



# Residents' Handbook

Your handbook to your Abbeyfield  
House!

(November 2012)

**Contact details for your Abbeyfield House**

<b>Name of Local Abbeyfield Society</b>	
<b>Resident's name</b>	
<b>Resident's telephone number</b>	
<b>Abbeyfield House address</b>	
<b>Housekeeper's name</b>	
<b>Weekend Housekeepers</b>	
<b>Resident Liaison Officer</b>	
<b>Resident Liaison Officer (telephone)</b>	
<b>Your doctor</b>	
<b>Abbeyfield Australia</b>	(03) 9419 8222 <a href="http://www.abbeyfield.org.au">www.abbeyfield.org.au</a>

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**Residents' Handbook - older persons' house**

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## **1. Your handbook explained**

Welcome to your Abbeyfield House and your Resident Handbook.

Your handbook is a guide to living in your Abbeyfield House and explains your rights, and responsibilities as a resident. The handbook gives you information about your house and the community it is part of.

Our goal is to provide an attractive, comfortable and affordable house which satisfies your wishes and meets your accommodation needs.

Your Abbeyfield House gets its character from you and your fellow residents. So, as well as the information in the handbook, you can gain a lot of information about life in your house from talking to others in your house.

Your handbook will help you in three ways:

- it is a guide to living in your house
- it has information about your rights and responsibilities as a resident.
- it helps you find other sources of useful information.

## **2. About Abbeyfield**

### **2.1. What is an Abbeyfield House?**

An Abbeyfield House is a group house in which residents live independently within the dynamic of a shared supportive house. The residents 'come and go' as they please, socialise with other residents as much as desired, enjoy the support of a live-in housekeeper and remain engaged with the community.

Abbeyfield Houses are based on an 'assisted independent living' philosophy and residential concept where:

- each house has ten residents who each enjoy a private suite comprising bedroom and ensuite
- residents share a comfortable lounge room, dining room, garden, and laundry
- nutritious meals are provided by a full-time live-in house keeper
- all maintenance and house costs covered by the local Abbeyfield association.

An Abbeyfield House is a large house but it is not an institution or a facility. It is just an ordinary house in an ordinary street.

### **2.2. The Abbeyfield House model**

A unique feature of the Abbeyfield model is that each Abbeyfield House is managed by a local Abbeyfield Association (an incorporated Association managed by a volunteer Committee of Management).

The local Association manages all aspects of the house in accordance with the governance principles and procedures of Abbeyfield Australia. Lead by a volunteer Committee of Management, your local Abbeyfield Society is responsible for issues such as:

- compliance with tenancy legislation
- compliance with food safety standards
- induction and ongoing liaison with residents
- employment of your housekeepers
- consultation with residents (individually and via a residents' house meeting)
- budgeting and financial management.

Once constructed, an Abbeyfield House requires no ongoing government subsidy as operational costs are funded through affordable resident rent.

This business model:

- ensures consistent quality outcomes whilst encouraging local control (as all Abbeyfield Houses operate under a national framework)
- is very cost effective because it maximizes the commitment and contribution of volunteers at the local level
- ensures the local community remains engaged with its Abbeyfield House which is emotionally 'owned' by the local community as a community asset.

### **2.3. Abbeyfield Australia**

Abbeyfield Australia is the peak national body representing 26 affiliated Abbeyfield Associations. Together these community based incorporated Associations successfully manage 23 Abbeyfield Houses and three aged care facilities across Tasmania, Victoria, South Australia, New South Wales, the ACT and Queensland.

Abbeyfield's focus is affordable, assisted group housing for older people, and for adults with mild to moderate intellectual disabilities. Our model adapts to meet local community needs.

Abbeyfield Australia is a part of the world wide Abbeyfield movement encompassing 18 countries as diverse as the United Kingdom, Canada, New Zealand, Italy, Japan and South Africa. The Abbeyfield concept began in 1955 in the United Kingdom and today more than 9000 people in 850 houses throughout the world live in Abbeyfield Houses.

Abbeyfield Australia is a not for profit company limited by guarantee, a Public Benevolent Institution (PBI) and has Deductible Gift Recipient Status. (Donations to Abbeyfield Australia over \$2.00 are tax deductible.)

Whilst being a national peak body advocating for all Abbeyfield Houses and Hostels, a key role of Abbeyfield Australia is to maintain a management and support framework for local Abbeyfield Associations.

### **3. People in your Abbeyfield House**

#### **3.1. Your Housekeeper**

Your Housekeeper is a valuable employee with an important role. Your full time housekeeper will work at the house every Monday to Friday and will:

- cook healthy and tasty meals for you every day
- clean the lounge, dining room and other common areas of the house
- keep a watchful eye on your general well-being
- do all the shopping for house.

