



## Housing

Your initial accommodation may be temporary for the first few weeks in Australia. Your caseworker or proposer will have organised this for you. You will have to find long-term or permanent accommodation within six months after arrival in Australia. You can look for accommodation through real estate agencies, your caseworker, proposer or friends.

In Australian cities and towns there are different kinds of housing ranging from small one-bedroom apartments to large houses. Tall blocks of apartments are common in cities, as are large townhouse complexes. In the suburbs, unit complexes, large and small houses, are all common while people in small country towns may live in farm houses or cottages.

Houses in Australia will usually have a kitchen, lounge room, bathroom, laundry and several bedrooms. The bathroom usually has a shower and will sometimes have a bathtub. The toilet may be in a small separate room or it may be in the same room as the bathroom.

### Renting

You will need to rent accommodation to live in. Rents in Australian cities are expensive and you will be responsible for paying your rent with the help of government assistance (Centrelink) or the income from your job. The type and size of house that you live in will vary depending on the city, the location within the city and what you can afford to pay in rent. Housing away from the city centres and in the suburbs and regional towns is usually larger and less expensive.

Prior to moving in, you will have to pay the first month's rent in advance and a **rental bond** as well as sign a lease.

A rental bond is a one-time payment (often a month's rent). The rental bond is a security deposit in case you damage the accommodation or move out before the agreed time. You will get this money back when you move out if you have caused no damage and have not breached the lease. You might be eligible for assistance to pay the rental bond. Ask your caseworker or accommodation services representative for advice.



You will have to complete a **condition report** before you move into the accommodation. This is a record of the condition of the accommodation and fixtures before you moved in. It is expected that when you leave the property it should be left in a similar condition to how it was when you moved in. If it is, then you will have your rental bond returned to you.

To rent you must sign a **lease** for your accommodation. A lease is a legal document between you – the **tenant** – and the property owner – the **landlord**.

The lease protects both the landlord and tenant by stating how much your rent is, when you must pay it and how long you will be living in the property. The lease also states who pays for what **utilities**, such as electricity, water, gas, telephone and other services.

It is your responsibility to pay your rent and your utility bills on time – otherwise these services will be stopped or, by being behind in your rent payments, you may be at risk of having to leave the property.

The landlord has the right to inspect the accommodation while you are living in it. **Inspection** times are usually shown in the lease. The landlord will be inspecting to see you are keeping the house and the garden clean and tidy, and there is no damage.

If you do not maintain a neat and clean house, your neighbours might complain or you could even be evicted by the landlord.

## Tenants' responsibilities

- Paying rent on time
- Taking care of the house or unit
- Reporting any damage to the landlord
- Getting permission before making any changes to the house or apartment
- Giving adequate notice, usually four weeks, to the landlord before moving out
- Ensuring that the number of occupants remains within the legal limits. No subletting in the property or having long term visitors
- Being considerate to neighbours
- Keeping receipts and documents relating to the tenancy in case they are needed if there is a tenancy dispute
- Pay any penalties for moving out before the end of the lease.



## Landlords' responsibilities

- Give proper notice in case of rent increase
- Give proper notice in case of eviction
- Make repairs as needed and in a timely fashion
- Give proper notice if the landlord or their agent intends to enter your house for an inspection or for any other reason
- Return your rental bond if all conditions of the lease were met.

## Safety

- Always lock your doors and windows
- Always turn off your stove when you are not cooking
- Ensure fire alarms are working – replace batteries regularly (every six months).

## HOUSING CHECKLIST

Use this checklist to be sure your rental experience is a good one

- Be familiar with the neighbourhood and know what **schools, transport and shops** are located near the house or flat
- Know the **length** of the lease
- Know how much you will be **paying for rent**, how often and when it is due
- Know the amount you will need to pay for **bond** (usually four weeks rent)
- Know if there are any penalties for **moving** out before the end of the lease
- Know landlord and tenant **responsibilities**
- Arrange to have **essential services** (electricity, water, gas, telephone) connected
- Supervise your **children**
- Look after any **animals** you may have
- Keep your home and garden neat and **clean**
- Keep **noise** at a low level so you do not disturb neighbours
- Store **rubbish** in collection bins and recyclable material in recycle bins.



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