

KNOW YOUR HOUSING RIGHTS.



A guide to renting
for La Trobe students
attending the
Bundoora campus.



KNOW YOUR
HOUSING
RIGHTS



The La Trobe University Student Union (LTSU) is the peak representative body for La Trobe University students at the Melbourne (Bundoora) campus.

Our representation is led by and for students and incorporates the ISA (International Students Association) and MASO (Mature Age Students Organisation). We've helped shape the University, supporting everything from new facilities such as the Sports Centre to Union Hall, providing vital services, tirelessly fighting for the rights of students at La Trobe, and more.

Our purpose is to advance the education of the students of La Trobe University by:

REPRESENT

Representing students within and outside the University.

PROMOTE

Promoting the interests and welfare of students.

SUPPORT

Supporting and co-ordinating the activities of students.

PROVIDE

Providing amenities and services for students, other members of the University community and the public.

ENHANCE

Enhancing the learning experience of students while at the University.

In addition to student representation and voice, we provide a free, independent and professional Advocacy Service for all La Trobe University and College students studying at any campus, online or offshore. This service routinely supports students through many complex university processes including support for housing issues.

Students can get advocacy support by registering using the QR code, or by contacting us on [Itsu. advocacy@latrobe.edu.au](mailto:advocacy@latrobe.edu.au) or (03) 9479 2469.

[Click here to register to get advocacy support](#)

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INTRODUCTION

We know renting can be difficult and confusing. But, when it works well, it can also be a fun and exciting part of your uni experience.

That's why we've created this guide to renting for La Trobe students. Whether you're living in a private rental, a share house or on uni res, we've put together the tips and tricks you need to make the most of it.

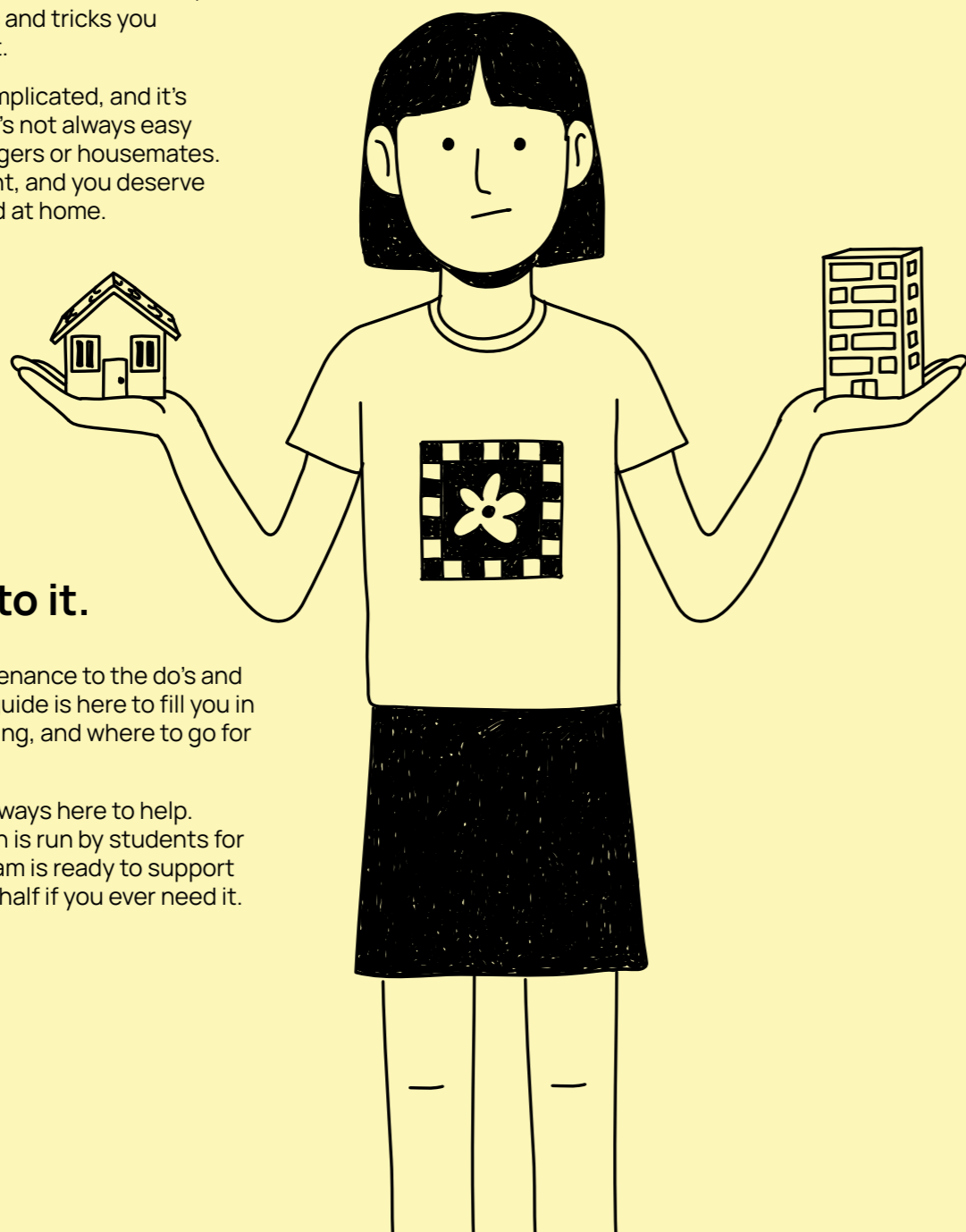
Rental law can be really complicated, and it's ok to need help. We know it's not always easy to deal with property managers or housemates. But housing is a human right, and you deserve to feel safe and empowered at home.

So, let's get into it.