Your housekeeper will live on-site for five nights per week and will be available to assist in emergencies after hours. (There will not be a housekeeper sleeping overnight on weekends.)

Your house may also employ two or three casual housekeepers who may be rostered to work for for a few hours each Saturday and Sunday.

Your housekeeper is there to help you, but she is not your servant, butler, maid or personal carer.

#### **3.2. Your Resident Liaison Officer**

Your Resident Liaison Officer is a volunteer member of the Committee of Management which manages your house.

The Resident Liaison Officer is there to:

- help you settle in to your house
- help you and your fellow residents organise their Residents' Committee
- answer any questions you have about your Abbeyfield House
- tell you about news affecting you and your house
- attend meetings of the Residents Committee to ensure your views are heard
- make sure you understand all your rights and responsibilities at your house.

#### **3.3. Residents' Committee**

The Residents' Committee is a committee comprising you and your fellow residents. It is an important committee and gives you input into how your house operates.

Residents' Committee will:

- meet regularly, and probably about once every month
- follow an agreed agenda and keep simple meeting notes
- hear from the Resident Liaison Officer about things being considered by the Committee of Management
- discuss potential new residents
- discuss the House Rules to apply at your house
- have input into important decisions at the house effecting the residents

- provide feedback (compliments or criticisms) on any aspect of your house.

The best Residents' Committee meetings are informal, relaxed and follow three golden rules:

- you have a right to speak and be heard
- you have a responsibility to listen quietly to what others say
- everyone has something to contribute and deserves respect.

The Resident Liaison Officer will attend the Residents' Committee meeting but does not get a vote. The Housekeeper won't attend the Residents' Committee meeting unless invited.

You do not have to attend Resident Committee meetings but we would like you to.

### **3.4. Volunteers**

Abbeyfield Australia and every local Abbeyfield society relies upon volunteers to survive.

Without the fantastic work our volunteers do, Abbeyfield would not exist and we could not offer you the opportunity to live in your Abbeyfield House.

All our volunteers are unpaid and give freely of their time. Say 'G'day' when you see a volunteer.

## **4. What you want and what you need**

### **4.1. House Rules**

Your Abbeyfield House has a set of House Rules which you must obey. These will be in display in your Abbeyfield House.

House Rules are important and say that every resident must respects the rights and responsibilities or every other resident.

You will be involved in making the House Rules for you house. They are your rules so you get to help make them.

House Rules will be reviewed annually and will be displayed on the house notice board.

If you break a House Rule we may speak with you about it. In very serious cases, we may even ask you to leave the Abbeyfield House.

### **4.2. Balancing duty of care and dignity of risk**

An important aspect of life in your Abbeyfield House is balancing duty of care and dignity of risk. This means that we:

- have a legal responsibility (duty of care) to ensure our accommodation is safe and secure; and
- recognize that you have the right to make informed choices and take calculated risks (dignity of risk).

This is very important because an Abbeyfield House is just that, a house. It is a home like any other ordinary home in any ordinary street. It is not an institution with lots of rules and regulations, and does not have lots of staff telling you what you can and cannot do.

An Abbeyfield House is a group house and we balance the duty of care and dignity or risk by having a residence agreement (your lease agreement) which gives you rights and responsibilities, and also by having House Rules which all residents must obey.

### **4.3. Feedback**

We are not perfect and will sometimes make mistakes. If you are concerned about anything relating to your Abbeyfield house, we want to hear from you!

You can speak to the Resident Liaison Officer about any concern or complaint you have. If this does not deal with the matter, you can continue to follow our complaints procedure. A copy of the procedure will be on you house notice board and is also available on the Abbeyfield Australia web site at [www.abbeyfield.org.au](http://www.abbeyfield.org.au)

You may also be asked to take part in an annual resident survey. Your participation is optional but we would really like you to take part because it helps us to run the house better for you. It is only through feedback that we can make sure that we can continually improve your Abbeyfield House.

## **5. Your Abbeyfield house**

Your Abbeyfield house is a place where you can live comfortably with independence, support, and friendship. It is your home and a place we want you to be proud of.

### **5.1. Being safe and happy in your Abbeyfield House**

This is your home and we want you to feel safe, happy and proud.

If ever anything happens that you do not like, then we want you to tell us.

### **5.2. Your room**

Your room is your private place. It's yours to furnish with your personal possessions, and to live in as you choose.

