



# KEEPING YOUR HOME SAFE & HEALTHY



## Some important terms

**Clutter:** a home can become cluttered when there are more items than can safely or comfortably be stored or moved around

**Unsafe living conditions:** when a home becomes very unclean or disorganised, it may start to affect health and safety

**Hoarding behaviour:** when a person collects and has difficulty discarding items, even things others may not see as valuable

**Domestic squalor:** when living conditions have become very unclean, to a point that they may affect a person's health or safety.

These are recognised by health providers and are not a sign of laziness or failure.

### Why is it important to address this?

- To keep you, your household and neighbours safe
- To ensure access for urgent repairs or emergency services
- To reduce fire risks and hazards
- To avoid property damage that may be difficult or costly to repair

### We are here to help

If you're finding things overwhelming, there is help available. Support options may include:

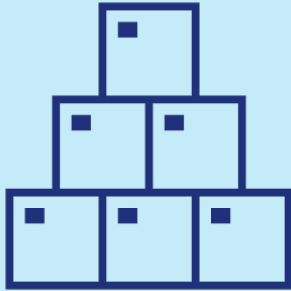
- Cleaning and decluttering services
- Mental health service
- Access to support or education groups

### Rights and responsibilities

- Renters must allow WHL access for inspections
- Renters must not cause damage to the property or pose a safety risk
- Renters must minimise fire risks by ensuring safe entry and exit to the property
- Renters must not cause a nuisance to neighbours, including odours or goods impinging on neighbours' properties.

WHL aims to work with you, not against you. We want to keep you safe in your home and make sure support is available.

**Support is available if you or a household member is struggling with clutter or unsafe living conditions**



## Common signs to look out for

- Ongoing difficulty in parting with items
- Feeling a need to 'save items' and feeling upset about getting rid of them
- A build up of clutter that makes it difficult to access or use rooms
- A build up of food or trash to a large, unsanitary level
- Disorganised stacks or piles of items such as newspapers, clothes, paperwork, books or sentimental items
- Being unable to use furniture (i.e., bed) due to accumulation of goods
- Limited ability to walk through the property unimpeded
- Having more animals than what is safe or reasonable for the property
- Feeling stressed or anxious about personal belongings
- Feeling stressed or anxious about visitors to your home

## Where to get support

- **Tenancy Plus:** A program aimed at supporting renters to remain in social housing.
- **NEAMI:** Offers a range of programs including case management and housing support
- **Housing for the Aged Action Group:** Offers a program for persons over 50 at risk of homelessness
- **Wombat Singles Support Program:** A program for single adults in THM Housing that provides case management
- **EACH:** Offers a range of support in wellbeing, mental health and housing
- **The Crowded House:** offers secondary consultations and home based therapeutic practical support
- **Buried in Treasures Program:** Offers sessions runs by Occupational Therapists
- **Swinburne Psychology Clinic Compulsive Hoarding and Acquiring Group:** A group program to assist with hoarding and squalor issues through Cognitive Behavioural Therapy.



## Fire Services Victoria

WHL will notify Fire Service Victoria where there are concerns that emergency responders might not be able to have safe egress into a property. This is an anonymous process and the renter's name is not disclosed.