



A word from our CEO



Hello and welcome to our first newsletter of 2024. We have lots of information to share with you in this edition. Our maintenance pages focus on preventing tenant liability charges which we hope you will find useful. We also have facts about creating a will and the most recent advice about scammers and their increasing use of Artificial Intelligence, something we all need to be vigilant about.

We also have the latest advice about lithium-ion batteries and the fire risk they can pose. With more of our appliances, gadgets and essential items such as mobility scooters containing these batteries, it is good to know how to take care of them properly.

Our Tenant Spotlight on Page 3 falls on Mark who has created an amazing makeover of his garden and has showed his creativity and his bargain hunting skills. Thank you Mark for sharing your interesting and informative story with us.

Kathryn

Kathryn Moorey, Chief Executive Officer

Byford Development Begins

We are excited to announce that work has started on our Byford housing development which comprises 12 two bedroom units.

The units will be close to local shops including a medical centre and chemist, on a public bus route and with access to public open spaces.

This project has been made possible by the Department of Communities through the Community Housing Grants Program awarded in July 2023.



We anticipate that the project will be completed and our new social housing tenants will be enjoying their new homes by March next year.



Artist's impression

Information Insights

Making a Will

A will is a legal document that sets out what you want to happen with your belongings after you die, such as who you want to have your car, money, jewellery or other items. These assets are called your 'estate.'

It can also state whether you want to be buried or cremated, whether you want to donate your organs, whether you want to gift anything to charity and who you would like to look after your pets and any provisions you may make for this.

A will also names who will carry out your wishes after you die – this person is called the 'executor.' You must get the permission of an executor because they don't have to accept the role.

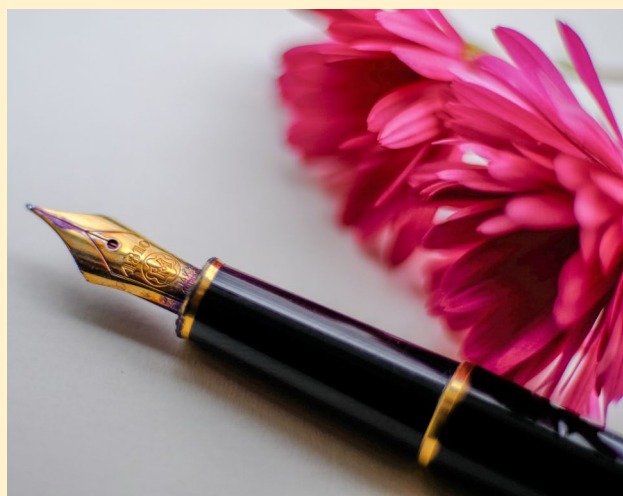
You can make a will at any time and change it as often as you like. You don't need to itemise everything; you can use expressions like 'all of my jewellery' or 'all of my remaining property of whatever kind.'

If you don't have a will, the law will decide who gets your belongings after any debts have been paid. When a person dies without leaving a will, they are said to have 'died intestate.' The rules can be complicated depending on the value of the estate and the relationship to the next of kin.

You can write up a will yourself or buy a will kit from a newsagent or Australia Post, or you can do it on-line but remember that wills are complex documents with legal rules and if you make a mistake, your will may not be valid and your wishes may not be carried out or there may be disputes about the wording.

It is a good idea to get legal advice and make sure your will is correctly prepared by using a lawyer or the Public Trustee. The Public Trustee has reduced fees for concession card holders and will also act as the executor of your will. For more information, visit the **Citizens Advice Bureau WA's website** <https://cabwa.com.au/help/making-wills/> or the **Public Trustee** at www.wa.gov.au/service/justice/civil-law/make-will-public-trustee.

If you don't have access to the internet, contact your Property Officer and we will arrange for a PDF version of the information to be sent to you.



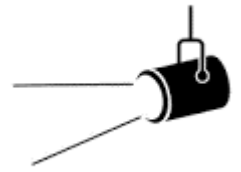
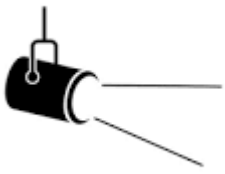
New Warning About AI Scams

Consumer Protection's ScamNet is warning of the rising threat of scammers using Artificial Intelligence (AI) to create convincing deepfake videos and voice impersonations. Less than one minute of someone's voice gained from social media can generate entire blocks of AI speech and a few photos can create a realistic deepfake video.



