



Private Rental Information Pack

Eastern Homeless Network
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Private Rental Information Booklet

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Compiled and Produced by the Eastern Homelessness Network

www.ehn.net.au

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Table of Contents

What is a Lease?	4
Fortnightly Budget Planner	6
Where to find rentals?	7
Am I Blacklisted?	8
Presentation	8
Inspecting a Property	9
What to look for when renting a property	10
A property will be safer and more comfortable if it has:	10
Open For Inspections	11
Repairs and Maintenance	12
Applications	13
Rental Assistance	15
Bonds	16
Rent In Advance	19
Signing a Lease	20
Your Rights and Responsibilities	21
Connecting Utilities	22
Furniture	23
Setting up House	24
What to do if something goes wrong	26
Support Agencies	27



What is a Lease?

Once you have located a suitable unit or house to move into and have been offered and accept the house, you have to sign a lease.

A lease is a legally binding document; the lease cannot be “broken” by either tenant or landlord with out giving a written notice or going to The Victorian Residential Tenancies Tribunal (VCAT).

For the tenant to break a fixed term lease they must meet certain criteria which includes giving written notice of their intention to break lease. If you break the lease early you may be held liable for rent until the property is re let, plus advertising and reletting fees.

For the landlord to break a lease, end the tenancy or evict tenants they must give you the correct written Notice to Vacate. If you receive a Notice to Vacate from your agent or landlord, or wish to break a fixed term lease early, seek free legal advice from the Tenants Union 03 9416 2577 or from Consumer Affairs 1300 558 181.

That's why it's really important to read the lease **before** you sign it - ask a close friend or family member you trust for some help if you need it. You need to understand your rights and responsibilities as a tenant.

Before signing a lease you should be issued with a copy of the “Renting a Home - a Guide for Tenants and Landlords” which explains the basic procedures to be followed during your tenancy. The real estate agent will give you this.

A lease should include the following information:

- ❖ Who the landlord and real estate agent are and their address.
- ❖ Who are the tenants - that is you and anyone over the age of 18 living at the property (if you are sharing).
- ❖ The address of the house/unit you will be renting.
- ❖ If furniture, garage or storage space is included.
- ❖ How much rent you pay, when and how you pay it.
- ❖ How long the lease lasts for (eg. 6 months 12 months etc.).
- ❖ How much the rental bond is and how much rent in advance needs to be paid.
- ❖ If there are people to contact for urgent repairs.

You will also be provided with a “Condition Report”. The condition report is a legal document that you need to go through thoroughly. It is very important that you complete the condition report in great detail - eg; ‘5x 3cm scrapes of paint of window pane’, “oven door not sealing properly” etc . If you are able to it is beneficial to photograph any concerns that you have with the property and add the photographic evidence to the report when returning to rental agency.

The condition report will be kept in the rental agency and will be utilized at the end of your tenancy to establish what percentage of your Bond will be returned.

Budgeting

Budgeting for relocation

- Four weeks rent in advance
- Four weeks bond
- Removalist costs (usually between \$100-\$120 per hour)
- Utility connections
- Food and other bills
- Telephone and mobile phone

Things to remember:

To be eligible for Office Of Housing Bond Loan or Community Housing Limited Rent In Advance assistance, your weekly rent (including rent assistance) must not exceed 55% of your weekly income. To calculate this; multiply your weekly income by .55.

E.g.; your income including rent assistance from Centrelink is **\$400 per week** – $400 \times .55 = \$220$. So in this situation if you were looking at a rental that was \$240 a week you will not be eligible for rent or bond assistance.

You may be eligible to apply for rent in advance through Community Housing Limited (CHL – Box Hill) or Eastcare (Salvation Army Hawthorn)

Budgeting tips

A rough guide in drawing up a budget would be:

- 35% Housing – rent, utilities, maintenance)
- 20% Transport (car payments, insurance, maintenance, fares)
- 15% Debt repayments
- 5-10% Savings
- 20-25% Other (food, clothing, entertainment etc)

Always pay rent first! You can access assistance for food, utilities etc if required. If your rent is not paid, your tenancy is at risk.

