After Your Home" booklet and any relevant fact sheets.	Provide the follow up inspection letter to the CHO
Confirm the appointment time with the tenant.	Provide the travel dates and inspection time.
Provide advice as to whether an interpreter is required.	Make arrangement for the interpreter if required.
Print out Inspection Report (SRF80) and complete the tenant's details. Attend the inspection with the Tenancy Contract Officer.	Refer to the previous inspection report outlining to the tenant, the areas that were unsatisfactory and advise the tenant if they have made the necessary improvements.
Provide plan for targeted support if required.	Tenant and Tenancy Contract Officer to sign inspection report.
Record interactions with tenants through the tasking system.	Review and close tasks once all requirements are met. Update Inspection Screen in TMS.

#### 3.2.13. Paying Rent or Housing Maintenance Levy

Once a household's income has been assessed and a rental rebate has been calculated or the maximum dwelling rent has been reached, a household can then make an agreement between themselves as to who will be making those payments and the level of their contribution. This is called a Family Rent/ Maintenance Levy Agreement (SRF40).

A Housing Maintenance Levy (HML) is an historic payment for existing houses in a Community where the tenancy is based on an OID rather than a lease.

Contractor	Department
	Create Task in the tasking system.
Explain and Assist the household with the SRF40.	Calculate the rent payable by the household.
Assist the tenants on the SRF40 to complete and sign the Method of Payment forms.	Enter the method of payment details into TMS.
Record interactions with tenants through the tasking system.	Review and close tasks once all requirements are met.

#### 3.2.14. Rent Calculation

The rent framework was introduced on 1 July 2010, to ensure tenants living in Communities across the Territory have their rent calculated consistently. The amount of rent charged is calculated as a percentage of each tenant or occupant's income type and is also based on an assessment of the total household income. The total household income is the income of everyone who lives in the house permanently or for more than six weeks.

If an assessment of the total house income exceeds the maximum dwelling rent, the rent charges per week will be set at the maximum dwelling rent. The money collected from rent helps cover the cost of repairs and maintenance and tenant support programs.

Contractor	Department
	Create Task in the tasking system.
Assist all occupants of a dwelling, including children, to complete an Income Confirmation Scheme Active Consent Authority (SF11) and Parental/Guardian consent form (SF33).	Check documents for completeness of information and update in TMS.
Assist all employed occupants of a dwelling to complete a Statement of Income (SF39).	Collect up to date income statements from Centrelink.
Assist tenants to have employers complete the Statement of Income (SF39) and obtain payslips.	Perform Rebate actions in TMS.
Record interactions with tenants through the tasking system.	Review and close tasks once all requirements are met.

#### 3.2.15. Leaving Tenancies

There are many ways a Tenancy can end. The *Residential Tenancies Act* (RTA) outlines ways in which Tenancies can be ended by either the Landlord, Tenant or both. Where a Tenancy is not ended as outlined in the RTA you will need to refer to the Department.

The purpose of ending a tenancy correctly is to ensure that both the landlord and the tenant meet their obligations under the RTA.

Contractor	Department		
Identifies the need for a task and creates a task.			
Commence the Task.	Ensure all requirements are noted in the task.		
When a tenant has advised that they intend to end their tenancy, assist them with the completion of a Cease Tenancy Form.	Check documents for completeness of information and update in TMS.		
Perform Actions according to updated task.	Update task as required for CHO to assist with in- community actions.		
Attend the final inspection with the Tenancy Contract Officer.	Perform the Final Inspection with reference to the Property Condition Report.		
Record interactions with tenants through the tasking system.	Review and close tasks once all CHO action requirements are met.		

### 3.2.16. Transferring Tenancies

Transferring tenancies can occur due to a change of circumstances of the Primary Client or Co-Client. There are many combinations of Tenancy transfers that can occur and many factors need to be considered.

An example of transferring a tenancy could be as follows:

- The primary client leaves the dwelling permanently;
- The leaving client completes and signs a Statutory Declaration confirming they have vacated and will not return;
- The remaining client becomes the primary client and is the sole signatory to the lease agreement; and
- The bond is not returned by the landlord to the leaving client.

Contractor	Department	
Identifies the need for a task and creates a task.		
Commence the Task.	Create Task in the tasking system.	
Assist the outgoing tenant to complete a statutory declaration.	Check documents for completeness of information and update in TMS.	
Record interactions with tenants through the tasking system.	Review and close tasks once all CHO requirements are met.	