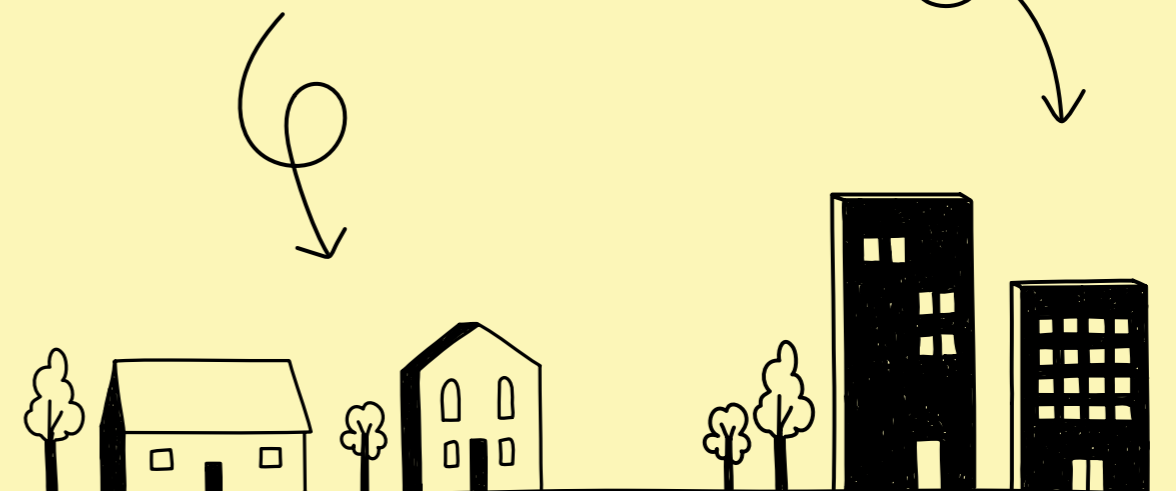
From how to request maintenance to the do's and don'ts of living on res, our guide is here to fill you in on the ground rules of renting, and where to go for more information.

And one last thing: we're always here to help. The La Trobe Student Union is run by students for students. Our advocacy team is ready to support you or advocate on your behalf if you ever need it.

[Visit our website](#)



PRIVATE RENTAL VS. UNIVERSITY RESIDENCE



There are several key differences between living on residence and through a private rental.

In a private rental, you rent a property (house, unit or apartment) with those that live there, splitting the costs of bills and sharing the kitchen and bathroom, or you live alone and manage these yourself.

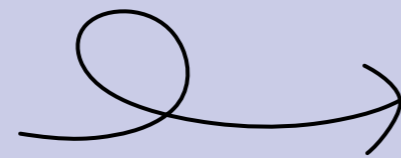
Living on residence you do the same, however it's often with more people. For example, if you chose to live at Chisholm College, you will share your kitchen and bathroom with around 12-14 other students.

The biggest difference is that the legislation that covers renters – the Residential Tenancies Act 1997 – does not apply to students living on residence.

This means: the list of rights and protections that the Tenancies Act offers does not apply to students living on residence.

This Act outlines what a rental provider can and can't do. For example, the Act outlines that a **rental provider must fix non urgent repairs within 14 days** and cannot raise the rent more than once a year. Without this legislation, students living on residence are limited in the actions they can take. Internal La Trobe University procedures are the only way to hold the university to account on issues with student accommodation. The next legal avenue is the Magistrates' Court.

RENTING 101: PRIVATE TENANTS



Moving to Melbourne to study can be an exciting and scary process, and there are a lot of things to keep in mind about where you'll live.

The main options are to find private accommodation, like a share house or solo apartment, or move into a university college or specialist student accommodation. It can be daunting to step into the world of renting and share houses.

This guide will give you all the information you need to get your head around renting in Melbourne. It will point you to where more information can be found and give you some tips on how to rent successfully.

If you have further questions, you can reach out to the La Trobe Student Union's advocacy team at latrobesu.org.au/advocacy

WHERE TO FIND RENTALS

There are a few ways
to find a rental property.

You can either find an empty house through [realestate.com.au](https://www.realestate.com.au) or [domain.com.au](https://www.domain.com.au) or even by searching through a real estate agents' site.

You can also join an existing share houses by searching through either a Facebook group like [Fairy Floss Real Estate](#) or [Queer Housing Melbourne](#)! Or use a website like [flatmates.com.au](https://www.flatmates.com.au) or [flatmatefinders.com.au](https://www.flatmatefinders.com.au).

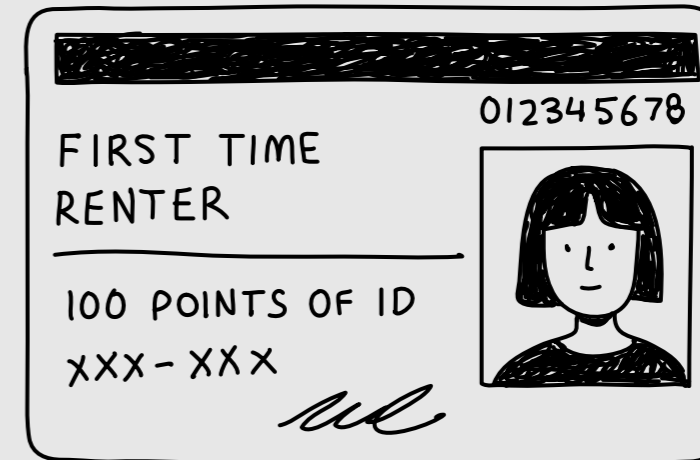
Make sure you inspect a property before placing a rental application, as properties often look different in person. Check that the property is in an area that's easy to get to university and that there are no noticeable damages that are not known to the agent.



APPLYING FOR A RENTAL

A real estate agent or property manager will require you, and anyone applying with you, to fill out an application form.

For more information on applying for a rental see consumer.vic.gov.au



You will need to provide 100 points of ID, information about your income (Centrelink or job details), and a rental history. Some of this information will help them decide who to offer a property to.

If you have any issues with the information the agent or property manager asks for, you can always call their office and ask why they need the documents, and what could be a good alternative if you cannot provide it. For example, if you are applying for your first rental, you will not have a rental history and so a reference from your boss or parent might be an alternative.

If your parents or family are planning on helping you pay for rent, they can provide a guarantor letter to substantiate they will pay if you're unable to.

FURNITURE CHECKLIST

Depending on your lease agreement, properties can either be furnished or unfurnished.

Most however are unfurnished. As a result, you'll need to buy or bring things with you, like a fridge, microwave, couches, tables and beds.