Set up your rent deductions through Centrelink Centrepay or Direct Debit (small fees apply). This means that you will have your rent automatically taken out and that you will not fall into rental arrears. You can also pay your utilities through Centrepay. This is a free service. (Not available with all agents)

Write out a shopping list before you go. Its not a “*Bargain*”, if you don’t need it!

If you are able to pay your debts off pay in installments that you can afford. If you are struggling financially and would like to find alternate ways to managing your finances, seek the support from EACH/Anglicare financial counseling services.

Anglicare Lilydale (03) 9735 4188 **EACH** (03) 9871 1800
Box Hill (03) 9896 6322

Be patient. Paying off debts, living on a budgeted income and saving for something all take time .If you find that some unexpected expenses arise during you tenancy, you may be eligible for a financial grant. You could access these through Centrelink, the Department of Human Services (electricity or gas grants), Supported Housing or a no-interest loan scheme.

Fortnightly Budget Planner

Income:

Name	
Date	

Centrelink Pension / Benefit	\$
Family Allowance	\$
Child Support	\$
Rental Assistance	\$
Other	\$
Total Income (A)	\$

Housing		Food		General	
Rent	\$	Groceries	\$	Cigarettes	\$
Contents Insurance	\$	Milk & Bread	\$	Alcohol	\$
		Meat	\$	Entertainment	\$
Utilities		Vegetables	\$	Videos/DVDs	\$
Water	\$	Lunches	\$	Gifts	\$
Electricity	\$	Take Away	\$	Other	\$
Gas	\$	Other	\$		
Telephone	\$	Pet Food	\$	Debt Commitments	
Mobile Phone	\$			Court Fines	\$
Pay TV	\$	Personal Expenses		Centrelink Debt	\$
Internet	\$	Chemist	\$	Credit Card	\$
Appliance Hire	\$	Doctor	\$	Personal Loan	\$
		Haircuts	\$	Family/Friends	\$
Transport		Other	\$	Community Housing	\$
Car Registration	\$			Office of Housing	\$
Car Insurance	\$	School Requirements			
Car Loan	\$	Clothes	\$	MISC	
Petrol/Gas	\$	Shoes	\$		\$
Public Transport/Taxi	\$	Books/Stationery	\$		\$
Other	\$	Fees	\$		
		Activities/Camps	\$		
Clothing and Shoes		Sport	\$	Total Expenses (D)	
Adult	\$	Other	\$		
Children	\$			CALCULATION (B + C + D =)	
				B	\$
				C	\$
Total Expenses (B)		Total Expenses (C)		D	\$
				Total Expenses (E)	\$

Total Income (A)	\$
Subtract Total Expenses (E)	\$
BALANCE	\$



Where to find rentals?

Helpful Web Sites to search for rentals or share accommodation



www.domain.com.au
www.realestate.com.au
www.flatmatefinders.com.au
www.realestateview.com.au
<http://au.easyroommate.com>
www.noagentproperty.com.au
<http://Melbourne.gumtree.com.au>
www.melbourneexchange.com.au

www.housemates.com.au
www.roomshare.com.au
www.share-house.com.au
www.flatmates.com
www.ziggie.com.au
www.hotrentals.com.au
www.homehound.com.au

Newspapers

Check out the back of Your Local Paper under:



- REAL ESTATE
- TO LET
- SHARE ACCOMMODATION

Check out the back of your favourite newspaper. These can be purchased at your local newsagent.



The Age - Wednesday and Saturday newspapers are best
Herald Sun

Visit your local Real Estate Agent



Ask for a current rental list

View property details advertised in shop window

Community Organizations

- UnitingCare Harrison has local newspapers and computers for clients to access rental listings.
- Anchor Inc. provides a copy of rental lists from local real estate agents that are accessed off the Internet.
- Clients are encouraged to drop in to their office at 7 – 9 John Street, Lilydale to have a look & get any suitable pages photocopied.
- Free internet access available at local libraries.

