



Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Communities**
Housing

**GOVERNMENT REGIONAL OFFICERS'
HOUSING**

**Grounds and Gardens
Policy and Guidelines**

October 2017

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GROH Grounds and Gardens: Policy and Guidelines

Purpose

This Policy and Guidelines document (Guide) outlines the supply of items related to grounds, gardens and automatic reticulation in GROH dwellings, as well as the responsibilities associated with maintaining these items.

Scope

This Guide applies to all GROH dwellings, including those that are occupied, vacant, allocated and unallocated to Client Agencies, and those that have shared tenancies. It is for use by Housing employees, Client Agencies, GROH tenants and the general public.

Definitions

Client Agency means either:

- an Employing Agency, which is a Department under the administration of a Minister of the Crown in the Government of the State, or any Crown instrumentality, hospital, board, body corporate or other body of whatever description, proclaimed as a Department under s.7 of the *Government Employees' Housing Act 1964*; or
- a Responsible Agency, which is the agency responsible for arranging the salary and other entitlements (including accommodation) of the tenant when this tenant is not an employee of an Agency.

Communities means the Department of Communities.

Grounds and garden re-establishment allowance means a reimbursement paid by Communities to contribute to the GROH tenant's costs of re-establishing some or all of the grounds or garden in a Housing-owned dwelling.

GROH means the Government Regional Officers' Housing program administered by the Department of Communities Housing Division.

GROH client means either:

- a client agency; or
- any other client serviced by GROH (**other GROH client**).

GROH dwelling means a house as defined in s.5 of the *Government Employees' Housing Act 1964* (GEH Act), which is owned, leased or constructed by Communities and allocated for use by GROH.

Housing means the Department of Communities Housing Division.

Housing-owned dwelling means a GROH dwelling that is owned by Housing.

Leased dwelling means a GROH dwelling that is leased from the private rental market by Housing.

Maintain means to keep the grounds and gardens of the GROH dwelling as close as possible to the condition they were in when the tenant first occupied the dwelling – fair wear and tear excepted (*RTA Regulations 1989, Form 1AB*).

Maintaining the grounds and gardens includes tasks such as mowing and edging the lawns and slashing grass, weeding, hand watering (as is reasonable), trimming shrubs and trees (particularly to prevent the possibility of any injury or nuisance) and removing rubbish from the yards.

Officer means an employee of the Department of Communities.

Other GROH client includes other worker housing programs, e.g. Non-Government Organisations, non-proclaimed state government Agencies, other housing programs or private tenants.

RTA means the *Residential Tenancies Act 1987 (WA)*

Re-establishment of grounds and gardens means the supply and/or planting of grass, shrubs, trees and mulch to restore or improve the condition of the grounds and gardens to the GROH dwelling.

Serviced units means any unit of accommodation that is part of a multiple-dwelling development and that may share common water, electricity and/or gas meters and facilities such as driveways, carports, washing lines and/or gardens.

Tree lopping means cutting the branches or stems of a tree to remove a hazard to a person's life, to the GROH dwelling or neighbouring dwellings, or to nearby power lines. It includes the removal of any lopped materials.

Tenant liability means that the tenant is responsible for the cost of repairs.

Policy Statements

1. Supply

1.1. Policy

Landscaping and automatic reticulation

1.1.1. Communities will supply landscaping and automatic reticulation:

- i. to the front and rear of all newly constructed Housing-owned GROH dwellings; and
- ii. to the communal areas of serviced units or estates.

1.1.2. Communities may retrospectively supply landscaping and automatic reticulation to existing Housing-owned GROH dwellings.

1.1.3. Communities is not responsible for supplying landscaping or reticulation to leased dwellings.

1.2. Guidelines

1.2.1. The standard landscaping provided to newly constructed Housing-owned dwellings (under 1.1.1.i) will be:

- Front: rock mulch covering and no lawn
- Back: minimum lawn area with large garden beds with rock mulch covering.