What should come with the property

- Heater in the main living room
- Hot water systems
- Light fittings
- Stove or oven
- Carpets
- Curtains or blinds
- Kitchen cupboards

What you'll need to bring

- Bed and frame
- Desk and chair
- Table and chairs
- Couch and TV
- White goods (fridge, washing machine, etc.)
- Kitchen appliances (kettle, toaster, microwave, etc.)
- Bathroom supplies (soap, towels, toilet paper, etc.)
- Personal items
- Clothing and linen (bedding, towels, etc.)

BASIC RIGHTS

There are laws protecting your rights as a renter, which a rental provider (landlord) must respect.

Under the Residential Tenancies Act 1997, a rental provider must:

- Ensure that the property remains in good repair
- Ensure that a resident has 'quiet enjoyment' of the property
- Ensure the property meets a number of minimal standards (more on this later)
- Provide keys to working locks on all external doors and windows

In Victoria, a rental provider cannot evict you without reason. They also cannot raise the rent as much as they want, whenever they want to. See consumer.vic.gov.au/rentincreases for more information.

A condition report is usually written before starting a tenancy, by the real estate agent or rental provider. This document will be referred back to in order to determine what is fair wear and tear and what is damage to the property and needs to be repaired.

This condition report will be your evidence if the rental provider has any issues with the state of the property when you leave, so make sure you document everything. This could mean taking photos of existing damage and sending them to the agent as proof that the damage was there before you moved in.

LIVING WITH PEOPLE

Living with people can be hard, and housemate disputes can be complicated. All tenants are responsible for rent and maintenance of the property if a lease is shared between people. It's a good idea to discuss the following before commencing a lease with co-tenants:

- Who will connect utilities (power, gas and water)
- How you will split the rent
- What happens if someone causes damage
- What happens if someone wants to move out before the end of the lease

It is also essential to manage your relationships with housemates, as living with people can be tricky. Be courteous, polite, and respectful, and remember that you are sharing the space. It might be useful to have open and honest conversations about how you are using the space and if you're enjoying living at the property. Regular housemate meetings are important to make sure that you get to have your issues listened to and, importantly, have an opportunity to listen to others.

Living with people can be hard, but it's also really rewarding.

UTILITIES

Before moving in, you will have to set up utilities (power, gas internet and water). Without these set up they won't magically turn on.

Only the person whose name is on the utility bill is legally responsible for paying the bill, so it's best to have in writing beforehand how this will be split between all tenants. Normally this is split equally amongst all tenants. This can be as simple as an email that shows you all support this option or a physical document that you've all signed.

It is best to compare a few electricity, gas and internet companies and to make sure you're comfortable with the service provided. It's also worth considering if the company's ethics line up with your own. For example, how much power will be generated through renewable energy?

The Victorian Government has a service to compare energy companies: compare.energy.vic.gov.au



ADJUSTMENTS TO YOUR HOME

You are allowed to make some changes to a property to make it a home, without getting permission from the rental provider first.

Changes that can be made **without permission** include:

- Non-permanent window film for insulation, reduced heat transfer or privacy
- A wireless doorbell
- Curtains (but the renter must not throw out the original curtains)
- Adhesive child safety locks on drawers and doors
- Pressure mounted child safety gates
- A lock on a letterbox
- Picture hooks or screws for wall mounts, shelves or brackets on all surfaces except exposed brick or concrete walls
- Wall anchors to secure items of furniture on all surfaces except exposed brick or concrete walls

- LED light bulbs which don't need new light fittings
- Low flow showerheads (the renter must not throw out the original showerhead)

A larger list of changes can be found: consumer.vic.gov.au

If you'd like to make changes outside of the list, you need to ask the rental provider first. Some rental providers won't mind if you decide to make some changes; others may have a firm view on their investment, but all you can do is ask. Remember, it is illegal to evict tenants for no reason in Victoria.



PETS

If you want to have a pet in your home, you must ask your rental provider for permission.



Rental providers legally need a good reason to refuse the renter's request and can only apply to VCAT for an order to refuse permission.

All you have to do is fill out a Consumer Affairs Victoria **pet request form** and send this to your property manager or rental provider. It is worth describing your pet's temperament and behaviour in the form to give your rental provider more information.

If you are living with housemates, you should also have a conversation about getting a pet or bringing them with you when you move it. It is useful to talk about the expectations you or your housemates have about your plan to care for your animal. Your housemates might be willing to share the clean-up from your furry friend once in a while, but might not be happy to do it all the time.