Cafés & Bookshops

Many cafés, bookshops, milk bars, TAFE's, Citizen Advice Bureau's and Community organizations provide share boards and noticeboards where people offer accommodation to rent.

Word of Mouth

Let friends, family, colleagues know that you are looking for somewhere to rent. You never know who might know someone that can help out!



Am I Blacklisted?

The **National Tenancy Database (NTD)** collects information to provide to its real estate members and others listed below, current and historical tenancy and location information on individuals and companies who/which lease residential and commercial property from or through licensed real estate agent members of **NTD**. Private Landlords do not have access to the NTD.

The National Tenancies Database, previously held files on record for 7 years. These files were not always a “blacklisting” the comments recorded on this data base may have been Negative, Neutral or Positive, dependant on the experience the Real Estate had of your tenancy.

However in Victoria, as of the 1st September 2011, Real Estate Agents can only place a comment on the data base if you have been taken to VCAT (court) and finding for “rental arrears” or “damages” has been found against you. These listing will now only last 3 years.

Please call the NTD on numbers listed below, to see if they hold a file in your name. You will not be informed (over the phone) what information is contained in the file. If there is a file you can access a copy of your file for free, speak with your housing or support worker.

NTD Ph: 1300 563 826

Presentation

As you can imagine your presentation at the open for inspection is also the sales pitch that you provide to the real estate. It is strongly suggested that you present yourself like you would for a job interview – neat, groomed and with a smile!

When you are making phone contact with a real estate agent have the address of the property in front of you so that you have a reminder available. Have the name of the property manager in front of you and ask for that person.

Making contact with a real estate agent by phone or in person regarding a rental property:

By Phone

- Have the details of the property in front of you so as not to draw a blank when speaking with the person.
- Have the name of the property manager or property contact in front of you; be sure to ask for the right person.
- If you are inquiring about a few properties from the one agency have your list ready, no point making 4 calls to the same agency!
- Speak clearly, be polite and be patient



Inspecting a Property



Make sure that you take photo identification with you.



Make sure you attend appointments on time. (If you can, be early!)



Choose the option of leaving the children with a family member or a babysitter, if available.

What does it mean

Abbreviations

BR – Bedroom

Ens – Ensuite

BIR – Built in Robe

GDH, D/H or d/heating – Gas Ducted Heating

d/garage or d/gge– Double Garage

SLUG or LUG – Single Lock Up Garage

DLUG – Double Lock Up Garage

A/C – Air Conditioning

WC – Toilet

DW – Dishwasher

B/yard or byrd – Backyard

CRPT – Carpet

FF or F/F – Fully Furnished

HTG – Heating

K'ette – Kitchenette

OFP – Open Fire Place

OSP – Off Street Parking

PCM – Per Calendar Month

REFS REQ – References Required

WB – Weatherboard

PFB – Polished Floor Boards

What to look for when renting a property

Tenants have a right to a standard of accommodation which does not put their health or safety at risk.

This guide aims to help people choose suitable and safe rental properties. It has also been designed as a handy reference tool for landlords.

The guide identifies various legal and other requirements to consider when you are looking for somewhere to live. The guide provides details of the relevant legislation when it applies.

It may be helpful to bring this guide with you when you are inspecting properties.

What to look for when renting a property has been developed by Consumer Affairs Victoria, the Office of Housing, the Real Estate Institute of Victoria and the Tenants Union of Victoria.

Legal Requirements

All rental properties are required by law to meet a number of standards. To meet these standards, properties must:

- Have working smoke alarms
- Be in a reasonably clean condition
- Have locks on all external doors and windows so that the property can be secured.

A property will be safer and more comfortable if it has:

- Electrical safety switches to reduce the likelihood of electrical faults
- A security system, such as security door or a peephole in the front door
- Air conditioning or ceiling fans

Ask the landlord or real estate agent if you are unsure if the property has these features.