Other people should only enter your room with your permission. The Housekeeper will always ask for your permission wherever possible before entering your room.

To help maintain the safety and security please close and lock your doors at night (both hall door and outside door)

As your room is your private space, you are responsible for keeping it clean and tidy. You may ask a friend or family member to help you, or hire a private cleaning service or government funded service to assist.

### **5.3. Ensuite**

Your room has its own private ensuite with shower, basin and toilet. This is your space and you must keep it clean and tidy. That includes cleaning the shower and toilet.

### **5.4. Laundry**

Your house has a fully equipped laundry which is shared by all residents. There may be a laundry roster so ask your Housekeeper how to use the washing machines and to explain any roster.

You are responsible for doing your own laundry. You may ask a friend, family members or support service to help you with your laundry if you want to.

It is not the Housekeeper's job to do your laundry.

### **5.5. Heating and lighting**

We are responsible for the heating and overall lighting in your house. If the lighting or heating does not meet your needs, please speak to the Housekeeper.

### **5.6. Medication**

You are responsible for any medication you take and the Housekeeper is not allowed to give you medication or help you take it.

You may find it helpful to use the monitored dosage system that a pharmacy provides.

### **5.7. If you are sick**

Your Abbeyfield house is your home. Your doctor can visit you and you can rest and recover from minor illness in the house.

The Housekeeper is not allowed to provide medical assistance or personal care beyond basic first aid in an emergency. This is because the Housekeeper is not a doctor, or a nurse or a medically qualified person. In an emergency an ambulance should be called.

If you need to go into hospital, you must continue to pay the regular house fee / rent. In some instances we may reduce the amount you pay for the time you are away to offset the cost of food.

For short periods of time the Housekeeper may also bring your meal to your room.

### **5.8. No smoking**

You must not smoke in the house, or in the garden, or anywhere on the property.

This is because smoking is a dangerous fire hazard in a group house and often impacts upon other residents who may not like 'stinky' cigarette smoke around their house.

### **5.9. Pets**

If you want to have a pet, talk to your Resident Liaison Officer so that the matter can be discussed at a residents' meeting.

Generally a house may have one small pet (such as small dog or cat) but all pets must be compatible and able to live comfortably in the house without upsetting any residents,

If the residents' meeting and Committee of Management agrees to having a pet, then you may have a pet.

### **5.10. When you are going out**

You can come and go as you wish from your Abbeyfield house. All that we ask is that whenever you go out that you:

- tell the Housekeeper if you are going to miss a meal
- maintain the 'in and out' board as you come and go
- come and go quietly so you do not disturb other residents
- leave the front door locked at all times.

### **5.11. Visitors**

Your friends can visit you at the House at any time. You are free to invite people to your house and entertain them in your room or in the shared areas. The only thing we ask is that they respect the fact that this is a shared house and treat all other residents politely and with good manners.

Your visitors are welcome to stay for meals. Please arrange this beforehand with the Housekeeper and let your guest know any cost

If you wish, you can invite your visitor to sleep overnight in the guest room. But check with the Housekeeper first to make sure the guest room has not already been booked. There may be a nominal charge for using the guest room.

### **5.12. Shared areas**

The shared areas within your house will include the dining room, lounge, kitchen, laundry and garden. These areas are for you to use and for your fellow residents.

You may use them simply to sit in, to meet with a friend or to share an activity with other residents.

We are responsible for cleaning and maintaining the shared areas. We aim to keep them in a good condition for you and the other residents.

### **5.13. Meals and menus**

We provide two meals a day for residents to eat together in the dining room. These are usually a lighter meal at lunchtime and a main meal in the evening. But this can be changed in consultation with the resident's and Management Committee.

You can discuss the menus with other residents and the Housekeeper and we provide details of the week's meals in advance.

We provide facilities to prepare breakfast so that you can decide what and when to eat it. You are also very welcome to prepare snacks so long as the Housekeeper is not busy in the kitchen preparing meals.

### **5.14. Social activities**

It is your choice whether or not to participate in any house social activities. If you do want to, you will always be welcome. If you have ideas for social activities either in the house or the wider community, then share them.

The notice board in the house is also a good place for leaflets and flyers about social activities in the house and wider community.

### **5.15. Helping in the house and garden**

Just like any other house, you are very welcome to help in the house or garden. For example you may like to:

- be responsible for setting the dinner table
- volunteer to load the dish washer
- offer to dust the lounge room
- weed a flower garden or grow some vegetables.

If you want to participate in this way please speak with your Resident Liaison Officer or Housekeeper. Your support will be greatly appreciated.