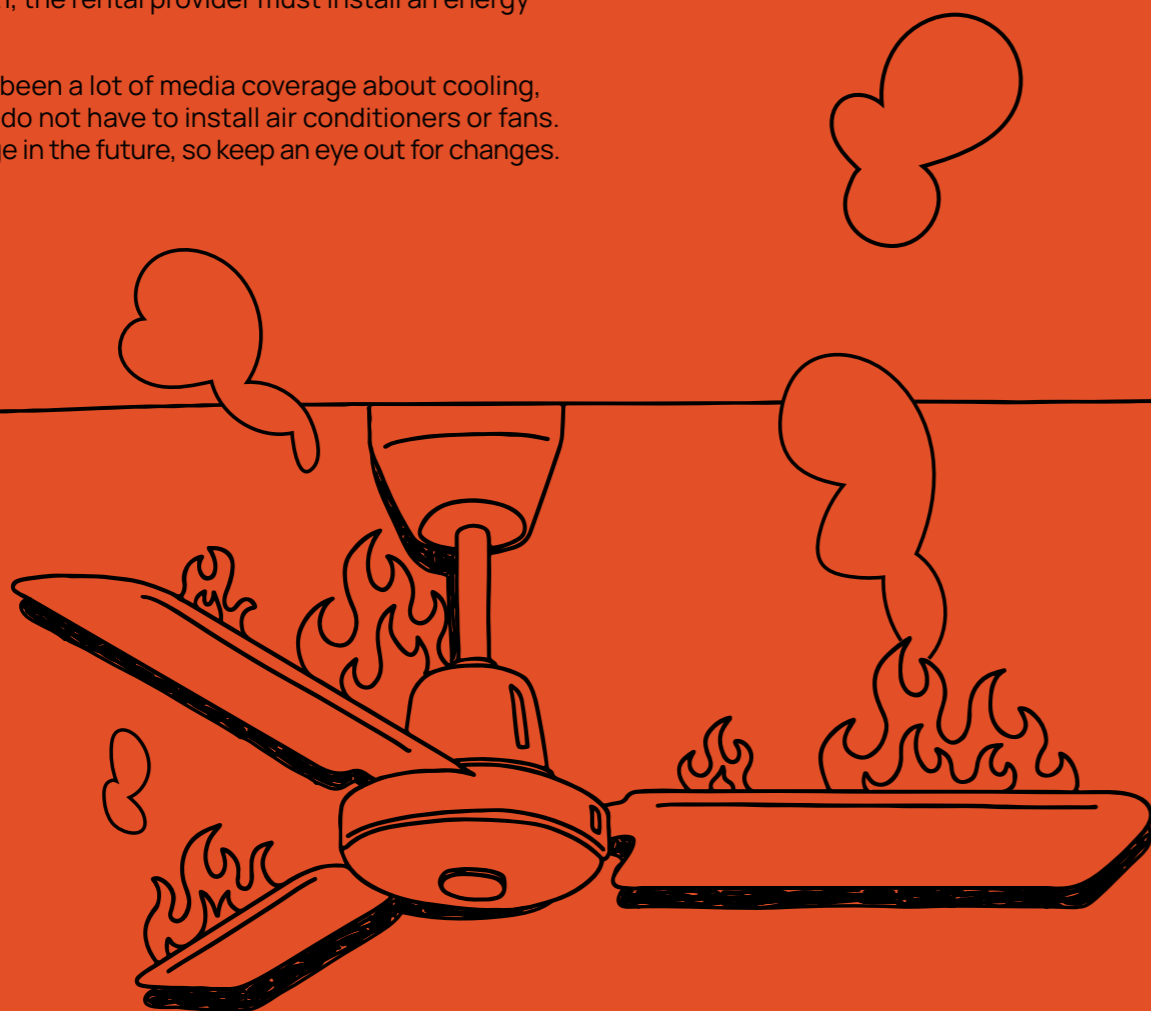


HEATING & COOLING

Rental properties must have a fixed heater (not portable) in good working order in the main living area. This is normally the living room.

If a fixed heater has not been installed in the main living area by 29 March 2021, the rental provider must install an energy efficient heater.

While there has been a lot of media coverage about cooling, rental providers do not have to install air conditioners or fans. This could change in the future, so keep an eye out for changes.



BOND

A bond is a payment that renters provide in case of damages to a property.

This bond is paid, through the real estate agent or rental provider to the Government via the Residential Tenancies Bond Authority (RTBA). Bonds cover damage and other costs rental providers may have to pay when a renter moves out like a professional cleaner if the property was professionally cleaned before a tenant moved in (and there is a receipt).

You, your real estate agent or rental provider may apply to have the bond refunded after a lease has ended. Any damages that are not fair wear and tear – or a cleaning fee – will be taken out of the bond. A condition report will be given to you when you move into a property. It's this document that your rental provider will refer back to when doing a final inspection. It's a good idea to keep the document handy when doing your final clean to avoid any surprises.

A bond is often shared amongst residents of a share house before moving in. Only those who are **named on the bond form with the RTBA are eligible for the money** so it is a good idea to have in writing how the bond will be shared. It is common for bonds to be split equally.

LEASE AGREEMENTS

A lease is a contract that outlines the terms of a rental property.

A lease usually contains:

- The amount of rent
- The length of the lease
- The amount of bond to be paid
- Other conditions and rules

There are broadly three types of leases:

1. Short fixed-term lease (generally less than 6 months)
2. Long fixed-term lease (any period that is generally over 6 months)
3. Periodic (month to month) agreements

A renter or rental provider must give 28 days' notice to end a lease after the period specified in the lease.

Fixed-term agreements like a 12-month lease will automatically move to a month-to-month periodic lease if the period has ended and you have not signed a new 12-month lease.

There are a number of reasons to end a lease early from either the renter or rental provider's perspective. Sometimes if the renter breaks the lease, there may be costs you need to cover. For a full list of reasons, when you need to tell your provider and possible costs, see: [consumer.vic.gov.au](https://www.consumer.vic.gov.au)

If you have broken a lease agreement, a rental provider may seek to evict you. This could be because you haven't paid rent or have caused damage for example.

A rental provider cannot evict you for no reason in Victoria. For a full list of reasons and time frames see: [consumer.vic.gov.au](https://www.consumer.vic.gov.au)

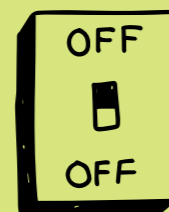
MAINTENANCE

Things break in a house. They may break on their own, or with a helping hand. It may be an accident or things could simply fall off.

Some items will degrade over time, like carpets and curtains. These could come under fair wear and tear. Fair wear and tear is deterioration because of:

- Reasonable use of the property
- Natural environmental forces

Examples of fair wear and tear might be faded curtains, worn kitchen bench tops or faded carpet, while ripped or torn curtains, or stained or chipped bench tops might be considered damage.



However, if something does break or needs maintenance, you should let your rental provider know. You can do this via email with a photo of the issue. Consumer Affairs Victoria have a form that you can fill out asking for 'non urgent' repairs.

Click to download the non-urgent repairs form

These must be carried out within 14 days of getting a written request. Rental providers must make urgent repairs immediately. Urgent repairs are defined by the law. Anything else is a non-urgent repair. A repair is non-urgent if the renter can continue to safely live in the property. **Non-urgent** repairs include things like a broken dishwasher or loose bathroom tiles. **An urgent** repair could be a gas leak or a blocked or broken toilet.

It is common for a rental provider to give you a list of tradespeople that they have authorised to carry out urgent repairs if needed (to be paid by the rental provider), you can use this list without needing permission first. You can also pay for urgent damages and then seek to be reimbursed by a rental provider, however if they dispute the amount, this will have to be challenged in VCAT. It is advisable to not pay for the repairs yourself, unless it is absolutely necessary.

A rental provider must also replace/ fix an item with a similar standard or better. For example, if your heater breaks then a rental provider must replace it with a similar unit or better. They cannot give you an item that is inferior. Similarly, a rental provider cannot replace your air conditioner with a fan.