## 4. Standards of Work

## 4.1. Legislation and Standards

The Contractor must ensure that staff employed to provide Tenancy Management Support Services will, at all times, comply and adhere to relevant standards, policies, processes, codes of conduct, including but not limited to:

- The Northern Territory <u>Residential Tenancies Act 1999</u> which is supported by the NT <u>Housing Act</u> <u>1982</u>. The Department and all its tenants are subject to this legislation;
- Mandatory Reporting Requirements under the <u>Care and Protection of Children Act 2007</u> and the <u>Domestic and Family Violence Act 2007</u>;
- alcohol, pornography and any other Community restrictions, see <u>Stronger Futures in the Northern</u> <u>Territory Act 2012</u>;
- the <u>Work Health and Safety (National Uniform Legislation) Act 2011</u> and <u>Work Health and Safety</u> (<u>National Uniform Legislation</u>) Regulations 2011, (Refer S16 Conditions of Contract);
- Reporting to the Police IMMEDIATELY, if during the course of work on the property, the Contractor becomes aware of or witnesses an illegal act or a crime in progress; and
- Inform themselves of the <u>Independent Commissioner against Corruption Act 2017</u> and its jurisdiction over the Contractor in respect of contracting with the NT Government.

## 4.2. Conduct of Employees

The Contractor shall be responsible for the good and proper conduct of the persons, employees, agents and subcontractors engaged by him and employed in the performance of the Contract.

The Contractor must at all times:

- remain aware that the dwelling is a tenant's home;
- behave in a courteous manner and maintain a professional and fair approach;

- ensure there is minimal inconvenience to tenants, occupants and their family members and the residents of adjacent properties;
- honour agreements and undertakings and communicate with Tenants as required;
- respond to any special needs or requests of Tenants, such as providing advice of progress and outcomes in relation to the Services being undertaken;
- take due care with the property and tenant's belongings;
- not antagonise or mistreat tenant's pets or bring any pets or animals to a dwelling; and
- respect the tenant's privacy and not disclose any confidential information to any other party.

The Contractor, if confronted with a difficult situation involving a Tenant or other occupants or an adjoining owner will inform the Department of the situation and of action taken by the Contractor.

#### 4.2.1. Housing Maintenance Contractor

All staff engaged in the delivery of Tenancy Management Support Services are expected to work closely with the Remote Housing Maintenance Contractor to improve service delivery. The Contractor may be required to provide support to the Remote Housing Maintenance Contractor to gain access to properties to undertake works, to liaise with tenants about required work and to keep tenants informed of the status of their maintenance request.

It is expected that the Tenancy Management Support Service Contractor and the Remote Housing Maintenance Contractor will work together to achieve a communication system for maintenance requests.

## 4.3. The Issuing of Tasks

Contractors will be issued (and can create) tasks in a format prescribed by the Department. Where this is managed through an online portal, all employees of the Contractor who will be updating tasks will be issued with a unique User ID and log in.

Tasks are a recording of tenant interactions and time spent on Tenancy Management Activities performed under the contract and are in addition to tenancy management updates in TMS (Rebates, inspections, entering applications) where these are included in the Contractors duties.

The task will notify the Contractor of the timeframe in which the task needs to be completed.

The Contractor will be notified of a task via an email address nominated by the Contractor.

As required, the Contractor will receive training in the system and will be provided with a guide.

#### 4.3.1. Updating Tasks

Contractors will record all interactions with tenants in relation to the tasks, or where a task has not been created, create a task to record the interaction.

The Contractor will update all tasks in compliance with the Departments policies and procedures.

## 4.4. Access to Dwellings

The Contractor is not to proceed with any Services in respect of a dwelling where no contact has been made with the Tenant or permission to enter the dwelling has been refused, until further advised by the Department that it is in order for the Contractor to do so.

Where appointments cannot be made and/or where dwellings are unattended, the CHO **must leave an approved calling card** which clearly defines the nature of the visit/call, together with identification, time, date and telephone number. Under no circumstances will the CHO gain entry to dwellings by force, or enter the property surrounds without the consent of the occupant. Forced or uninvited entry onto the dwelling

will be regarded as a serious offence and acts of this nature will be referred to the NT Police for appropriate action.

## 4.5. Completion of Works

When undertaking services, the CHO is to be aware that tasks shall not be considered complete until:

- the task has been correctly updated;
- the supporting documentation for each action has been submitted to the Department by scanning and emailing to the provided email address; and
- the Department has designated the task as complete.