Consumer Protection's advice when watching videos is to be vigilant for unnatural movements of the eyes and hands and the mouth not moving in time with the speech. In a fake audio, such as a phone call, the person may not greet you as they normally would or won't answer any of your questions. Be wary of unexpected phone calls, as caller ID numbers can be faked.

If someone who says they are a family member or friend is asking for your personal details or money using a video chat or phone call, tell them you will ring them back to verify their identity. Think about creating a 'safe word' to say over the phone with family and friends so you know when it is a genuine emergency.



Tenant Spotlight

Amazing Garden Transformation

When Mark moved into his home a year ago, his garden was almost non-existent and the few plants that did exist were neglected and worse for wear.

Mark decided he wanted his garden to look good, so he set to work improving it and the results are amazing.



March 2023 - Before

Mark is an avid bargain hunter and found an artificial lawn off-cut on Facebook Marketplace for \$50. He wanted a professional finish, so he arranged for the ground to be levelled with stone chippings and compacted.

Mark's mum painted some unused plastic pots terracotta, which Mark used to plant roses.

Rather than buying Frangipanis, Mark used cuttings from his mum's established plant.

With some retic, care and attention his plants, and the ones that were already planted, are thriving.



For the entertainment area, Mark went bargain-hunting online and found a solid wood table for \$50 and outdoor cushions for \$20, creating a very welcoming, relaxing area.

We love Mark's garden and appreciate him sharing his story and the finished photos with us.

If you have a hobby, idea or talent you'd like to share, contact your Property Officer and we may see your story here.

Maintenance Matters

Money down the Drain

One of the most common Tenant Liability charge is for blockages caused by unflushable items going down the toilet. Even some flushable products don't break down and can clog pipes.

A new national standard has been released, meaning that all products such as toilet wipes, sanitary products and even some types of cat litter must display a flushable logo. If the product does not have the logo, it means it isn't flushable. Toilet paper, liquids and soluble products don't need to display the logo.



Waste products are not meant to be flushed and must not go into the toilet, but in the bin.

Some examples are:

- Cotton buds, tissues, wet wipes, paper towels, dental floss, nappies, sanitary products, disposable razors
- Food scraps, coffee grounds, tea leaves, cooking fats and oils
- Newspaper and plastics, unused medicines
- Paint, cleaning products, mulch, potting mix, fertiliser, pesticides and engine oils.

Be careful children don't stuff toys and other items down the toilet. If your child is going through a toilet-flushing phase, think about fitting a child safety toilet lock. Using too much toilet paper can also cause a blockage.

Plumbing repairs for blockages can be expensive and the vast majority are tenant liability. Making sure that your toilet is only used for its intended purpose and not as a bin can help you avoid unexpected costs. If you do block your toilet, read below for some tips on what you can try before ringing for a plumber.

Things you can try to unclog a blocked toilet

- If you can see the blockage, put on rubber gloves and try to fish it out.
- If you can't see the blockage, and the toilet bowl is not overflowing, pour half a cup of dishwashing liquid into the bowl followed by a kettle full of hot (not boiling) water. Wait a few minutes then flush. The dishwashing liquid may allow the blockage to slide more easily.



- Use a toilet flange plunger (available from hardware or large retail stores). Put the plunger in the bottom of the bowl and submerge it in the toilet water. Press on the plunger gently (not hard, as you could damage the bowl) to get all of the air out of the plunger and create a seal. Quickly jerk the plunger up. Repeat until the water begins to drain.
- If the toilet bowl is not full of water, try mixing a cup of baking soda with a cup of vinegar. When the mixture starts fizzing, pour it down the toilet. Leave it for at least half an hour.
- Try using a natural enzyme drain cleaner (available from supermarkets and hardware stores).

If you choose to use chemical drain cleaner, make sure it is specifically suitable for toilets. Unsuitable corrosive chemicals can cause the toilet bowl to crack and damage the plastic pipes. Chemical toilet cleaners should not be used for septic tanks and the instructions must be followed very carefully.