The following flowchart maps the process for non-urgent repairs over a 14-day time period:



RENTAL MINIMUM STANDARDS



There are a number of minimum standards and amenities that a rental provider must provide:

- Locks on all external doors and windows
- Vermin proof council bins (meaning outside large bins that rats, mice or other pests can't get into)
- Bathroom with basin, bath or shower, working toilet and hot and cold water
- Kitchen – food prep and cooking area, sink with hot and cold water, stovetop with at least 2 burners
- Heating – there must be a fixed heater in the main living area (normally the living room)
- Window coverings (curtains or blinds) in the bedrooms and living areas
- Keys for each person on the lease
- Gas/electrical safety checks may be carried out every two years
- The property must be structurally sound and free from mould and damp

For a full list of rental minimum standards see consumer.vic.gov.au

SUBLETTING

Subletting is when you rent out your room to someone else when you are on the lease, and they are not.

Subletting is generally not allowed under Victorian law unless you have written permission from the rental provider. It is advisable that you email your real estate agent and rental provider asking for permission to sublet your room or home.

CENTRELINK

You should update your address with Centrelink within 2 weeks (14 days) of your move. This can be done through the Government's [MyGov](#) portal.

VOTING ENROLMENT

If you are an Australian citizen, you need to update your name on the electoral rolls both at a Commonwealth and state level when you move house. That can be done prior to an election with rolls closing generally around 2 to 3 weeks prior to the election. Both the [Australian Electoral Commission](#) and the [Victorian Electoral Commission](#) have easy-to-use websites to do this.

COUNCIL SERVICES

Local councils control a wide variety of services across planning, public health, traffic, parking and animal management.

Click to find out which council you're in, or contact us for support

Bin pickup varies from council to council. Information on when a council will pick up bins can be found on their website. You can also keep an eye out on when your neighbours put theirs out.

CAR PARKING

If you have a car you'll need to find a safe spot to park. Some houses come with off-street parking, like a driveway, garage or undercover parking. If they don't, you may be able to park on the street. However, if you are in a permit zone then you'll need to buy one from the council. These can range in price and often are cheaper for the first permit assigned to a house. This will need to be a conversation between housemates on how to split the cost of permits.

If you have a car, it's a good idea to look for a property to rent that has either off-street parking or dedicated parking for you.

MORE SUPPORT AND INFO

Renting can be hard, and there are a lot of laws and regulations that can make it confusing. However, there are a number of services and organisations that are there to help.

Tenants Victoria champions renters' rights in Victoria and offer support services to tenants in need. Tenants Victoria has in-house lawyers that can provide free useful legal advice.

Consumer Affairs Victoria also has a lot of easy-to-access information on renting and is a good first point of call for doing your own research.

Lifeline is a free dedicated phone service for anyone experiencing a personal crisis. Call 24/7 on 13 11 14.

Beyond Blue has free 24/7 phone support and online service and resources.

Study Melbourne is a Victorian State Government site which has good information and financial advice for local and international students.

International Student Legal Information is a dedicated international student resource that offers information in Chinese, Vietnamese and Spanish.

Headspace is a free online and phone support counselling service for young people aged 12-25 years old.

Switchboard is an LGBTIQA+ specific support network and referral system.

If you are struggling to get enough food, there are food banks available around Melbourne that can help out. Studymelbourne.vic.gov.au has a list of food banks around Melbourne. [Facebook.com/FeedingLaTrobe](https://www.facebook.com/FeedingLaTrobe) is a food bank located on La Trobe University's Bundoora campus next to the Eastern Lecture theatre.

There are also numerous community legal centres that can help by providing free legal advice for renters. The La Trobe Student Union also offers advocacy services and can help by providing advice on your unique situation. latrobesu.org.au/advocacy

Finally, **The Renters and Housing Union (RAHU)** is a member-run union, comprised of renters, homeowners, and people in unstable housing. RAHU requires you to be a paid member to get support from RAHU. They can offer advice and help you with questions about renting but don't have in house lawyers or advocates. They are a great resource if you need help organising with other renters to gain support for change.

RAHU membership is free for international students and as low as \$1 a month for those on income support (like domestic students).

RESOLVING DISPUTES

Disputes with your rental provider or property manager can go through the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT).

This might include your rental provider pursuing you for payment of damages to the property or cleaning fees, or in some extreme cases, challenges to eviction orders. VCAT is not just for rental providers, and can be a useful avenue to address issues if your rental provider won't fix things around the property.

VCAT is a legal body that oversees lower-level disputes and keep them out of court. They can make legally binding decisions and orders. The proceedings are administered by 'members' who make decisions based on the evidence heard. Almost all residential tenancy disputes are heard through VCAT. Around 50,000 applications are made to VCAT each year.

Before going to VCAT, it's important that you have exhausted normal procedures. These are things like sending requests in writing, such as email. Consumer Affairs Victoria has a range of forms that can be issued to rental providers and will often be the first or second step before you can escalate to VCAT. For example, if your rental provider has not fixed a non-urgent repair within 14 days (the stipulated timeframe they must follow), then you can apply to VCAT to issue a work order.

Anyone can apply to VCAT with an issue. You don't need a lawyer and can represent yourself. However, going to VCAT is a legal process and it's a good idea to get some legal advice or information first.

VCAT is not a free service and does have a fee associated with it. This ranges in cost from \$67.40 for a standard one day hearing to much more for longer hearings. See vcat.vic.gov.au/fees for more information.

VCAT prioritises cases that the renting laws say must be heard within a certain time and consider urgent cases first. Typically, it takes about 7 business days to hear cases about non-urgent repairs. Applications for possession due to danger, damage, or disruption are scheduled for hearing as soon as possible. Possession applications due to unpaid rent are heard in about 5 weeks, and most other applications for possession are heard within 4-8 weeks.

Click to apply to VCAT using the form

MANAGING LANDLORD RELATIONSHIPS

Managing a rental provider relationship can be complicated.

You may never speak to or meet your landlord if you rent through an agency. However, if you are renting directly from a rental provider, you will inevitably have a working relationship with them.

There are a few rules about when your property owner can visit the property. These can be found at consumer.vic.gov.au. Generally speaking, a rental provider must give at least 48 hours to 7 days' notice that they plan to inspect the property.

Remember to speak to a rental provider and real estate agent with courtesy, politeness and respect – they are a human being. Ask for what you need in plain English. At the end of the day, rental providers want good tenants who alert them to damages when they occur and pay their rent on time.

