



**VICTORIA
UNIVERSITY**

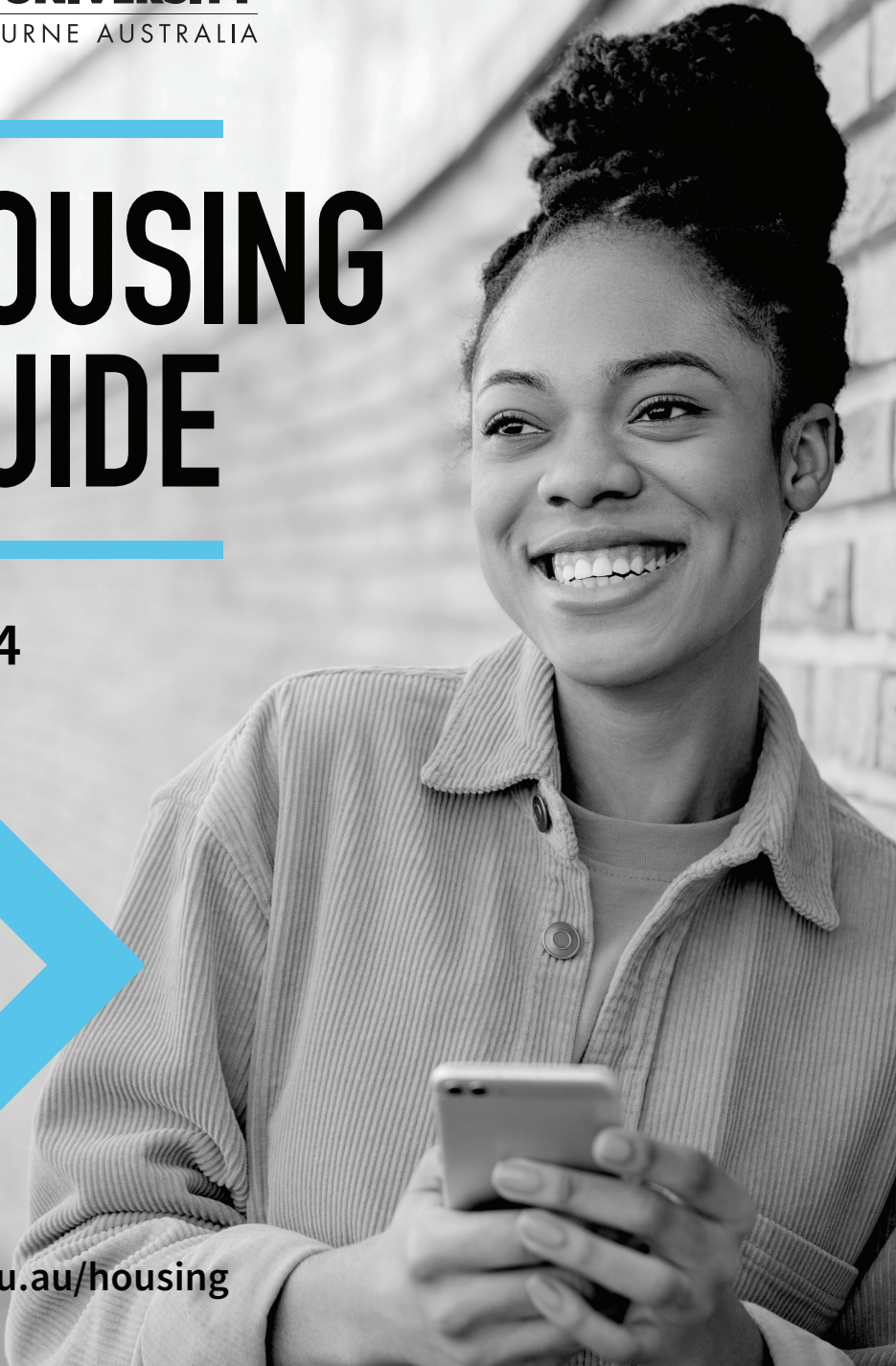
MELBOURNE AUSTRALIA

HOUSING GUIDE

2024



vu.edu.au/housing





Contact us

askvu.vu.edu.au

vu.edu.au/housing

Phone: +61 3 9919 6100



CONTENTS

Accommodation options	4
VU accommodation, hosted by VU UniLodge	5
Share housing	6
Renting	7
Homestay	8
Hostels/rooming houses	10
Student apartments	10
Living costs	11
Rental costs	12
Applying for a rental property	12
During a tenancy	14
Moving out	15
Understanding your rights and responsibilities	18-19
Housing information websites	20
Housing checklist	21
Support services	26-27

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge and pay our deep respect to the Ancestors, Elders, and families of the Traditional Owners on all of our campuses. At Victoria University (VU) we honour Indigenous cultures. Everything we do and every decision we make is underpinned by a commitment to Protecting Country. Country is both a place of belonging and a way of believing, as well as contributing to the conservation of critical environmental and diverse cultural assets. It is a community-driven movement towards long-term social, cultural, physical, and economic prosperity and sustainability.



ACCOMMODATION OPTIONS

Choosing the right type of housing can present a challenging task.

Before you start looking you must determine what you can afford. What will be your source of income and how much of that income can you afford for housing? Doing a budget will help you to identify your expenses.

The electronic budget planner on the Moneysmart website is ideal – **moneysmart.gov.au/budgeting/budget-planner**. If you need assistance or have questions about doing a budget, you can book an appointment with a Senior Advisor - Welfare. See page 26 for the link to booking an appointment.

Next, consider your needs – for example, do you rely on public transport or will you need car parking? Do you need to be close to campus or an area for employment?

Write down a list of your needs and your budgeted amount for housing so you can take these into account when considering the options.

And lastly – improve your living skills by ensuring you know how to do your laundry, cook and care for yourself.

Accommodation options include:

- ◆ university accommodation
- ◆ commercial student apartments
- ◆ shared housing
- ◆ private rental
- ◆ homestay
- ◆ rooming houses and hostels.