1. The Building Regulations 2006 require working smoke alarms to be fitted in all residential dwellings.
2. The *Residential Tenancies Act 1997* requires the landlord to ensure the rented premises are in a reasonably clean condition at the start of the tenancy.
3. The *Residential Tenancies Act 1997* requires the landlord to provide locks to secure external doors and windows of the rented premises.

Open For Inspections

What to look for...

- 🔍 Does the property have gas or electricity
- 🔍 Is there adequate heating
- 🔍 Is there adequate ventilation and light
- 🔍 Are floor coverings free of major rips or raised edges and no unsecured floorboards or tiles
- 🔍 Are walls in a reasonable condition without major holes, cracking, staining, rips or graffiti
- 🔍 Are there smoke detectors
- 🔍 Are the stove and oven in good working order
- 🔍 Are there exhaust fans in the kitchen and bathroom
- 🔍 Is there a space for a washing machine
- 🔍 Is there enough storage space and clothes hanging space
- 🔍 Do the windows have curtains and blinds
- 🔍 Do the windows open and close properly
- 🔍 Do the doors and windows have fly screens
- 🔍 Is there a security door
- 🔍 Is there a telephone connection
- 🔍 Is there a TV antenna outlet and a TV antenna outside
- 🔍 Are there enough power points
- 🔍 Is the property in good overall condition
- 🔍 Are the fences and gates adequate
- 🔍 If you have a car is there somewhere suitable for parking
- 🔍 Is it close to public transport, shops, doctors etc...



Repairs and Maintenance

Once you have moved into a rental property, you have a legal right for that property to be maintained in good repair. There are procedures that residents, landlords and agents must follow when dealing with repairs to the property.

A list of all urgent repairs and the procedure to follow is contained in *Renting a home: a guide for tenants and landlords*. **Your landlord or agent must provide you with a copy of this book when you become a tenant.**

If you require a repair to be undertaken, it is important you contact your agent or landlord as soon as possible. The landlord or agent is responsible for undertaking urgent and non-urgent repairs. However, if you have damaged the property, your landlord can ask you to arrange and pay for repairs.

For further advice about repairs, contact Consumer Affairs Victoria on 1300 55 81 81 or Tenants Union Victoria (03) 9416 2577

ADD COVER LETTER

A cover letter can be used to introduce yourself to agents and landlords. It should be attached to the front of your application.

How to write an introduction cover letter:

FIRST PARAGRAPH:

Your aim is to: Tell the reader why you are writing to them.

SECOND AND THIRD PARAGRAPH:

Your aim is to: Tell them a little bit about you so they have some idea of who you are. Remember they have to 'sell' you to the landlord who hasn't met you. Let them know that you can afford the rent and discuss your income. A Centrelink payment can be presented as a consistent reliable income. If you "enjoy gardening" let them know. This shows you have an interest in maintaining the property. If you have no rental history, explain why.

FOURTH PARAGRAPH:

Your aim is to: Let them know that you are not on your own, and inexperienced you may:

- Have a guarantor
- Be part of the private rental brokerage program
- Have great rental references
- Have great character references
- Have great employer references
- Have saved up your months rent in advance

FINAL PARAGRAPH:

Your aim is to: Politely end the letter and let them know you are keen to hear their response.

Applications

Applications provide important information to both the agent and the owner when they are assessing your eligibility for the nominated property. Provide as much detail as possible to prove you will be an excellent tenant.

Current Employer / Previous Employer

Provide any details of past and present employment in this section. You will need to provide a Job Title / Company Name and details of the contact person. Even if it is casual work, remember to include this information.

If you are currently unemployed use terms such as “actively seeking employment”, “currently studying”, “full time parent/homemaker” which promote a positive impression.