THIS IS PLAIN ENGLISH

I UNDERSTAND

NATURAL DISASTERS

There is no one way to manage a rental property that has been affected by a natural disaster.

When a rental is deemed “unliveable”, it usually means that the building is fully or partially destroyed or damaged (could be due to a natural disaster like a storm or flood) or condemned (meaning not safe to live in). If you think the property you are in is “unliveable”, raise it with the rental provider ASAP and ask for an assessment and repairs. Remember – do this in writing.

If a natural disaster has left your rental unliveable, you can write to your rental provider to inform them that you intend to vacate the property. There are no fees, penalties or notice periods if the property has become uninhabitable.

You may wish to live in a property while it is being repaired. Talk to your rental provider about this when the situation arises.

You can contact Tenants Victoria or the La Trobe Student Union Advocacy team for more information: latrobesu.org.au/advocacy

SCAMS

When searching for rentals, you should be cautious of properties that sound too good to be true.

When a property is significantly cheaper than other similar properties in the same area, it may be a scam. Unfortunately, there are people out there who scam vulnerable students, especially international students. Be wary of scammers trying to appear genuine by providing photos, real addresses of properties, land title deeds and even scans of stolen passports. They can scam you by asking for a month’s bond and rent to secure the property. If you pay by money transfer, there is very little chance of recovering your money.

Look for signs that you’re going through a legitimate person or company:

1. Official paperwork (a lease, condition report, welcome pack, proof you’ve picked up keys)
2. Payment via BPAY (rather than cash)
3. Renting through a real estate agency

If possible, try and verify the identity of the person you are dealing with. For example, if they say they work for an established estate agency, you could contact the agency to confirm you are dealing with their representative.

If the property owner offers ongoing excuses about why you cannot view the property in person – such as them being overseas – be wary. Avoid paying via money transfer services, or making a payment directly into a bank account, because these methods may be less secure than using BPAY.

You can also do a reverse Google Image search with the images in the advertisement for the property to check they haven’t been copied from somewhere else.

MOVING OUT

There are a number of things you should do when you move out.

1. Provide 28 days written notice to your rental provider or housemates of your plan to move out
2. Clean, clean, clean:
 - All internal areas, including the living room, kitchen, bathroom, laundry, toilet and bedroom(s)
 - The stove top, hot plates, grill and oven
 - Wash out all the drawers and cupboards
 - Mop the floors and vacuum the carpets
 - You may need to get the property professionally cleaned if it was done before you moved in
3. Take all of your things out of the house, including all furniture and belongings
4. Tidy the garden (if you have one)
5. Fix any damages that are not in the original condition report
6. Disconnect or transfer to a remaining housemate any utilities in your name (gas, electricity, water, internet)
7. Do a final inspection with the condition report
8. Return keys to your rental provider
9. Apply to have your bond returned with the RTBA

EVICTION

Rental providers must follow strict rules before evicting renters, otherwise it is an illegal eviction.

These steps are:

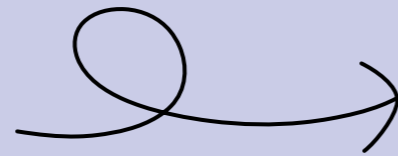
1. Give the renter the official written notice called a **notice to vacate**
2. Apply to VCAT for a possession order
3. Receive a warrant of possession
4. Give the warrant of possession to the police, which gives police the power to evict the renter.

A notice to vacate says that a rental provider wants to end the rental agreement or lease. This can be challenged by the tenant through VCAT.

There are also a lot of different timeframes involved with eviction orders. For example, it’s a 14-day period if the renter owes at least 14 days’ rent or the renter has brought in other renters or sub-letters without consent.

A period of 60 days applies if planned reconstruction, repairs or renovations require the renter to vacate, the premises is to be demolished, the rental provider or a member of their immediate family or a dependent (who normally lives with the rental provider) will be moving into the premises, or the property is being sold.

RENTING 101: UNIVERSITY RESIDENCE



When coming to university there are a lot of choices you need to make: what course you will study, where will you get coffee on campus and, importantly, where will you live?

Living on campus can be a lot of fun and offers the opportunity to live with lots of like-minded people. On-residence living usually involves renting a small room with a desk and bed with a shared kitchen, bathroom and common spaces.

Many students chose to spend some of their time living on campus in their university degree. It is a great way to immerse yourself in university life and be part of a community.

FURNITURE CHECKLIST

You will have all furniture supplied while living on residence.

You need to bring all your personal items, clothing and linen as well as computers. You can also purchase a bar fridge that can be kept in your room, but this will need to be 'tested and tagged' before it can be used. If you want to bring any other furniture, you'll have to ask Living at La Trobe.



What will come with the property

- Heater
- Hot water systems
- Light fittings
- Stove or oven
- Carpets
- Curtains or blinds
- Kitchen cupboards
- Bed and frame
- Desk and chair
- Table and chairs
- Couch and TV
- White goods (fridge, washing machine, etc.)
- Kitchen appliances (kettle, toaster, microwave, etc.)

What you'll need to bring

- Personal items
- Clothing and linen (sheets, towels, etc.)
- Bar fridge (if desired)
- Bathroom supplies (soap, towels, toilet paper, etc.)

BASIC RIGHTS

In Victoria, unlike a private rental living, you are not covered by the Rental Tenancies Act on residence, which reduces the legal protections in place.

You also usually need to be a student to qualify for on residence accommodation. If you get excluded from the university for misconduct, you can find yourself being evicted from your accommodation as well. Make sure you read the Conditions and Rules of Residence booklet that the university will provide you to understand the rules for living on residence.

For minor misconduct, there will be a disciplinary hearing. For serious misconduct, you can be excluded from the university with only 48 hours' notice.