Take time to explore your options and take temporary accommodation – staying with friends or relatives, hotels, motels, hostels and backpackers to give yourself time to inspect accommodation before signing any rental agreement or paying any money.

VU ACCOMMODATION

If you have never lived out of home or wish to live in a University environment with planned social, recreational and academic activities, then choosing to live in Victoria University's accommodation may be a great option.

Benefits of living in university accommodation

- ◆ located across the road from VU's Footscray Park campus, provides you access to all the services, facilities and activities of the campus – library, gymnasium, indoor pool, cafes, bar and events where you can mix with other VU students from all over the world
- ◆ Residential Advisors are on site 24/7 to support new students while they settle in and ensure they have the best experience whilst living in university accommodation
- ◆ easy access to public transport to VU's other campuses — our City Tower Campus is just two train stops away
- ◆ lower rent — compared to lesser quality and higher priced accommodation in the CBD.

Unilodge Victoria University

This purpose-built multi storey complex located directly opposite VU's Footscray Park campus offers Studio, 2 and 6 bedroom luxury apartment living for 537 students! Fully furnished apartments, study rooms, in-house theatre and much more await you! Utilities and unlimited wifi are included in the rent. Twin share apartments are now available from \$245 per week.



Accommodation guarantee

UniLodge Victoria University has partnered with Victoria University to offer guaranteed accommodation to new and continuing full-time domestic and international students for your initial rental agreement.

For further details of university accommodation contact:

Visit: vu.edu.au/accommodation-guarantee

Booking: unilodge.com.au/student-accommodation-melbourne/vu

Email: victoriauniversity@unilodge.com.au

Phone: +61 3 9998 8490

OFF CAMPUS ACCOMMODATION

In and around Melbourne, you can choose to rent a commercially operated Student apartment, a vacant property in the community, rent a room in a share house or live in a family home environment through Homestay.

You can find out more about these different accommodation options in this guide.

Student housing database

If you are considering Off Campus accommodation, Victoria University has a Student Housing Database which students can access. The database can be viewed at vu.studystays.com.au.

More information about moving out of home and budgeting can be found on the Moneysmart webpage: moneysmart.gov.au.

SHARE HOUSING

Choosing shared housing gives you the opportunity to live independently in a shared environment. You share the cost of the rent with others and share common areas such as the kitchen, bathroom and living room with other people living in the household.

Remember that as it is a shared arrangement people may tend to move in and out of the house. This can be great for interacting and meeting new people, but it may also create a challenging study environment.

Joining a shared household

Living in a household and sharing the cost of rent and bills (and sometimes food) with other people makes sharing a cheaper housing option than renting on your own. In some instances, housemates take turns in sharing the cooking and put in money for communal living expenses (such as cleaning products).

It is less expensive if you choose to move into an established share house that has furniture, kitchen utensils and whitegoods (e.g. fridge, washing machine). When looking at moving into a shared household, always check what is included and what you need to bring to the house.

Some things to consider before you move in are:

- ◆ shared rental and living costs
- ◆ number of people in the household
- ◆ current tenancy arrangements
- ◆ distance to campus and public transport
- ◆ if rental provider permission is required
- ◆ shared house expectations and rules
- ◆ condition of the property
- ◆ safety inside and outside of the property
- ◆ rental provider permission is obtained (if property is a rental)
- ◆ secure locks and smoke alarms.

The Housing Checklist (page 21) provides detailed questions to ask when considering and moving into a shared housing arrangement. When sharing it is important to recognise that the Residential Tenancy Act 2021 does not differentiate between the rights and responsibilities of co-renters in relation to each other. If something goes wrong, a rental provider can pursue any one or all of the co-renters for damages. Specifically, this means that you can be held responsible for the wrongdoings of your housemates. For this reason, it is important to ensure that you meet potential housemates and discuss living arrangements prior to moving into a shared household.

TIP The Dispute Settlement Centre of Victoria (DSCV) provides a free mediation service to help resolve disputes. disputes.vic.gov.au
Phone: 1300 372 888

Disagreements in a shared house

Sometimes disagreements and disputes arise between housemates. Common areas of conflict include friends visiting or staying over, cleaning, food and different cultural needs or lifestyle habits.

If you find yourself in this situation remember good communication is essential. Try to talk through the problem directly with the other housemate(s) and focus on the issue. Remaining open to the other person's perspective and looking for areas of commonality will also help to resolve the disagreement.

As with other housing options, it is always a good idea to establish and agree upon the living arrangements prior to moving into a house. It is also a good idea to have regular meetings with your housemates to discuss chores, bills and social activities.

TIP Before moving into any rented premises, ensure the rental agreement holder has written permission of the rental provider. If the person states they are the owner ask for proof such as Land Rates notice bearing their name.

RENTING

Renting a property in the private housing market gives you the opportunity to live independently and to be self-reliant.

For some students this choice provides an excellent option for privacy, autonomy and lifestyle independence.

This option however can be expensive as you are responsible for organising the tenancy, paying for the connection to utilities, paying the full rent and managing ongoing bills.

Please consider your budget carefully. It is recommended that you allow at least 35% of your income for rent.

You are also solely responsible for all the daily chores associated with living in a house. For example there is no sharing of dishes, cooking, grocery shopping or cleaning duties. Again, if you enjoy being self-sufficient and are organised these responsibilities may not be daunting.

Finding a private rental

There are a few different ways of finding a rental property in the private market:

- ◆ VU Student Housing Services Database
- ◆ search the real estate websites
- ◆ visit real estate agencies.

You must inspect each property you are interested in before applying. The web listing may contain Open for Inspection times or contact the Agent or rental provider to arrange this.

When you decide to apply for a rental property, you will need to complete an application form. This contains a range of personal details including the contact details of referees.

You will also be asked to provide details of employment and/other sources of income and rental history. You will also be asked to provide a copy of your driver's licence or passport.

TIP Ensure that you fully understand any tenancy documents before you sign them. Seek advice from Consumer Affairs Victoria if you are unsure of your rights and responsibilities.