Pets

It is always best to be truthful when asked about pets on the application. If you are accepted for a property based on an application which lists no animals and the agent receives complaints regarding the dogs in the backyard you may place a strain on the tenancy. Inform the agent of all pets on the application but note that they are housetrained, well behaved, outside/inside, etc.

References

You may not have any references because you are a first time renter or previous home owner. Think carefully about who you nominate as a reference—it is important to provide professional references (not friends or family). References are the most important thing on your application! Ensure that the references you nominate are both available to give a reference and will provide you with a favourable one.

If you are a youth client you may be able to ask your TAFE or school teacher to be a reference, or maybe a close family friend that has known you for a while.

If you are linked into any form of employment agency they maybe able to provide a reference. Also consider support workers, employers and past landlords who can provide a character reference.

Types of questions asked by real estate agents to your references:

- Have they paid the full amount of rent on time consistently?
- Are there any rent arrears?
- How much rent are they currently paying?
- What has been the condition of the property at inspections?
- Was there any damage to the property?
- Have they received any complaints from neighbours regarding the applicant?
- Why are they in Transitional Housing (if applicable)?
- Any issues with pets?
- Why is there no rental history?

Applications... (cont.)

What should I include with my application?

- Identification – 100 points are required. You can usually take any of the following:
 - Drivers License
 - Passport
 - Copy of Birth Certificate
 - Healthcare Card
 - Medicare Card
 - Bank / Credit Cards
 - Student Identification
 - Utility Bills
- Income Statements / Wage Slips
- Written Reference Letters

Note: Have copies of this information so that when you submit an application you don't need to photocopy all the documentation each time. It is also handy to have a copy of an application you have previously filled out so that you can use that as a 'Master Copy'.

The application is successful

If you are accepted to be prepared to move quickly when the right place does come up – you'll need money up-front for your bond and rent in advance.

Don't be disheartened if the first few properties you see are not what you're after or you are not accepted. Most people apply for approximately 30 properties before being successful. Demand for rental properties is incredibly high. If you don't get approved, ask an agent for feedback and talk with your worker. If at first you don't succeed....try again!

Rental Assistance



Rental Assistance is available from Centrelink. It is a payment to help you pay your rent. It gives you extra assistance if you have a low income and are in rental accommodation.



To get rent assistance you must be receiving a payment from Centrelink (including above the base rate of family tax benefit).



If you want to claim rent assistance you will have to provide Centrelink with a current formal written tenancy agreement (lease) which shows the amount of rent you pay or a completed rent certificate signed by your landlord, Centrelink will give you this form.



You can pay your rent directly to your real estate through Centrepay if your real estate agent is registered with Centrelink.

Bonds



The amount of Bond will be advised in the lease and will depend on the type of property. The Bond cannot exceed one months rent.

Bond Loan Scheme

If you want to rent privately, most landlords will ask you to pay a bond (or refundable security deposit) before you move in. At the end of your tenancy, the landlord may be able to claim all or part of your bond as compensation for any damage to the property or for unpaid rent.

If you can't afford to pay the bond yourself, you may be able to borrow the money interest-free from your local housing office. This is called a bond loan.

These loans are for bonds only and cannot be used for rent in advance or moving costs.

The full amount of the bond loan must be paid back at the end of your tenancy. If your landlord withholds some of the bond because of unpaid rent or damages, you must still repay the full amount of the bond loan.

Eligibility

You are eligible for a bond loan if:

- You meet the bond loan income and asset eligibility limits
- You are a permanent resident of Australia
- Your share of the rent is not more than 55 per cent of your gross (before tax) weekly income
- You do not own or part own a house, flat or unit
- You have repaid any previous bond loans, and
- You do not owe any money relating to previous or current public tenancies.

There are exemptions to some of these rules. Please contact your local housing office for more information.

Loan amount

The amount you can borrow depends on the number of bedrooms in the property you will be renting and on the number of people who will live there. In some cases, a study or separate dining room can count as a bedroom.