1.2.2. Communities may alter the landscaping provided under 1.2.1 due to the availability and costs of materials, the suitability of items for specific locations and conditions, local government guidelines and other relevant factors.

2. Upkeep and maintenance

2.1. Policy

2.1.1. The responsible parties for maintaining the grounds, gardens and automatic reticulation in GROH dwellings are stated in Table 1.

Table 1. Maintaining grounds, gardens and automatic reticulation in GROH dwellings: Responsibilities

Area / dwelling type	Responsible party
Occupied GROH dwelling (Housing-owned and leased)	Tenant
Enclosed yards in serviced units and estates	Tenant
Communal areas in serviced units and estates	Communities
Unallocated, unoccupied GROH dwellings	Communities
Allocated, unoccupied GROH dwellings	Client Agencies

2.2. Guidelines

- 2.2.1. In Housing-owned dwellings, Communities is responsible for lopping or removing trees.
- 2.2.2. In leased dwellings, the owner or owner’s agent is responsible for lopping or removing trees.
- 2.2.3. If Communities determines that the grounds and gardens of a GROH dwelling have deteriorated beyond fair wear and tear, due to neglect, misuse or wilful damage, to the extent that they need to be restored, the parties outlined in Table 2 will be responsible for the restoration costs.

Table 2. Restoring grounds and gardens in GROH dwellings: Responsibilities for costs

GROH dwelling status	Responsible party
Occupied (Housing-owned and leased)	Tenant
Recently vacated (Housing-owned and leased)	Tenant
Shared	Client Agencies
Allocated, unoccupied	Client Agencies

3. Tenants altering or re-establishing Grounds and Gardens

3.1. Policy

3.1.1. Tenants who wish to alter or re-establish the grounds or gardens in a GROH dwelling must:

- Seek and obtain the written approval of Communities; or
- make a written request to Communities, which will seek the written permission of the owner or the owner's agent – for leased dwellings.

3.1.2. Works must not commence until the owner (for leased dwellings) or local officer (for Housing-owned dwellings) has approved a tenant's request.

3.1.3. Tenants who alter or re-establish grounds or gardens must maintain these for the duration of their tenancy.

3.2. Guidelines

3.2.1. Tenants of Housing-owned dwellings may request a garden re-establishment allowance.

3.2.2. The approval and amount of the allowance are at the discretion of Communities.

3.2.3. Where the tenant has been granted permission to alter or re-establish the grounds and gardens of a leased dwelling, the tenant is responsible for all costs of these works. The owner has the discretion to reimburse some, all or none of these costs.

Document History

ISSUE	DATE	REASON	POLICY AUTHORS	OFFICER'S TITLE	DATE LOADED on Internet
1	August 2017	<p>These GROH Grounds and Gardens Policy and Guidelines incorporate following GROH policies:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. GROH Automatic Reticulation Policy 2. GROH Grounds and Gardens Policy 3. GROH Landscaping Policy 4. GROH Tree Lopping Policy 5. GROH Vacated and Vacant Allocated Properties and Garden Charges Policy (<i>in part</i>) 	Chris Walker	Policy and Research Officer	January 2018

Authorisation

<i>Version</i>	<i>Authorised by</i>	<i>Approval Date</i>	<i>Effective Date</i>	<i>Sections modified (if applicable)</i>
[1.0]	Director Housing Programs	November 2018	January 2018	

Summary Information

Responsible Officer	Director Housing Programs
Contact Officer	Senior Policy and Program Officer, Housing Programs
Superseded Documents	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. GROH Automatic Reticulation Policy 2. GROH Grounds and Gardens Policy 3. GROH Landscaping Policy 4. GROH Tree Lopping Policy 5. GROH Vacated and Vacant Allocated Properties and Garden Charges Policy
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Associated Documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Government Employees' Housing Act 1964</i> • <i>Residential Tenancies Act 1987</i> • Housing Authority Maintenance Policy Manual