SCAMS: if the information you read about a property looks too good to be real, it probably is not real. Beware! Find out more about SCAMS here: moneysmart.gov.au/scams

TIP Always complete a Condition Report before you move into a Rental Property. This important document is your written record of the condition of the premises (and may be used as evidence in any dispute about cleaning, damage or missing items).

When inspecting a rental property it is a good idea to refer to a map and become familiar with where facilities (e.g. shops, public transport, chemist, doctor etc.) are located in relation to the property.

It can be difficult to remember all the things you need when inspecting the property and for this reason, take along the Housing Checklist (page 21). This is also handy for comparing properties.

Allow enough time to find a rental property

Given that there is strong competition for affordable rental properties in Melbourne, it is advisable to allow yourself at least **6-8 weeks** to find suitable housing, especially at the start of semester when many students are looking to secure affordable housing. This allows time to have a look at a range of properties on the market and helps you to find a property that suits your needs.

HOMESTAY

Homestay provides a cultural exchange between you and a local family or individual (called a Host). You live as a guest in the host's home. Unlike many other accommodation options you do not need to pay a bond, provide furniture, sign a rental agreement or search for a property.

Living in a supported environment, you are provided with a clean furnished room (this includes items like a bed, desk, wardrobe, chair and a study lamp) access to bathroom and laundry facilities and meal services. Utilities (electricity, gas and water etc.) are also included. The minimum stay is 4 weeks.

Hosts offer ongoing support and orientation to the local area and facilities such as banks, post office, shops, public transport etc.

Homestay charges vary. As a general guide, costs A\$375 per week. The rate will depend on whether the host is offering a single or share bedroom, meal plan option and your age (less than or over 18 yrs). Homestay agencies who arrange the placement charge a placement fee of \$340.

To find out more please refer to homestaynetwork.org/VU-students or phone: 1300 024 628 email: info@homestaynetwork.org

AHN students are covered by insurances and have a 24/7 emergency phone line.

TIP Deal with the issue early. The longer a problem is left, the more difficult it becomes to resolve.

When problems arise in homestay

In the event that a problem does occur, try to talk through the problem directly with the other person. Choose a time that you are both available and think ahead about what you want to say. It might also be helpful to write down the points you want to raise. Remember to stay focused on the issue and talk about the problem, not the person. Remaining open to new ideas and looking for areas where there is common interest can often help with reaching a resolution.

If you are reluctant to speak directly with the other person, then it is important that you contact the Homestay agent.

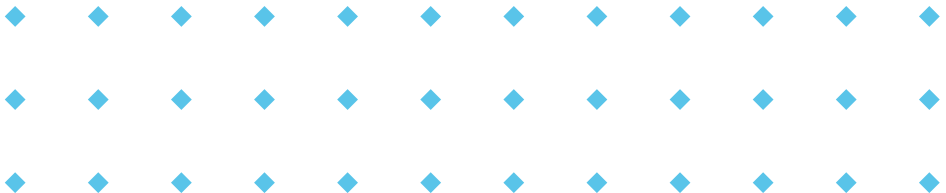
The Dispute Settlement Centre of Victoria (DSCV) also provides a mediation service.

disputes.vic.gov.au

Phone: 1300 372 888

For further information refer to the Understanding Your Rights and Responsibilities section.

TIP Never pay a Bond in cash. Get a bank cheque or money order (from a Post Office) made out to the Residential Tenancies Bond Authority (RTBA) and complete the Bond Lodgement form together with the rental provider or agent.





Hostels/Rooming houses

Any house or building that has four or more people who individually rent a room and share facilities may be classified as a hostel or rooming house and should be a registered business.

Hostels are popular amongst students who like living with other people in a communal environment. You can rent your own locked bedroom (single room) or share a bedroom with other students.

Bedrooms may be furnished with a bed, wardrobe, table and chair and lamp. You share the kitchen(s), dining room(s), laundry(s). Utilities are normally included in the rent unless separately metered.

Most hostels usually have a café where you can buy meals and the larger hostels some have gyms, bars, travel agents, and business facilities.

Some things to consider:

- ◆ please check the Consumer Affairs Victoria webpage for information about your bond Visit: consumer.vic.gov.au/housing/renting/rent-bond-bills-and-condition-reports/bond/bond-payments-and-amounts
- ◆ seek advice if you are asked to sign a tenancy agreement
- ◆ if you want to leave the rooming house, you need to give at least 2 business days notice for which you will need to pay rent
- ◆ operator must give 48 hours notice to enter a private room for an inspection
- ◆ a summary of rooming house rights and responsibilities must be given and displayed in each residents room
- ◆ ensure that you ask for a copy of the Consumer Affairs Victoria Rental Guide when you sign your tenancy agreement

TIP A operator cannot put additional people in a room without the consent of the current occupier.

Student apartments

Student apartments are run by commercial operators. Apartments include bathrooms and kitchen facilities. If you enjoy independent living, this option may be worth considering.

The rooms are fully furnished with most complexes having a management team and usually security. There are different apartment configurations, including one bedroom, two bedroom and twin share.

Renting your own apartment may be expensive so many students tend to share an apartment. Shared rental means that each student has a locked bedroom and shares the kitchen, etc.

Commercially operated student apartments not affiliated with an educational institution are covered by the Residential Tenancies Act.

TIP Rooming Houses and Hostels must be registered to ensure health, fire and safety requirements are met.

TIP Rental agreements for student apartments are normally 6 or 12 months. If you need to break a rental agreement early, break rental agreement will apply and may be quite substantial.
Note: UniLodge Victoria University has lease terms aligned with VU Block Model dates, for VU Block model students

TIP If you have a concern about your room you can contact Consumer Affairs Victoria for advice and assistance consumer.vic.gov.au. Phone: 1300 558 181

TIP Costs can vary between the mentioned options, so it is worth calling a few different accommodation providers and asking about their short and long term rates. There are also temporary accommodation options (e.g. hotels, motels and backpackers) to consider.

LIVING COSTS

The following table lists the average living costs per student for a room in an established household in the private market as compared to a room in a 6 bedroom apartment in UniLodge Victoria University. This is a guide only and costs are subject to increase and may vary depending on location, lifestyle needs and choices. Costs are calculated for one full year. Setting up your own house or flat would be more expensive than either of these options.