The Office Of housing work out your share by dividing the total bond amount by the number of rent contributors living in the house. For example, if you are renting a four bedroom house which has a \$1,000 bond, your share of the bond loan would be \$250.

The maximum bond loan amounts are:

Property Size	Maximum Loan Amount
Bedsit or 1 Bedroom	\$1300
2 Bedroom	\$1600
3 Bedroom	\$1650
4 or more Bedroom	\$1900

To be eligible for a bond loan, the weekly rent charged for the property cannot exceed 55% of the applicant's total gross weekly income.

Applying for a bond loan

The Office of Housing is open from 8:45am – 5:00pm

Box Hill office

883 Whitehorse Road Box Hill

(03) 9843 6577

Ringwood office

25 Ringwood Street, Ringwood

(03) 9871 5199

You can apply at your nearest housing office by filling in Bond Loan application form and giving us the information we need to work out your loan amount if you are eligible.

You can apply by yourself, as a couple, or part of a shared household. Only one bond form should be submitted per rental property.

If there are more than three household members applying for a bond loan then you will need to fill out an Additional bond loan applicants insert and submit this together with the Bond Loan application form.

Do not pay any bond money to the owner or agent before we tell you if your loan is approved. Except in special cases, we cannot refund the bond amount to you if you have already paid it to the owner or agent.

You cannot apply for a bond loan until your landlord or estate agent has approved your application to rent a particular property. The property you wish to rent must be in Victoria.

Your landlord or agent must also fill in part of the Bond Loan application, to tell us about the property you will be renting. If your landlord does not use an estate agent, they must also confirm their ownership of the property or give permission for us to do this with the local council.

Bond Loan Application Form:

<http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/forms-and-templates/bond-loan-application-form>

Income and assets

Each applicant's income and assets must be within the Office of Housing Income and Assets Limits. We generally update these every six months.

If you or an applicant receives any income from Centrelink, you can give us permission to confirm your income, assets, and other information with Centrelink by using the Income Confirmation Service. If you use the Income Confirmation Service, you do not need to give us income and assets documents, but you must still give us documents about any property assets that you own.

If you or an applicant does not use the Income Confirmation Service, you must give us documents to prove each applicant's income. This could be a current (less than two weeks old) letter from Centrelink or Veterans' Affairs, a wage statement from your employer, or a 13 Week Profit and Loss Statement if you are self employed.

You must also give us documents to prove each applicant's assets, including any property assets that you own.

Proof of income and residency

You must give us proof of each applicant's identity. This can be one form of identification with a photograph and signature (for example, passport or driver's licence) or two other identity documents for each person (for example, Medicare card, Health care card, birth certificate).

You must also provide proof of residency status for each member of the household not born in Australia (for example, Certificate of Australian citizenship, visa, passport, or a letter from the Department of Immigration and Citizenship).

Receiving the loan

If your application is approved, a cheque made payable to the Residential Tenancies Bond Authority will be given to you or sent directly to your landlord or their agent. The cheque will be accompanied by a Bond Lodgement form, which the landlord will use to lodge the bond with the Residential Tenancies Bond Authority.

Repaying the loan

At the end of your tenancy, your landlord or agent will apply to the Residential Tenancies Bond Authority for the bond money to be repaid to the Department of Human Services. If your landlord withholds some of the bond because of unpaid rent or damages, you are still required to repay your share of the loan.

Any disputes between you and your landlord over unpaid rent or damages should be determined by the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal.

Each member of your household applying for the bond loan must sign an agreement to repay the loan and participate in any legal proceedings for the recovery of the bond money.

For more information on or to apply for the department's bond loan, contact your local housing office or your support worker.

Rent In Advance

There are two housing services that you can contact to get assistance with rent in advance. They offer assistance with 2 weeks rent in advance. You will need to ring and make an appointment to see a Initial Assessment and Planning (IAP) worker.



Community Housing Ltd

9 Prospect Street, Box Hill
Ph. 9856 0050

Community Housing service the Whitehorse, Knox, Maroondah & Yarra Ranges areas.



