

06 OCT 2020

CENSW Updates

Electronic Verification of Rent (EVOR)



Common Equity has been approved by Centrelink to use their EVOR system. This service applies only to directly managed tenants and households and not to Co-op tenant members.

What is EVOR?

EVOR is a free Centrelink service that housing providers use to help manage tenants' rent payments. Common Equity is now able to verify and update tenant's rent amounts using Electronic Verification of Rent (**EVOR**) each time there is a change in rent.

How will it work?

EVOR can be used by Common Equity if tenants provide their written consent. We have a detailed tenant consent form outlining when we will use EVOR and how you can withdraw consent.

How will we benefit from EVOR?

The EVOR service will support tenants and Common Equity. Tenants do not have to adjust their rent amounts after each rent review, Common Equity can process the adjustments automatically. This will also help eliminate tenant rent arrears when the rent changes are not processed swiftly by Centrelink.

Vacancy

Aston Hall Co-operative, Bourke St, East Sydney has a vacancy in a 1-bedroom unit, suitable for 1 person. They would be very interested in housing someone with experience in Co-operative housing.

Please contact chris@commonequity.com.au or ring 02 9356 9205 for more information.

Common Equity NSW Rent Management & COVID-19 Stimulus Payments

Below is updated advice on how CENSW and Co-ops will manage tenant and members rents during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Who this affects?

Directly Managed (DM) Housing & Co-operative Housing

Bulk rent reviews

The Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) has recommended that rent reviews not be conducted in the September / October 2020 period, as there have been no increases in most Centrelink payments in September. CENSW is following this advise and will not be conducting the September indexation subsidy update / bulk rent reviews and all rents will remain the same.

Tenants must still tell us and / or their Co-op if their household circumstances and incomes have changed.

Arrears due to COVID-19

Common Equity & Co-ops will work with you to arrange a reasonable re-payment plan.

Changes to JobSeeker & JobKeeper COVID-19 Supplements

The JobSeeker and JobKeeper COVID-19 supplements have been reduced from \$550 to \$250 per fortnight. These will remain as non-assessable income.

Other payments

For any other specific income, like statutory incomes please visit Centrelink website or call us for further information.

Pandemic Leave Disaster Payment

NSW workers who have no leave entitlements are eligible for a one-off \$1,500 payment for every 14 days they are directed by NSW Health to self-isolate or quarantine - or when caring for someone with COVID-19.

The Pandemic Leave enables workers to self-isolate or care for family members while still being financially supported. If you are a part of a couple, you can both claim this payment.

For more information check the Centrelink website:
<https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/centrelink>

Co-operative Annual General Meetings

Co-operatives must hold an Annual General Meeting (AGM) within 5 months of the end of the financial year. COVID-19 has changed how these meetings can now take place. In NSW, Co-operatives can delay their AGM and annual returns without application to Fair Trading. This arrangement is in place for 6 months from 30 April 2020.

You can find information and make inquiries on Fair Trading's website:
<https://www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au/>

Larger Co-operatives will be affected, due to social distancing requirements.

The Co-operatives National Law (CNL) does not dictate the way a Co-operative must hold its AGM. The manner of conducting the AGM is set out in each Co-op's rules. Most Co-ops will find that the AGM cannot proceed without a quorum of members, "present in person". This rule means that the meeting must be a physical gathering of members.

The Registrar of Co-operatives cannot take action against a Co-op for a breach of its rules. They can only take action for a breach of the law (CNL). If a Co-op breaches its rules, then the members may act against the Co-op.

Meeting Options

To support holding the AGM as per Co-op rules & social distancing guidelines, large Co-ops can either look for a larger venue or considering holding their meeting virtually on Zoom, Google Meet or Skype. Co-ops can also hold hybrid meetings which include both members who will join online, and a group that is physically present.



Please contact us if you need any technological support or advice for holding an online or hybrid meeting.

Future meetings in a post COVID-19 world

It may be worthwhile amending your Co-op's rules to allow online meetings and postal ballots for members in the future. You can contact us for assistance with drafting a suitable rule and making other necessary changes.

If you have any questions, please contact us. You can also find information and make inquiries here: <https://www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au/>

RESOURCES

COVID-19 UPDATE NSW Health

Taking a holiday or having people over? Know the rules



If you're traveling, handwashing and physical distancing still apply. If you feel unwell don't travel, stay home and get tested.

You can invite up to 20 guests into your home, however it is recommended you keep it to 10 people.

If gathering outside in public parks, reserves or beaches, the limit is 20 people.

More information here: <https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/what-you-can-and-cant-do-under-rules>

Conduct a successful online AGM

Institute of Community Directors Australia have put together a helpful resource.

Click here to view: <https://communitydirectors.com.au/help-sheets/>

PIAC Forum: A Just Transition to a Sustainable World - 14 October 2020

Join this special Zoom forum and hear from The Hon. Matt Kean MP, NSW Minister for Energy and Environment and renowned social researcher and author Dr Rebecca Huntley, in conversation with Donna Luckman (Coalition for Community Energy), and Craig Memery (Head of PIAC's Energy and Water Consumers' Advocacy



Program) to discuss how we can make a just transition to a sustainable world.

Wednesday 14 October 2020 (*Registrations close 2.00pm Wed 14 Oct*)
6:30pm – 7:30pm

FREE Register your attendance via <https://www.eventbrite.com.au/>

CALENDAR

October 11 – Headspace Day

October 15 – Resilience in the Age of COVID – Older Women’s Take on Poverty & The Way Forward. Free event.

October 15-21 – National Nutrition Week

This email bulletin is printable and meant for all members, so please feel free to share it with others.

COMMON EQUITY CONTACT DETAILS

| Team | Email Address |
|------------------------|--|
| Co-op Development Team | cdt@commonequity.com.au |
| Maintenance Team | maintenance@commonequity.com.au |
| Finance | finance@commonequity.com.au |

| Staff | Role | Contact |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|
| Nick Sabel | CEO | 02 9356 9200 |
| Stephen Wardrop | Property Manager | 02 9356 9220 |
| Joanna Wong | Finance Manager | 02 9356 9221 |
| Prema Menon | EA to CEO | 02 9356 9212 |
| Poppy Whiting | Senior Projects Manager | 02 9356 9224 |
| Mirjana Kreiselmaier | Co-op Development Manager | 02 9356 9210 |
| Corine Addison | Operations Manager | 02 9356 9288 |
| Maintenance Out of Hours Emergency | | 0432 664 486 |

We acknowledge the traditional Aboriginal owners of the country throughout Australia and pay our respects to them, their culture and their Elders past, present and future.

Image credits and sources

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Disclaimer:

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