	PRIVATE SHARE HOUSE		UNILODGE VICTORIA UNIVERSITY	
ESTABLISHMENT COSTS				
Bond/damages/security deposit [#]	\$900-\$2,000		\$1,300	
Rent or fees in advance	\$900-\$2,000		\$1,061 - \$2,002	
Rent and reservation fee	0		\$170 (payable on arrival)	
Residential life Programme	0		\$150 value - already included in rent	
Homestarter kit (bedding etc)	\$400-\$600		\$367.40	
Furniture, if required	\$1,500-\$3,000		Already fully-furnished	
Departure cleaning fee	\$500		\$150	
TOTAL ESTABLISHMENT COSTS	\$4200-\$8,000		\$3048.40-3989.40	
WEEKLY COSTS	PER WEEK	PER YEAR*	PER WEEK	PER YEAR*
Rent/accommodation fees	\$220-\$325	\$11,440-\$17,000	\$245 ^{##}	\$12,739.99
Food/beverages	\$150	\$7,800	\$120	\$6240
Public transport (Myki Card)	\$76.30	\$3,970	**\$45	(\$2340)
Personal care	\$50	\$2,600	\$35	\$1820
Entertainment, sport, hobbies	\$60	\$3,120	\$40	\$2080
Mobile/internet	\$125	\$6,500	*0	0
Utilities (gas, electricity, water)	\$70	\$3,680	0	0
ESTIMATED MINIMAL LIVING COSTS	\$750-\$860	\$39,110	\$485	\$25,219.99

A bond is refundable subject to no deductions for outstanding rent or damages

6 bedroom apartment

* Unlimited wifi included in rent

** Living at UniLodge Victoria University you may have minimal public transport cost if you are attending Footscray Park Campus or Footscray Nicholson St Campus. To see more about the costs of living in Victoria go to

liveinmelbourne.vic.gov.au/live/money-and-tax/cost-of-living-in-melbourne

See the UniLodge website for the full product range and pricing.

Visit: unilodge.com.au/student-accommodation-melbourne/vu

TIP Senior Advisor Welfare at Victoria University can provide you with information and advice on money management, tips to save money, debt management and inform you of your rights in relation to money and debt matters. You can make an appointment with a senior advisor, phone: +61 3 9919 6100. Doing a budget will help you manage your money. For a useful budget planner visit moneysmart.gov.au/budgeting/budget-planner

RENTAL COSTS

It is important to consider the combined cost of rent, living expenses and transport when choosing rental accommodation in Melbourne. Study Melbourne:

studymelbourne.vic.gov.au/money-and-budgeting/the-cost-of-living-in-victoria

RENTAL PRICES FOR SUBURBS NEAR VU CAMPUSES*

LOCALITY	1 BEDROOM UNIT	2 BEDROOM UNIT	3 BEDROOM UNIT
CBD Melbourne	\$ 540	\$465	\$975
Footscray	\$409	\$379	\$580
St Albans	\$300	\$340	\$380
Werribee	\$298	\$330	\$380
Sunshine	\$260	\$360	\$430

Source: www.dffh.vic.gov.au/publications/rental-report

* Median prices per week (as at the as at the end of June Quarter 2023).

Interested in finding out more about a location?

To find out more about each suburb (such as people, lifestyle and types of housing) visit realestate.com.au/neighbourhoods

APPLYING FOR A RENTAL PROPERTY

Obtaining a rental is very competitive. To improve your chance of being successful with your application remember when applying for a rental, Real Estate Agents and Rental provider's look for a renter who can demonstrate the following things:

- ◆ your ability to pay the rent on time and in full, and
- ◆ your willingness to care for the rental property, and
- ◆ your ability to make a good impression on the agent or Rental provider.

To improve your chances of getting the rental follow these tips:

- ◆ if you have rented before, providing positive references from previous Rental provider's or Real Estate Agents, will greatly improve your

chances of getting the tenancy. If you are coming from overseas remember to organise these before you come to Australia;

- ◆ make a good impression by arriving on time to the inspection, dress well and ensure that your application is error free;
- ◆ be honest with the Rental provider/Real Estate Agent
- ◆ flexibility in the amount of rent or the length of the rental agreement may assist you in getting the tenancy;
- ◆ if you don't have a rental history you can demonstrate proof of your capacity to pay your rent by showing your proof of income and your bank account balance.
- ◆ rental references could be provided by your employer or someone who knows you well.

1. Inspect property
2. Lodge application
3. Application accepted
4. Real estate agent/rental provider gives you a Residential Tenancy Agreement to read, understand and sign – keep a signed copy
5. Pay the bond in bank cheque or Money Order (from post offices) made to Residential Tenancies Bond Authority and one month's rent in advance

Note: if you are starting a tenancy in a rooming house and the rent is to be paid weekly, the rooming house owner cannot ask for more than 14 days rent in advance and the bond can not be more than 14 days rent. Refer to Rooming House section on page 10 of the Housing Guide

6. You are provided with a Bond Lodgement Form to complete and sign. You keep one copy
7. Real estate agent/rental provider forwards the bond to the Residential Tenancies Bond Authority (RTBA) within 10 business days of receiving the bond money
8. The RTBA sends you a receipt within 7 days of receiving the bond
9. A Condition Report on the premises is given to you by the rental provider/real estate agent
This very important document details the condition of the premises at the start of the tenancy. You have 3 business days from when you receive the keys to add your comments to this report and hand a copy back to the rental provider or agent
10. Return a copy of the Condition Report with your written comments within 3 working days to the rental provider or real estate agent. Keep a signed copy
11. Arrange connection of gas, electricity and water (In Rooming Houses these would be connected and cost included in the rent unless the room is separately metered)
12. Settle in.

TIP Keep all your tenancy documents (rental agreement, condition report and any photos) rent receipts and correspondence with the real estate agent or rental provider in one folder. Check that you receive receipts for the rent, bond and any bills. Also, remember the importance of checking the property location and the safety inside and outside of the property.