## 4.6. Delays and Extension of Timeframes

The Contractor will use its best endeavours and take all reasonable action to avoid delays in the completion of any services. However, the Contractor may request in writing an extension of time if faced with any of the following situations:

- abnormal wet weather conditions;
- natural disaster;
- significant change to the task or service to be performed;
- redirection by the Department to another task or service (redirection of priorities); and
- cultural matters giving rise to delays.

If there are delays in services being completed, the Contractor must advise the Tenant and the Department of the delay, giving an estimated time for completion.

## 4.7. Critical Incidents and Emergency Responses

The Contractor is to advise the Department of any relevant factors such as Community closure for ceremonies and conflicts.

In the event of a critical incident or emergency, the Contractor will:

- contact the appropriate emergency service immediately if there is any immediate danger to life or property; and
- notify the Department as quickly as possible of the situation.

The Northern Territory Government is responsible for the management of property and tenancy related critical incidents and emergencies. The Department will liaise with relevant Contractor/s, Government Departments and Services in response to any perceived critical incident or emergency.

The intention is to minimise trauma and distress to tenants and damage to property, and to ensure safe and secure tenancy is maintained or resumed within acceptable timeframes.

The purpose of this policy is to assist the Department in preparing for and responding to critical incidences and emergencies and applies to all public housing tenants, Contractors and associated employees of the Department.

#### 4.7.1. Critical Incidents – Definition

Critical incidents are traumatic events or the threat of such that occur suddenly and unexpectedly causing extreme stress, fear or injury. They may be an emergency or disaster such as cyclone, flooding or fire, with effects on staff, tenants and the operations of the Department and its Contractors, or some other physical event; a series of events; or a personal or psychological trauma that has severe immediate impact and potentially long-term effects on the individuals involved.

### 4.7.2. Emergencies

Emergencies and critical incidents can vary significantly in duration. Some will be discrete and short in duration others may be protracted and last for days or weeks e.g. cyclone, flood, wind damage, fire and fire damage.

Effective emergency management involves coordinated actions based on line management principles and designated responsibilities. This will:

- reduce the likelihood of emergencies and critical incidents;
- minimise the impact on tenants, service providers and site activities; and
- facilitate the return of the site to normal operations as soon as possible.

The Department will make contact with relevant Service Providers in response to any perceived critical incident or emergency.

#### 4.7.2.1. In the Case of an Emergency

In an emergency, such as cyclone or flood, the Contractor should ensure:

- All vehicles are fully fuelled, vehicles contain drinking water and are stored securely;
- All tools and equipment are stored securely;
- All worksites are secured and cleared of debris;
- An emergency contact is provided for post emergency evaluation and rectification works;
- where the Contractor's employees are residents of the affected area and requires evacuation, that an alternative, suitably qualified person is available in community as soon as practicable after the emergency event; and
- where a temporary workers camp is in-situ, all temporary structures, including shade sails and the like are dismantled and stored securely.

#### 4.7.3. Fire Risk, Asbestos Damage and Asbestos Containing Material

The Department maintains fire and asbestos risk management practices that corresponds with the risk the agency faces and with the objective to comply with the relevant specified Acts, Regulations and Codes to ensure public housing is habitable and safe for all occupants and workers. As the landlord for public housing, the Department has a duty of care to manage and maintain smoke and fire safety practices and equipment, and where suspected Asbestos Containing Material is damaged, to arrange an appropriate course of action.

In the event of an emergency incident involving fire and/or asbestos the Northern Territory Fire and Rescue Service (NTFRS) will be the controlling agency until the emergency has been contained and fire investigations have been carried out.

# Under no circumstances should tenants, CHO's or Department staff attempt to fix or remove damaged asbestos. Work to rectify any asbestos sheeting should be carried out by, or supervised by, a Contractor who holds a current license issued by NT Worksafe to remove asbestos.

While some dwellings do contain asbestos products, if they are maintained in good order, they present no immediate risk to health. Alternatives to asbestos have been phased in since 1986 but the total ban on importation and use of white asbestos products was not in place until 2003.

# It should be presumed that asbestos is present in all dwellings constructed before 1990 until it is verified by sampling that asbestos is not present.

The NT Worksafe Asbestos Website provides a summary of the codes of practice for

- the management and control of asbestos in the workplace; and
- the safe removal of asbestos.

## 4.8. Reporting and Performance

At the conclusion each 12 calendar month period, the Department will prepare a Performance Report for the Contractor based on performance against the performance measures, compliance assessments, monthly meetings and other available records and documentation.