Maintenance Matters

Alterations and Modifications

Do you know that the only alterations currently allowed under the RTA is for tenants to anchor furniture to a wall to stop it toppling over onto a child or a person with a disability?*

Tenants must seek written permission from Stellar Living for **all** other modifications or alterations. This includes things like putting up shelves, curtain rods, installing air-conditioners, ceiling fans and painting walls, ceilings, floors, cupboards etc. We will consider all requests for modifications and alterations and not unreasonably refuse requests.

We must however check whether strata or council permission is required, and consider whether there will be damage to the property, and if the property contains asbestos etc. If approved, we will provide **written approval** which may have conditions such as the work being carried out by a qualified tradesperson, having to be inspected when completed, providing copies of contractor's paid invoices, providing a copy of an Electrical Safety Certificate and putting the property back to its original condition when the property is vacated. All work and any remedial work is at the tenant's own expense.



Tenants who do not obtain written permission or go ahead with work although they have been refused permission, may be charged for the cost of removing any items and making good any damages or returning the property back to its original condition. It may also place them in breach of their Tenancy Agreement.

Always ask for permission from your Property Officer **before** making any alterations or modifications, however minor they may be.

**Tenants who are experiencing Family and Domestic Violence (FDV) may make certain security upgrades without our permission but they must tell us before they carry out any work.*

Your new
MAINTENANCE NUMBER FRIDGE MAGNET
is enclosed with this issue of the newsletter.
If yours is missing or damaged, please
contact your Property Officer for a
replacement.

Avoid Call Out Charges

Please remember that if you arrange for a contractor to attend your property to carry out repairs and you are not home at the arranged time, you will be charged the cost of the call-out.

To avoid unnecessary charges, if you are not going to be home, please arrange for someone else to provide access or ring the Maintenance Hotline number 1800 125 430 as soon as possible to re-arrange the appointment.

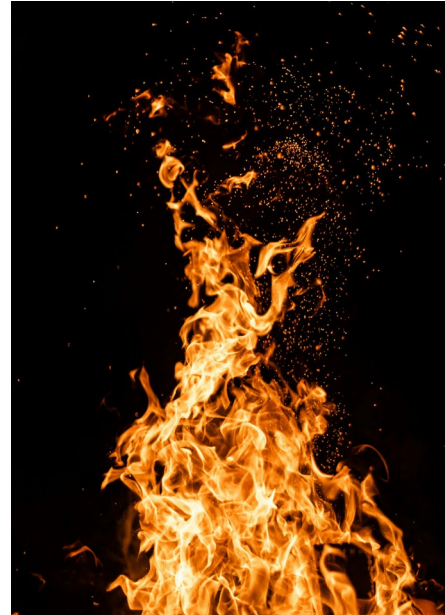


Lithium Batteries Fire Risk Warning

Consumer Protection and DFES are warning about overcharging lithium-ion batteries, which can lead to overheating and violent explosions, causing intense fires that can engulf homes within minutes. These batteries are commonly found in phones, laptops, tablets, toys, household and garden tools, as well as mobility equipment like scooters and electric bikes. Look for 'Li', 'Li-ion', 'Li-po', or variations of 'Li' on the battery to identify lithium-ion ones.

Safety advice:

- Use only the original charger or certified third-party chargers compatible with battery specifications as using the wrong voltage and current can cause damage to the battery, leading to a fire.
- Check that chargers show the Regulatory Compliance Mark, indicating compliance with Australian Standards, or check approval on the Electrical Equipment Safety Scheme (EESS) website at www.eess.gov.au
- Never leave batteries unattended while charging; disconnect them once fully charged. Avoid charging on soft surfaces and keep batteries away from flammable materials.
- Never charge a battery where your quick exit from the house would be prevented if it caught fire i.e. a hallway.
- Charge larger batteries in well-ventilated areas like garages or sheds.
- Keep batteries away from heat and moisture, don't leave them in direct sunlight or hot cars.
- Immediately stop using batteries that show signs of damage, are leaking, swollen or hot to the touch.



If you notice any strange smells or noises, extreme heat and/or smoke, evacuate and call emergency services (000) immediately.

My Aged Care

As we get older, we may need a little help to continue to live independently, keep active or attend social events. **My Aged Care** is a government-funded service which provides subsidised help to eligible persons aged 65 years or older (50 years or older for Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people).



There are many care options available, such as helping you around the home and with meals and shopping.

You may be able to do things yourself but just need help to organising transport to get to the shops, appointments and social activities. You may just want someone to come with you for company.