Condition report

The Condition Report states the condition of the property when you moved in.

It is vital that you carefully go through the property room by room and either tick the column next to each item if you agree, or make a comment if you do not. Write in any additional item/s of damage you find that is not shown on the Condition Report.

Take photos to support your comments and findings.

Return a copy of the Condition Report to the real estate agent or rental provider within 3 working days of moving into the property.

The Condition Report provides the evidence to support a claim by either you or the rental provider or real estate agent in the event of a dispute between you and the rental provider at the end of your tenancy.

The Condition Report documents:

- ◆ state of cleanliness of the property
- ◆ state of the fixtures and fittings
- ◆ declares if there is any existing damage.

TIP Use descriptive words on the Condition Report to describe state of cleanliness. e.g. moderately or heavily soiled instead of emotional words such as 'this place is filthy!' Describe damage accurately e.g. 6 slats of the lounge vertical blind are torn.

TIP Visit the Consumer Affairs Victoria website for more information: consumer.vic.gov.au

TIP Under the new rental laws, rental providers can only ask for a maximum of one month's rent as a bond, and can only require rent to be paid one month in advance.

DURING A TENANCY

Renter's responsibilities

- ◆ pay rent on time. If the rent is 14 days or more behind, the rental provider or real estate agent issues you a notice to vacate
- ◆ if a renter receives a Notice to Vacate (NTV) for rent arrears, and pays the arrears before the vacate date, it becomes invalid (for the first 4 NTV within a 12 month period)
- ◆ if there have been 5 such NTVs issued within 12 months, then the renter is at risk of eviction. If you are facing eviction - ensure you seek legal advice promptly, see contact details below
- ◆ if your rental provider asks you to move out, they must issue you with a NTV in the correct written form - including reasons for ending the agreement
- ◆ take care to avoid damaging the property
- ◆ report any damage caused by you or your visitors
- ◆ notify the rental provider or real estate agent of required repairs in writing
- ◆ connect utilities and telephone
- ◆ keep the property clean; maintain the garden and lawns (if any) as stated in the tenancy agreement
- ◆ people experiencing family violence who need to change their rental agreement so that they or their children can be safe can apply to VCAT.

Rental provider/real estate agent responsibilities

- ◆ lodge bond money with the Residential Tenancies Bond Authority (RTBA)
- ◆ provide you with information – Consumer Affairs Victoria booklets 'Renter's Guide' or 'Rooming Houses: Rooming house residents guide'
- ◆ your rental provider or agent cannot increase the rent more than once in any 12 month period - your rental provider or agent MUST give you 60 days notice, they MUST use the NOTICE OF RENT INCREASES FORM – for assistance please see details below
- ◆ rental providers (landlords) must ensure the rental property is provided and maintained in good repair and is in reasonably fit and suitable condition for occupation
- ◆ give you privacy and must give you a notice to visit or enter your property – this agreement must be made within 7 days before they can enter
- ◆ if you want to keep a pet, you must get rental provider's permission – use pet request form
- ◆ rental providers MUST provide a free set of keys for each renter
- ◆ rental providers must not unlawfully discriminate or tell their agent to unlawfully discriminate against you. i.e.: they must not discriminate against you because of your sex, age, disability, sexuality, race, or religion when deciding whether to rent you a property

Domestic violence can occur in share housing. If you experience violence, threat of violence or harassment from someone in your household seek legal advice. You can also attend your local police station to report the violence and discuss what is involved in applying for an intervention order.

fcl.org.au/find_a_community_legal_centre

police.vic.gov.au/location

If you would like to discuss your responsibilities during a tenancy or further information contact:

Tenants Victoria

tenantsvic.org.au

Phone: +61 3 9416 2577

Consumer Affairs Victoria

consumer.vic.gov.au

Phone: 1300 558 181

International students

Study Melbourne

studymelbourne.vic.gov.au/home

phone: 1800 056 449

Download CAV's Renting a Home Guide and Rooming House Guide.

consumer.vic.gov.au/rentingguide

MOVING OUT

Some important things to take care of before you move out of a house include making sure that you have paid your share of the bills, cleaned your share of the house, disconnected the gas, etc. if relevant, and provided your forwarding address or have your mail redirected by Australia Post.

Leaving a property at the end of an expired rental agreement

If you are living in shared housing (and not on the rental agreement), tell your housemate/s that you want to leave and give them an exit date.

Your housemate/s can then decide whether they want to advertise for a new housemate.

If you are on the rental agreement, you need to tell your housemates and give 28 days written notice to the rental provider or real estate agent of your intention to vacate. Your housemates can then decide whether to advertise for a new housemate or also give 28 days written notice to vacate to the rental provider or agent.

If you are living in your own rental property, you need to give at least 28 days notice in writing to the rental provider or real-estate agent.

The final inspection

The real-estate agent or rental provider has 10 working days from when you vacate the property to:

- ◆ undertake the final condition inspection to ensure the property is clean and undamaged

- ◆ process your bond claim for refund
- ◆ notify you of any issues of dispute such as cleaning or damage
- ◆ and if there is an issue, lodge an application with the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) for the matter to be heard.

Leave the property in the same or better condition as when you signed the rental agreement. Prior to the final inspection, repair any damage to the property that may have occurred. Remember to take all your belongings.

Share households usually have copies of all bills sent prior to the inspection date. You will need to pay your share of the utility bills (water, gas, electricity and internet/wifi) on your vacating date. All keys and borrowed goods also need to be returned to the rental provider on the vacating date. Extra rent may be charged if the keys are returned late.

TIP Ignoring your responsibilities may have an impact on the ability of future students to arrange accommodation with rental providers. You may also have renting problems if you try to rent in the future.

Breaking a rental agreement early

If your rental agreement (contract or agreement) has not yet expired and you want to break it early, then you may be liable to pay the rent until the property is re-let. This may include the re-let fee and any additional advertising fees.

The rental provider needs to take all reasonable action to re-let a vacant property and cannot discriminate against potential renters. Phone the rental provider regularly to see if they have re-let the property.