Salvation Army Eastcare Housing Services

16 Church Street Hawthorn
Ph. 9851 7800

Eastcare Housing service the Monash, Manningham & Boroondara areas

If you are not in the Eastern Region – Please call 1800 825 955 to be connected to your nearest Homelessness Access Point for assistance with rent in advance

What to take to your appointment

- A copy of the tenancy agreement (lease) or a letter from the agent or owner which states:
 - the name and address of the owner or agent
 - their contact telephone number
 - the names of everyone to be housed
 - the address of the property
 - the amount of rent and bond required
 - the tenancy start date
 - the length of your tenancy agreement
 - the number of bedrooms in the property.
- Identification

Either of the following:

• one form of identification with your photograph and signature, for example, passport, driver's licence, student card

Or

• two forms of identification with your signature, for example, bank card, Health Care Card, Medicare card.

- Current Income statement from Centrelink or a 13 week wage statement showing your gross income

Signing a Lease

When you find the right property for you, you will be required to sign a lease agreement with the agency. This is formally known as the 'Residential Tenancy Agreement'. It is a binding legal agreement that protects the rights of you as tenant and that of the landlord.

You will also be given a condition report to sign and complete. Make sure you document any damage in the house you see when you start to move in, or anything that needs fixing; **this protects you as a new tenant from being liable for any existing damage to the property prior to your tenancy.**

You will need to read, check and return the third document to the office so a record of the condition of the property can be kept until you vacate the property at the end of your lease. This condition report must be handed back to your agent within **three days** of you moving.

You will be required to pay one months rent to the Residential Tenancies Bond Authority, as a bond on the property, which is held by them until the end of the tenancy. Your bond must legally be lodged with the RTBA.

It would be useful to keep in touch with your real estate agent after you move into your property, just in case you need their assistance in the future.

Ending the tenancy is the cause of much confusion. You need to have a full understanding of this clause within the lease agreement. You will find all the details in the statement of rights and duties booklet handed to you at the time of signing the lease.

Your Rights and Responsibilities

Your Rights	Your Responsibilities
To start the tenancy with the premises in a reasonable condition (clean and fit to live in)	To keep the place that you are renting clean, including the garden
To be given a copy of the lease	To pay rent on time
To be given rent receipts if you pay rent in person	To let the landlord/agent know of any repairs that are needed or damage that has been caused
To be given notice of inspections	Not to change the place you are renting or add anything without the written permission of the landlord/agent
To have the Bond lodged with the correct Authority	To give the landlord/agent a copy of the condition report within three days of moving into the property
To be reimbursed for urgent repairs provided certain conditions are met. Urgent repairs organized by you cannot exceed \$1000 in Victoria	To leave the premises in the same condition as set out in the condition report (except for normal wear and tear)
To be given 60 days written notice of a rent increase	To ask the landlord/agent to allow someone else to take over your place on the lease
To be given the required notice if the landlord/agent wants to end the lease	Not to interfere with the peace, comfort and privacy of the neighbours
To enjoy peace and privacy	



Connecting Utilities

If you have a Health Care Card you are entitled to certain concessions on your bills.

Present your card when paying your bills and you can get 17.5% off 3 gas bills and 2 electricity bills between May and November. You can also have your transfer fee waived for electricity connection and 50% off water consumption up to \$67.50.

Power connection:

TRU	133 466
City Power:	131 260
AGL:	133 000
Red Energy:	131 806

Gas Connection:

Pulse:	132 692
Origin Energy:	1800 650 835
TRU:	133 466

Water Connection:

Yarra Valley Water 131 721

Energy Watch:

www.energywatch.com.au/

Energy Watch's objective is to educate consumers that discounts are available in the market. In one short phone call Energy Watch will assess your current price and consumption, and recommend options for your home or business.