### **5.16. House door key**

Never give a copy of your house door key to another person without the prior approval of your Resident Liaison Officer. We can then keep a record of who has keys.

If you have a key tag on your keys, include your mobile phone number but never include the address of your house.

If you lose your house key, tell the Resident Liaison Officer or Housekeeper straight away.

### **5.17. Repairs and maintenance**

We are responsible for the repairs and maintenance of your house. This includes:

- regularly servicing electrical equipment and gas appliances

- carrying out a regular check of electrical equipment in shared areas
- monitoring the house and undertaking repairs and planned maintenance.

You are responsible for the electrical appliances in your own room and for telling the Housekeeper about any repairs needed in your room.

### **5.18. Insurance**

We recommend that you consider insuring your own personal possessions kept at your Abbeyfield House.

If you do not have your own insurance, we provide some limited property insurance for you (at our cost) as part of our insurance policy. Our policy may not be sufficient to cover any loss you may have.

### **5.19. Political involvement**

It is your right to have political view and belong to any group or party. We are a non-political organisation.

### **5.20. Religious belief and practice**

We do not have any links to any particular religion. If you wish, you have the right to believe in and follow your own faith.

You may choose to take part in religious services in your community or be visited by a spiritual leader of your faith in your room. If other residents share your beliefs, you may be able to agree to hold prayer meetings or worship in a shared area in the house.

### **5.21. If the time comes to live somewhere else (Exit procedure)**

We want you to live at your Abbeyfield house for as long you wish and as long as it meets your needs. If your needs change and it is no longer possible for the House to provide the support that you need, you may need to move on to more appropriate accommodation.

We are committed to making sure that we are consistent with any process and procedure relating to residents moving on. We will consider whether you need to move on if we believe we cannot meet your needs in the house, or an assessment shows that your current needs make you a risk to yourself or others.

We will discuss any potential move with you fully.

## **6. Your rights and responsibilities**

Throughout this handbook there is an emphasis on your rights and your responsibilities. This section draws together your rights and responsibilities.

### **6.1. Respect**

You have a right to be treated fairly and without discrimination.

Your responsibility is to treat other residents and staff fairly and without discrimination.

### **6.2. Tenancy agreement**

You have a right to receive a Residence Agreement (tenancy agreement) signed by us and to have us fulfill our responsibilities as set out in the tenancy agreement.

Your responsibility is to sign a Residence Agreement (tenancy agreement) and to meet your responsibilities as set out in that agreement.

### **6.3. Rent and house fee**

You have a right to receive notice of the rent and house fee to be paid fortnightly.

Your responsibility is to pay the rent and house fee on a fortnightly basis.

You pay a single House Fee every fortnight which includes your rent and ancillary costs. The House Fee is paid by direct bank deposit or CentreLink transfer.

The House Fee is linked to the Aged Pension (AP) or Disability Support Pension (DSP) and Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA). This means that whenever these benefits increase, so too does your House Fee.

### **6.4. Going out**

You have a right to come and go from the house as you wish.

Your responsibility is not to disturb other residents as you come and go.

### **6.5. Making noise**

You have a right to watch TV or listen to the music of your choice in your room.

Your responsibility is to not disturb other residents.

### **6.6. Visitors**

You have a right to have visitors at any time.

Your responsibility is to make sure that your visitors do not disturb other residents.

### **6.7. Health and safety**

You have a right to have the health and safety risks in your house identified and addressed.

Your responsibility is to let us know about any health and safety concerns you have.

### **6.8. Heating and lighting**

You have a right to live in a house that is appropriately lit and heated.

Your responsibility is to take part in making your home energy-efficient and helping to meet our shared responsibilities to the environment.

### **6.9. Repairs and maintenance**

You have a right to have repairs and maintenance carried out by Abbeyfield.

Your responsibility is to keep your room neat and tidy, and report any repairs needed.

### **6.10. Consultation**

You have a right to be consulted by us on the services we provide.

Your responsibility is to choose whether to take part in the consultations and, if you choose to take part, to do so in the way and to the extent of your choice.

### **6.11. Complaints**

You have a right to complain through our complaints procedure.

Your responsibility is to raise any complaints through the complaints procedure.

### **6.12. Religious belief and practice**

You have a right to follow your personal spiritual and religious beliefs.

Your responsibility is to show respect for the spiritual and religious beliefs of others.

### **6.13. Don't do bad stuff**

You have the right to live as you wish in your Abbeyfield House.

Your responsibility is not do things which may be inappropriate or unsafe in your Abbeyfield House - such as drinking too much alcohol, smoking anywhere near the house, or using loud, aggressive or dirty language.