If you have any questions or need support, the La Trobe Student Union advocacy team are here to help. You can contact the team if you need advice on an issue at university or if you need someone to advocate on your behalf: latrobesu.org.au/advocacy



SERVICES AVAILABLE

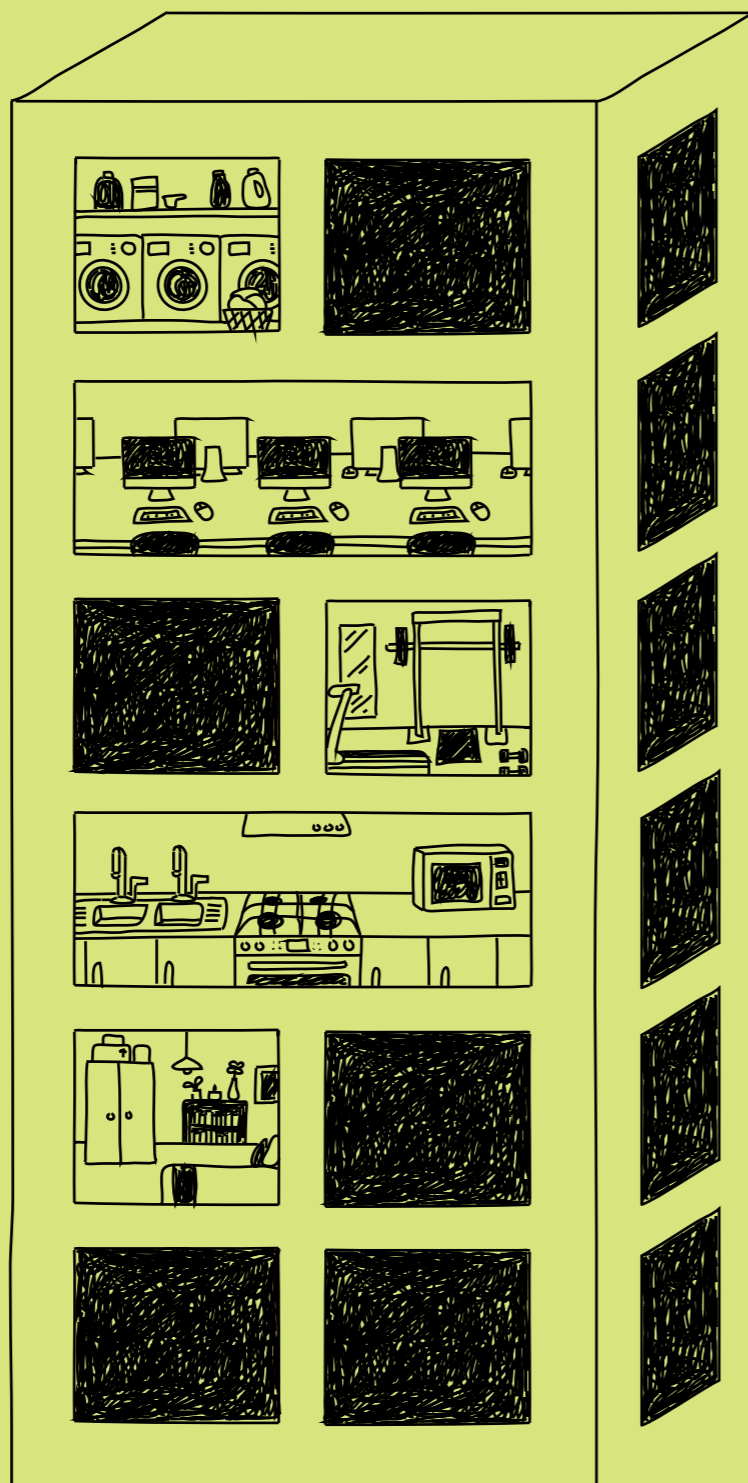
Each Bundoora Residential College at La Trobe has separate services available.

Yet, Residential Leaders will be available at all colleges. A "RL", normally a second or third year student will help, mentor and advise newer students on how to get the most out of their accommodation and university. The colleges also offer:

- A dedicated campus bus
- 24-hour computer lab access
- Self-catered with communal kitchen facilities (Menzies and Chisholm), optional catered dinners (Onsite Glenn Bistro café)
- Free BBQ facilities
- Study spaces
- Free laundry facilities
- 24/7 security presence
- Gym available onsite (free gym exclusive to Menzies and Chisholm)
- TV rooms and lounge spaces
- Secure individual key card entry to bedroom

Aside from what the colleges offer, the university itself offers welfare services that can be of use to students. La Trobe University's welfare team offers mental health counselling, wellbeing check ins, a legal advice service and financial counselling. See latrobe.edu.au/students/support/wellbeing for more information.

Remember, you can always reach out to the La Trobe Student Union advocacy team for help. Find out more at latrobesu.org.au/advocacy



THE BIG DO'S AND DON'TS

DON'T

- ⊘ Don't tamper with the fire equipment, like smoke alarms, smoke detectors or fire extinguishers. This is one of the most common occurring issues for students living on campus. These can be sensitive and can be set off by candles, aerosols and burning toast. You can be kicked out of the residence if you tamper with this equipment!
- ⊘ Don't let people onto the accommodation services after 10pm. You are sharing the space and need to let other people sleep.
- ⊘ Don't eat or throw out other people's food.
- ⊘ Don't participate in drinking games, hazing, bullying, sexual harassment, assault, theft and violence. You are expected to have full knowledge of, and abide by, the rules applying to community standards and behaviour.
- ⊘ Don't smoke or vape. La Trobe University is a smoke and drug-free campus and it is prohibited to smoke/vape anywhere in or around the residential buildings (unless in the designated smoking areas).

DO

- ✓ Do evacuate when the evacuation alarm goes off. It may be a false alarm, but it only takes one real case for things to go wrong.
- ✓ Do make sure to get ambulance cover (this will save you a costly ambulance call out fee, and is an annual fee of \$49.94).
- ✓ Do clean up after yourself (do your own dishes).
- ✓ Do adhere to the designated quiet periods.
- ✓ Speak up if you are feeling unsafe or if there are maintenance issues that need to be rectified. Put it in writing.
- ✓ Participate in residence events to meet other students, your RLs and find out what supports are freely available.

GUESTS

When living at La Trobe, you cannot have more than 2 people visiting during day hours without the permission of Living at La Trobe.

Similarly, to have a guest visit past 10pm, you will have to have approval from Living at La Trobe. A form can be filled out and submitted on StarRez.

PARKING

Parking is not included in your rental fees and needs to be purchased additionally from La Trobe University. You can pay a daily fee, but it will be cheaper and easier to purchase a year-long permit. latrobe.edu.au/transport-central

LIVING WITH PEOPLE

Living with people can be hard, and housemate disputes can be complicated. Living on residence with people also comes with its complications as there can be a lot of social pressure. You will need to adhere to designated quiet periods and be mindful of living in close proximity with others. Making sure you get involved in events and remain courteous, respectful and polite, this will help ensure you make the most of your time at La Trobe University.