OR - you can use a company like "On the Move". There are many other groups within Australia that are able to disconnect and reconnect your utilities. Just Google "utility connections Australia"

On the Move

Moving House? Want to compare electricity suppliers for cheap electricity, gas, internet and other utility connections to your house? With On The Move you can compare electricity suppliers and have all your utility connections for free and save heaps of time.



Furniture

The following organisations may assist you with furniture:

- The Good Shepherd Buying Service 9419 4666
- St Vincent de Paul
 - Ringwood 9870 9124
 - Croydon 9723 4116
 - Ferntree Gully 9758 8501
 - Lilydale 9735 4916
 - Hawthorn 9818 5456
- Salvation Army 9890 2993
- Eastern Emergency Relief (via your support worker)

Or try looking in the Trading Post, Op shops and second hand dealers.

Some online options for buying affordable furniture are:

Melbourne.gumtree.com.au

www.ebay.com.au

Setting up House

THINGS TO ORGANISE:

- ❖ Obtain boxes
- ❖ Pack (allow plenty of time to sort and pack your belongings).
- ❖ Moving arrangements (who? when? cost?).
- ❖ Connect electricity, gas and water.
- ❖ Connect telephone (optional).
- ❖ Spare set of keys (leave with family or close friend, just in case).
- ❖ Garbage night.
- ❖ How to use stove, heater etc.
- ❖ Contact relevant supports and services of change of address -
 - Centrelink
 - Medicare
 - Work
 - School
 - Doctor
 - Dentist
 - Vic Roads (for car registration and driver's license)
 - Bank/credit union
 - Electoral role (so you can vote)
 - Service providers (support workers)
 - Any clubs you belong to (eg. footy club)
- ❖ Contact post office to redirect mail (change of address forms are available at the post office)

Ending a Tenancy Agreement

A tenancy agreement can only be ended in accordance with the *Residential Tenancies Act 1997*.

If you want to end the tenancy:

- Advise your landlord or agent in writing if you want to leave the property
- Make sure you give the appropriate notice. (check renting a home guide or consumer affairs)
- Ensure that your notice is delivered within a suitable time

If your landlord wants to end the tenancy:

- They must give you a 'Notice to Vacate' in the correct written form.
- The notice must be sent to you at the rented premises by registered post, or given to you in person.

There are three main ways to end a tenancy:

- All the parties can agree to end the tenancy
- Your landlord gives you a valid 'Notice to Vacate'
- You give valid notice to your landlord that you intend to vacate.

On leaving a property, it is expected that the property will be left in a clean and presentable state. You will be required to steam clean carpets.

What to do if something goes wrong.....

If you fall behind in paying rent or have a problem with your tenancy contact your real estate agent immediately.

Consumer Affairs Victoria

- 1300 558 181
- Monday – Friday, 9am – 5pm
- Information for solving tenancy related issues

Tenants Union of Victoria

- 9416 2577
- Mon, Tues, Thurs, and Friday 9am – 4pm or Wed 1pm – 8pm

HIR at Community Housing (Vic) Limited or Salvation Army EastCare

- Information and advice to assist resolving tenancy issues
- Assess eligibility for financial assistance if applicable
- Referrals to other agencies for assistance and / or support

If your lease is at risk or ends due to any tenancy issues you can contact:

Eastern Metropolitan Region Homelessness Assistance

- 1800 825 955
- 7 days a week. 24 hours
- An initial point of contact for people who are homeless, at imminent risk of homelessness or experiencing domestic violence.

Support Agencies

Eastern Region Opening Door Services

Anchor Inc.
7-9 Johns Street
Lilydale VIC 3104
9760 6400

Community Housing (Vic) Limited
9 Prospect Street
Box Hill VIC 3128
9856 0050

Salvation Army EastCare
16 Church Street
Hawthorn VIC 3122
9851 7888

UnitingCare Harrison
Knox Ozone, 1012 Little Burwood Highway
Wantirna South VIC 3152
9871 8700

Wesley Homelessness & Support Services
291a Maroondah Highway
Ringwood VIC 3134
8870 4020

Notes...