#### 4.8.1. Monthly Activity Report

The Department will collect data from the task management system in relation to the Contractor's previous month's activity. The Contractor must ensure that all tasks are up to date. The data collected includes but is not limited to:

- Tasks completed and the date of completion;
- Tasks awaiting action from the Department or Contractor;
- Tasks incomplete or not commenced; and
- Labour hours attributed to each work plan task.

The Contractor shall provide a Monthly Employment Statement to the Department in the prescribed Excel template. The information required includes:

A list of employees with the following detail:

- whether they identify as Aboriginal;
- their position's labour type; and
- total hours working on this contract in the month.

This information, along with the invoice, shall be provided by the fifth business day in the following month.

Reporting arrangements maybe modified and improved during the period of the Contract by agreement between the Department and the Contractor.

#### 4.8.2. Key Performance Indicators

The performance of the Contractor will be assessed in accordance with the following performance indicators and methods of information gathering:

Performance Indicator	Target	Method of Assessment
Registration of tenancy interaction and actions	<b>100%</b> registration and reporting of all work requests and interactions under the correct interaction type in the tasking system, and is undertaken in accordance with the Contract and this handbook.	Task Reporting Data and Tenant feedback.
Attendance at HRG meetings	<b>100%</b> of HRG meetings are attended per annum.	Task Reporting Data; Assessment of HRG minutes.
Adherence to the Contract	<b>100%</b> work undertaken compliant with the Contract.	Task Reporting Data; monthly meeting between the Department and Contractor and from Tenant feedback.
Living Strong Program	100% primary client in each household have completed the Living Strong program over the 2 years of the contract.	Task Reporting Data, Attendance Records, reference to Contractor's plan for delivery.

Performance Indicator	Target	Method of Assessment
Employee hours efficiently utilised towards the work plan	Minimum of 85% of Tendered Labour Hours as proposed by Contractor in the Contractor's Tender utilised towards the work plan and agreed training.	Task Reporting Data.
Labour Hours (FTE)	The Contractor must provide <b>minimum of 95%</b> of the labour hours (FTE) proposed in the Contractors tender.	Monthly Employment Statement.
The carrying out of tasks within the specified timeframes	<b>95%</b> of the tasks carried out within the required timeframes noted in the task request.	Task Reporting Data.
Percentage of local Aboriginal Persons employed by the Contractor	<b>50%</b> of the Contractor's labour hours are performed by Aboriginal Persons at the commencement of the contract, increasing by <b>2%</b> annually on every anniversary of the contract.	Monthly Employment Statement to be provided by Contractor.

#### 4.8.3. Monthly Meetings

At the conclusion of each calendar month, the Contractor will be required to attend a meeting to discuss matters related to the Contract, the meeting will be held at a nominated time and place determined by the Department.

The meeting will be rescheduled if the meeting is not held due to the inability to attend of either party. The Department must be advised if the Contractor's Representative is unable to attend on the specified date. If no such notice is received, it will be reflected in the performance report.

Minimum requirements of the meeting will be to discuss performance relating to completion of the monthly work plan, delays, dwelling access issues and any other general issue that is relevant to the overall performance of delivering the expected Services within the community and under the Contract.

Meetings will be minuted by the Department and copies of the minutes and action items will be sent to the Contractor for endorsing as agreed. Any action/remedial action items must be followed up either prior to, or at the next meeting, depending on the action requirement.

These meetings will also provide the opportunity to discuss other Contractor compliance issues regarding the Department's Tenants, policies, systems, standards etc which have arisen during the month.

## 5. Appendices

- A. Employee Report Template
- B. Work Flow Delivery Model

#### After Award

- C. Induction Presentation
- D. TMS Guide

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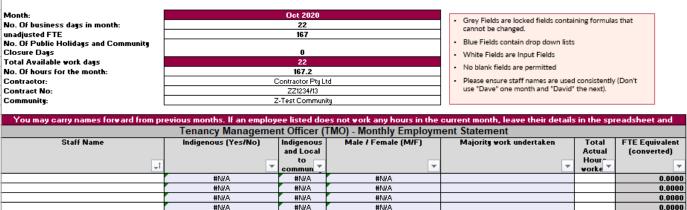
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## 5.1. APPENDIX A – Employee Report

# CHO EMPLOYMENT STATEMENT

#N/A

#N/A #N/A



#N/A

#N//A

#N/A

Total

Regions of NT have Show days that require approval and gazettal by the Minister.

Alice Springs Show Day: Tennant Creek Show Day

Katherine Show Day:

. Darwin Show Day:

TERRITORY FAMILIES, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES Page 27 of 28

## 5.2. APPENDIX B - Delivery Model Workflow