The re-letting provision does not apply to hostels, rooming houses (unless signed into a contract) or shared housing situations. Please contact Consumer Affairs Victoria if you need advice.

Rental providers may also legally apply to the Victorian Civil Administration Tribunal (VCAT) for you to pay compensation if you break your rental agreement early.

You can advertise for free on VU's Student Housing database or with another tertiary institution to see if another student will take over your rental agreement when you leave. If you have immediate reasons for breaking the rental agreement, such as the rented property being unfit for human use or major repairs have not been undertaken as requested, seek advice from:

For free confidential advice, contact:

Consumer Affairs Victoria

Phone: 1300 55 81 81 (local call charge)

Tenants Victoria

Phone: +61 3 9416 2577

Study Melbourne (for international students)

Phone: 1800 056 449

Cleaning

Final cleaning includes:

- ◆ carpets are cleaned and lawns mowed
- ◆ all surfaces (benches, floors and oven top) are dirt and stain free
- ◆ the oven/griller and bathroom/laundry have been cleaned
- ◆ newspapers are recycled and all rubbish placed out for collection
- ◆ all belongings (furniture, clothes, books, PC and pot plants) have been removed
This includes trying to find the owner (or friends of) belongings left behind that are not yours.

In shared households, bedroom cleaning is 100% the responsibility of the person who sleeps/ slept in it. Cleaning of communal areas (kitchen, lounge, bathroom, laundry and garden) is shared equally between all housemates. Be aware that failure to clean adequately may result in the rental provider claiming commercial cleaning costs (this can amount to hundreds of dollars).

Storage

If you have a household of furniture including bed/s, wardrobe, bookshelf, chest of drawers, washing machine, fridge, microwave sofa, table and chairs, bike, clothes, books, PC, desk, TV and stereo, you may want to use a removalist and hire storage to keep your furniture.

Compare prices of storage companies and removalists listed on the internet or in the local newspaper and yellow pages. Check with removalists how big their truck is, if insurance is included and if the quoted removalist price is for 1 or 2 people.

TIP It can be expensive to break a rental agreement. Before entering into a fixed term tenancy agreement, think about your likelihood of staying at the property for the full period of the rental agreement.

TIP You may be able to acquire storage boxes free from supermarkets. Ask friends if they have a spare room or garage that you can rent short-term to store your stuff.

Bond returns

To get the Bond back, complete a Release or Claim the bond application online: consumer.vic.gov.au/housing/renting/rent-bond-bills-and-condition-reports/bond/bond-claims-and-refunds.

Bond transfers

If you paid a bond/security deposit in shared housing that was lodged with the RTBA rentalbonds.vic.gov.au, then you need to complete a Renter Transfer form. The new renter (or remaining renters) pay you the bond money you are owed. Any new renter is then included on the rental agreement and their share of the bond is recorded in their name. You should check with the real estate agent/ rental provider that your name has been removed from the rental agreement.

TIP The Residential Tenancy Bond Authority (RTBA) will not accept a Bond Claim form if it has been altered in any way. If a renter, rental provider or real estate agent needs to make any changes to the form, they must complete a new Bond Claim form.

Cancelling the gas, electricity, water, phone and internet

If the utilities account/s are in your name, you need to give at least 48 hours notice to your retailer prior to vacating, to ensure the final readings are done to avoid being charged for utilities after you vacate. In most instances you can do these arrangements on-line.

Mail redirection

Complete a Mail Redirection form on-line with Australia Post to have your mail sent from your current address to another local or overseas address. The cost of this service is around \$35 per month and you can organise it in advance. Redirecting of letters overseas does incur extra costs – see Australia Post website auspost.com.au for more information.



UNDERSTANDING YOUR RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES



When you start renting a property, you enter into a rental agreement. There are two types of rental agreements: fixed term and periodic. Fixed term rental agreements are for a set period of time, usually 6 or 12 months. A periodic rental agreement generally runs from month to month.

It is important to understand that a rental agreement is a legally binding contract between you and the rental provider. If you break a rental agreement (e.g. leave before the end of the agreed time period), it can be very costly. For this reason, only sign a fixed term rental agreement if you are sure that you want to stay at the property for the entire period of the rental agreement.

Remember that you are entitled to negotiate the terms of the rental agreement with the rental provider – the law does not require that a rental agreement is for 6 or 12 months. It is just common practice. For example, you can ask the rental provider to change the rental agreement period to fit the academic year.

If you are renting a property with other people, you and the other renters all need to sign the rental agreement.

If you are moving into an already established share house, you should request written permission from the rental provider to have your name added to the tenancy agreement. Having your name on the rental agreement gives you the same rights as your housemates.

You are, however, also equally responsible for what happens in the house. For example, you are equally responsible for any damage to the property and non payment of rent.

If someone is moving out as you move in, make sure that you both sign a Bond Transfer form prior to paying the bond money to the renter who is leaving. Ask the rental provider or agent to come and inspect the property and complete a new Condition Report so you are not held responsible for any damage that might have occurred before you moved into the house.

There are some circumstances where you may be in a sub-letting arrangement. This is where a renter assumes the role of rental provider and sub-lets property. Your rights and responsibilities are the same as a renter under the Residential Tenancies Act.

As a renter, it is important that you read Renter rights and Responsibilities Guides produced by Consumer Affairs Victoria
consumer.vic.gov.au/housing/renting/starting-and-changing-rental-agreements/resources-and-guides-for-renters/resources-and-guides-overview.

These booklets provide information about yours and your rental provider's/rooming house owner's rights and responsibilities. It is required by law that you are given one of these guides by the rental provider or real estate agent.

If you want to discuss a tenancy issue, you can contact:

Consumer Affairs Victoria

consumer.vic.gov.au

Phone: 1300 558 181

Tenants Victoria

tenantsvic.org.au – useful housing factsheets

Phone: 1800 068 860

International students

Study Melbourne

Phone: 1800 056 44

studymelbourne.vic.gov.au/home

TIP There are some circumstances where you may be in a sub-letting arrangement. This is where a renter assumes the role of rental provider and sub-lets property. Your rights and responsibilities are the same as a renter under the Residential Tenancies Act.