If you are recovering after an illness or coming out of hospital, or your usual carer is going away for a while, you can ask for short-term help.

My Aged Care can help maintain a good quality of life and enable you to do the things you enjoy. To find out more, ring 1800 200 422 or go to www.myagedcare.gov.au or speak to your Property Officer for more information.

Complaints, Appeals and Feedback

We have a number of policies to make sure that our tenants have a way to voice their concerns, challenge decisions we have made and provide feedback to help improve our services. Here we explain the differences between Complaints, Appeals and Feedback.

COMPLAINTS ABOUT NEIGHBOURS

Neighbour complaints involve ongoing, unreasonable disturbances like excessive noise, threats, and offensive behaviour. Action can be taken against Stellar Living tenants if the nuisance behaviour breaches their Tenancy Agreement. We must follow a legal process which may take time. We do not address issues like personal disputes or normal daily activities like children playing. Some complaints, such as noise or barking dogs, are best reported to the local council's environment health and ranger services departments. For criminal or safety concerns, contact WA Police at 131 444 for non-urgent issues and 000 for emergencies.

To make a neighbour complaint, contact your Property Officer. We may ask you to keep a 'Nuisance Diary' to record the frequency, type, and duration of nuisance during our investigations and any subsequent legal action.

COMPLAINTS ABOUT STELLAR LIVING

If you are unhappy with a staff member, contractor or a service we have provided, you can make a complaint. Contact your Property Officer with details of the complaint such as the time, date, who was involved and what happened. We will carry out an impartial investigation into the complaint, taking into consideration both parties' accounts. If you do not wish to contact your Property Officer, email your complaint to kmoorey@stellarliving.com.au or post to PO Box 370 Thornlie 6988, marking it 'Confidential – for the attention of the CEO'.

APPEALS

If you are unhappy with a decision we have made, you can appeal that decision. It may be that you have been charged for a repair you do not feel you are responsible for, you have been refused a transfer request or permission to carry out an alteration to your property.

There are some things that can't be appealed such as our policies (although you can offer feedback as detailed below), government policies, or an application for a court hearing to terminate a tenancy.

The first step is to contact your Property Officer who will explain why the decision was made. If you have new information, your Property Officer will review the decision. If you are unhappy with that outcome, you can lodge a formal appeal. We will ask you to provide details of the decision and why you feel it is incorrect. Your appeal will be reviewed by a person not involved in the original decision-making process and you will be advised of an outcome within 14 days. If you are still unhappy, the third and final step is a CEO review of the decision.

FEEDBACK

We value your feedback on how well we are providing services to you or what we could do to improve. Your feedback can influence our policies and how we do things. To provide feedback, you can speak to your Property Officer, email enquiries @stellarliving.com.au, post it to PO Box 370 Thornlie 6988 or fill out the contact form on our website at www.stellarliving.com.au. We will acknowledge all feedback received.



Puzzle Page

Win a \$50 Bunnings voucher by completing our Word Search! This issue is all words relating to Easter fun.

All the words are in the word search except for one, which has been left out. Words can be forwards, backwards, diagonal, up or down. Letters may be used more than once. **Let us know the missing word** by emailing your answer, name and address to enquiries@stellarliving.com.au or post it to: Stellar Living Limited, PO Box 370, Thornlie WA 6988.

Competition closes **Wednesday 1st May 2024**. A winner will be drawn from all the correct entries after the closing date. Only one entry per household please.



Chocolate
Bunny
Eggs
Hunt
Basket
Family
Holidays
Bonnet
Parade
Autumn
Traditions
Camping
Outdoors
Brunch
Games
Crafts



Congratulations
to
Sally
who was the
successful draw
in our last
competition.
The missing word
was **BONBONS**.

Holiday Closures

We will be closed on the following days:

- Good Friday 29th March 2024
- Easter Monday 1st April 2024
- Anzac Day Thursday 25th April 2024

For **urgent maintenance only** ring
1800 125 430

Stop Mould

As the weather gets cooler, remember to keep your home mould free by:

- ✓ Airing your home regularly to let fresh air in
- ✓ Open blinds and curtains to let the sun in
- ✓ Use exhaust fans to get rid of steam
- ✓ Keep tiles soap-scum free
- ✓ Wipe away any moisture on windows, tiles & walls
- ✓ Air the room after drying clothes indoors.