HOUSING WEBSITES

There are some excellent housing resources available online to help guide you through the rental and shared house environment.

Check out the following websites:

Consumer Affairs Victoria

Provides rental information and forms
consumer.vic.gov.au

Tenants Victoria

Provides many useful fact sheets and an excellent section on Student Housing
tenantsvic.org.au

Moneysmart

Provides useful short videos to help you prepare for moving out of home
moneysmart.gov.au/student-lifeand-money/moving-out-of-home

Community Housing

Provides details of all Community Housing organisations
chiavic.com.au

Accommodation websites

domain.com.au

realestate.com.au

flatmates.com.au

flatmatefinders.com.au

Homestay

homestaynetwork.org

Real Estate Institute of Victoria

reiv.com.au

West Justice Community Legal Centre

westjustice.org.au

+61 3 9749 7720

Sustainable Renting

Tips on how to reduce your environmental impact

environmentvictoria.org.au/?s=renters+guide

Save on energy and your power bill

energy.gov.au/household-guides/reduce-energy-bills

Government Bond assistance

housing.vic.gov.au/apply-rentassist-bond-loan

Victorian Statewide

Homelessness Line

homelessnessaustralia.org.au/homelessness-services

Freecall: 1800 825 955

Public Housing

housing.vic.gov.au

Dispute Settlement Centre of Victoria

disputes.vic.gov.au

Victoria Civil and Administrative

Tribunal (VCAT)

vcat.vic.gov.au

Residential Tenancies Bond Authority

rentalbonds.vic.gov.au

Study Melbourne Student Centre

For international students at risk of homelessness

studymelbourne.vic.gov.au

HOUSING CHECKLIST

Before you start looking

What can you afford?

What area(s) do you want to live in?	
What area(s) can you afford?	
Can you afford to live alone and pay all the bills or do you want to live with others?	
How much is the bond and rent in advance?	
Have you checked whether you are eligible for financial assistance through Centrelink?	
How much is the gas, electricity, water and wifi/internet?	
What furniture, utensils and linen do you need?	

If you are choosing share housing, consider these questions

Do you want to live with males/females/gender diverse? Older or younger people?	
Do you want to live with students, unemployed or working people?	
Do you want to live with people who smoke cigarettes, drink alcohol or take drugs?	
What are your expectations about cleaning?	
What is your household's schedule?	
Are there cultural expectations and rituals practised in the home?	
Do you have any food restrictions, preferences, or allergies?	
Are parties or sleepovers a regular occurrence?	
How do you feel about pets in the household?	

COMPARING PROPERTIES RENT

Address

Property 1	
Property 2	

(Tick what is provided ✓)

Housing questions general

	Property 1	Property 2
Will you be sharing with anyone?		
What is the rental provider's name, phone number and address?		
How close is public transport?		
Is the property safe inside and outside?		
Are there any support services nearby?		
Is there a working smoke alarm?		
Do all the windows and doors open/lock?		
Is the area quiet or noisy?		
Is there a garden? If so, who maintains it?		
How long will it take you to get to campus?		
Pets: prepare your pets request form consumer.vic.gov.au/housing/renting/repairs-alterations-safety-and-pets/pets		
Does the household have any specific religious or cultural needs?		
Is the property accessible for people with a disability?		

Rent

	Property 1	Property 2
How much is the rent?		
Is this rent for a single or shared bedroom?		
Does the rent include bills?		

Important documents

	Property 1	Property 2
How much is the bond?		
How will the bond be kept?		
Has a Condition Report been completed, signed and provided to the rental provider and renter?		
How long is the rental agreement?		
How much written notice do you need to give to end the rental agreement?		
How much will it cost to break your rental agreement early?		
How many people are on the rental agreement?		
Can I put my name on the rental agreement/tenancy agreement?		

Household responsibilities and rules

	Property 1	Property 2
Who buys and pays for the food?		
Who does the cooking? What type of food is eaten?		
Are any meals shared or provided?		
Who does the grocery shopping?		
Who pays for the general household items (e.g. cleaning products)?		
Do renters shop as a group?		
Who does the cleaning?		
Are friends/family able to stay regularly and do they contribute to the bills?		
Can friends and family visit?		
What sustainable practices are used at the property? (e.g. recycling, water and power usage)		

GAS, ELECTRICITY AND WATER BILLS

(Tick what is provided ✓)

	Property 1	Property 2
Are there any water or heating restrictions in the household?		
Who pays the bills?		
How are the bills divided?		

Internet

	Property 1	Property 2
Is internet access provided? Does this cost extra?		

Bedroom furniture

Property 1	✓	Property 2	✓
Bed		Bed	
Wardrobe		Wardrobe	
Desk		Desk	
Drawers		Drawers	
Heater		Heater	
Fan		Fan	
Computer		Computer	
Lamp		Lamp	
Other (list):		Other (list):	

TIP | The renter needs to connect the utilities if moving into a vacant property.

WHAT IS AVAILABLE FOR SHARED USE

(Tick what is provided ✓)

Property 1	✓	Property 2	✓
DVD player, games console		DVD player, games console	
Computer, printer, internet		Computer, printer, internet	
Kettle, toaster, rice cooker		Kettle, toaster, rice cooker	
Cutlery, plates, cups		Cutlery, plates, cups	
Linen – pillow, sheets, doona / blankets / towels		Linen – pillow, sheets, doona / blankets / towels	
Car parking		Car parking	
Other (e.g. soap, butter, milk, sugar, coffee, toilet paper, cleaning products)		Other (e.g. soap, butter, milk, sugar, coffee, toilet paper, cleaning products)	

Receipts

Bond Receipt (Example only)

Date Paid:

(Name of person money paid to) received \$ (amount) for bond
from (your name and new address):

Both Signatures: _____

Bond Receipt (Example only)

Date Paid:

(Name of person money paid to) received \$ (amount)
from (your name) for
(how many) weeks rent) for address:

Both Signatures: _____

To access the range of support services at VU visit VUHQ in person, phone: **+61 3 9919 6100** or ask a question via **askvu.vu.edu.au**

STUDENT WELLBEING

Phone: +61 3 9919 5400

- ◆ Counselling
- ◆ Accessibility services
- ◆ Student Welfare: Sexual Assault and Family Violence Counselling
- ◆ Advocacy service
- ◆ Chaplaincy

STUDENT WELFARE

Phone: +61 3 9919 6100

Email: welfare@vu.edu.au

Housing

- ◆ Database of student housing options
- ◆ Utility aid and payment advice
- ◆ Tenancy advice
- ◆ Homelessness and temporary accommodation

Finance

- ◆ Money management
- ◆ Contract advice
- ◆ Short term student loans (upon approval)
- ◆ Eligibility for HECS help
- ◆ Enrolment fee issues
- ◆ VET help
- ◆ Emergency financial support

Centrelink

- ◆ Advocacy
- ◆ Payment advice and entitlements
- ◆ Application assistance

Community referrals

- ◆ Alcohol, drug & gambling issues
- ◆ Legal and Consumer rights

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT SUPPORT

International Student Support helps you get involved in the community, meet other students and get used to life in Melbourne. Talk with an International Student Advisor when you're feeling unsure about anything personal, or study related.

STUDENT LIFE

Enhances the student experience of current VU students through engagement in:

- ◆ Clubs
- ◆ Orientation
- ◆ Student leadership programs
- ◆ Social events
- ◆ Volunteering (VU Vollies) opportunities

For more information:

vu.edu.au/current-students/campus-life

VU STUDENT UNION

VUSU is the peak representative body at Victoria University, designed to provide and advocate for students at VU. VUSU is elected by students to and provides a range of representation, support, and general services to students on all campuses **vustudentunion.com**

LEARNING HUBS

VU's Learning Hubs are the place to go for academic support and skill development. Running daily workshops and drop-ins in writing, maths, statistics, presentation skills and more, head to **learninghub.vu.edu.au** to see what's on offer.

VU EMPLOY

- ◆ Job application support
- ◆ Career advice and consultations
- ◆ Employability programs
- ◆ 24/7 online Careers Toolkit

For more information:

vu.edu.au/current-students/careers-opportunities/careers-advice/vu-employ-careers-service-support

MOONDANI BALLUK

Indigenous Academic Unit

Phone: +61 3 9919 5681

Moondani Balluk provides financial, academic and pastoral supports to all enrolled Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students. Including student grants, financial assistance with accommodation and general living costs.

EXTERNAL SUPPORT SERVICES

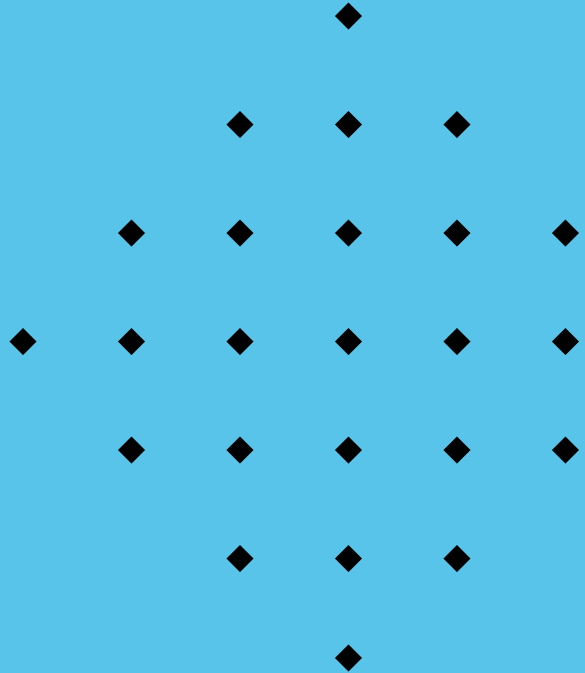
If you are experiencing difficulties outside Victoria University office hours, there are many free support services available to help you either by web or phone.

SERVICE	DESCRIPTION	CONTACT
Counselling services		
Lifeline Australia	Lifeline Australia provides a confidential telephone counselling services service.	Phone: 13 11 14 lifeline.org.au
Suicide Line Victoria	Suicide prevention and counselling and support.	Phone: 1300 651 251 suiceline.org.au
Beyond Blue Support Services	Provides access to information, advice and referrals around depression, anxiety and related conditions.	Phone: 1300 22 46 36 beyondblue.org.au
Switchboard Victoria LGBTIQ+	Counselling and information.	Phone: 1800 184 527 3pm – midnight (everyday) switchboard.org.au
International student assistance		
Study Melbourne Student Centre	Provides legal information, material aid and study support to international students and housing information.	Phone: 1800 056 449 9am – 5pm, Monday – Friday studymelbourne.vic.gov.au
Crisis accomodation		
The Salvation Army Crisis Centre	Provides a variety of support to people who are homeless or risk of homelessness.	Phone: 1800 627 727 (free call)
VIC 24hr Statewide Housing Crisis Service	Provides a variety of support to people who are homeless or risk of homelessness	Phone: 1800 825 955
General Housing Information and Referral		
Wombat Housing Service	Provides support to people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness in and around Melbourne's West.	Phone: 1800 887 775 9am - 5pm, Monday -Friday wombat.org.au
Other useful numbers		
Emergency	Fire, Police, and Ambulance services.	Phone: 000
1800 RESPECT	1800 RESPECT is a counseling information and referral service	Phone: 1800 737 732



**VICTORIA
UNIVERSITY**

MELBOURNE AUSTRALIA



Disclaimer

Please note this publication has been produced to provide housing information and should be treated as a guide only. Victoria University accepts no responsibility for the accuracy of information and reserves the right to make changes to the document at any time in its absolute discretion. The onus of responsibility is with each student to assess whether any housing option outlined in this publication is suitable to his/her own needs. Any arrangements, financial or otherwise, are strictly between the student and the share house/rental provider/agency/agent.

While every reasonable effort has been made to ensure this information is correct, details are subject to change. Publication date: October 2023.

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