Working out how you want to live on residence is important and vital to ensure you are successful at university. Finding that balance is a good first step.

STARREZ

StarRez is the online service students living on residence use to pay rent and lodge maintenance requests. On the first day of every month, StarRez will show how much money you owe for rent. This portal also displays the status of maintenance requests. If you have further questions on how to use StarRez, please reach out to the LTSU advocacy team or your residential assistant.

There are payment plan options available if you are suffering from financial hardship while staying on residence. If you need to speak to someone about a payment plan, visit the Residential Services Team.

SAFETY AND GETTING AROUND

The uni has a responsibility to make sure you feel safe on campus and in your residence.

You can call security and the Uni-Safe service 24/7 for help on (03) 9479 2222.

They can attend to issues of safety as well as escort you or sometimes even give you a lift between campus buildings, residences, carparks or to places like local public transport stops after dark.

There is also a **Night Glider bus** service available on request to pick-up or drop-off staff and students anywhere on campus, plus five designated off-campus locations. The LTSU fought hard to keep the Night Glider for students! Your safety is important!

For more info on Uni-Safe services:

[Click to visit the website](#)

[Click to watch the video](#)

UNDERSTANDING YOUR CONTRACT

It's important to understand the Conditions and Rules of Residence. This document contains all the rules specified by Living at La Trobe. The university and residence services take breaches of their rules seriously and can result in the termination of accommodation. If you need help understanding the document, ask your residence assistant or the student union advocacy team. latrobesu.org.au/advocacy

CLEANING AND MAINTENANCE

Common areas will be cleaned by professional staff, but you will have to clean up the big items and do your own dishes. You will have to keep your own room clean. Vacuum cleaners are available from accommodation services. If you do not keep your areas clean you can be charged a cleaning fee that ranges from around \$45 to \$100.

BOND

To get your bond back after your move out, complete a **bond refund form** either in-person or via the StarRez Portal. Your bond payment will be refunded within 21 business days of your contract end date to the bank account you put on the bond refund form.

It's not OK for your bond to be delayed or withheld unreasonably. Contact the Advocacy Service if this happens to you.

REPORTING ISSUES

If you do not think the residence is being kept as clean and tidy as it should be or if there are maintenance issues that should be fixed, **report this in the StarRez portal.**

[Click to report issues in the StarRez Portal](#)

If it is taking a long time or you want an update, email living@latrobe.edu.au. Remember, if you are not happy with the quality of the residence, the LTSU Advocacy Service can help!

UNILODGE

UniLodge is one of the biggest suppliers of student accommodation in Australia, including running La Trobe Universities Melbourne student residence colleges. UniLodge took over operations in 2022 and will be your first point of call to book the service in 2023.

Although UniLodge is not bound by the RTA, they as well as La Trobe much treat you fairly and with respect. If this is not the case, contact the Advocacy Service.

EVICTION

You can be evicted from your on residence accommodation for violating a university rule, or by breaching your Conditions and Rules of Residence. This can happen with 48 hour's notice. Make sure you read and understand your residence contract and the Conditions and Rules of Residence.

COST OF LIVING

RENTING COSTS

	Uni Residence or Suburb	1 Bedroom Unit	2 Bedroom Unit	Distance to campus
Private rental suburbs	Bundoora	\$370	\$390	1 km
	Kingsbury	\$292	\$350	1 km
	Macleod	\$210	\$380	2 km
	Heidelberg Heights	\$340	\$370	2 km
	Rosanna	\$340	\$370	3 km
	Reservoir	\$300	\$360	4 km
	Preston	\$310	\$390	5 km
	Thomastown/Lalor	\$300	\$330	9 km
LTSU on college accommodation	Chisholm College	\$235	NA	0 km
	Glenn College	\$395	NA	0 km
	Menzies College	\$265	NA	0 km
	North South Apartments Studio	\$355	NA	0 km
	North South Apartments Shared	\$290	NA	0 km

Residential College prices – weekly UniLodge rate for Bundoora on campus – current Semester 1, 2023.

Private Rental prices – weekly median rent from June quarter 2022 for an unfurnished property.

Sources:

- dffh.vic.gov.au/publications/rental-report
- Living at La Trobe Price Guide 2023

EVERYDAY EXPENSES COSTS

Essential item	Per-week cost	Required	
		Private rental	LTSU on residence accommodation
Utilities (electricity, gas, water)	\$10-\$20	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Internet	\$20-\$30	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mobile Plan	\$15-\$30	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Travel – Public Transport	\$30-\$60	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Travel – Car (after purchase)	\$150-\$260	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Food (groceries & eating out)	\$140-\$280	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		Total (without car): \$295-\$570	
		Total (with car): \$415-\$770	

This booklet was compiled by the LTSU to support students with many common and known housing issues. Much of the information and advice is general and may apply to students on all campuses, however the funding for this project provided by La Trobe University specified that information be tailored only to students at the Melbourne (Bundoora) campus. The LTSU is aware that housing issues impact all La Trobe students regardless of location and would welcome further investment from The University that recognises this and supports all La Trobe students. The LTSU Advocacy Service will as always support all La Trobe students with housing issues.

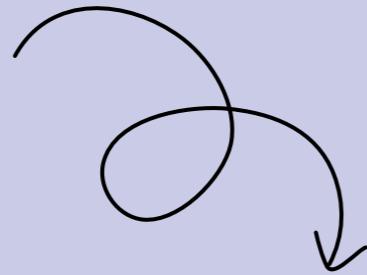
For more information see:

- reiv.com.au/property-data/residential-rental
- studyaustralia.gov.au/english/live/living-costs
- insiderguides.com.au/cost-of-living-calculator/#

Sources:

- Study Australia

KEY TERMS



Bond:

Tenants pay a bond at the start of a rental agreement or lease. Bonds act like a security deposit for the rental provider. You can expect your bond back in full if there are no issues at the end of their lease.

Condition Report:

A condition report will be provided to tenants at the start of a lease. It is used to document any damages to the property. It's important that you report any issues and attach photos before sending it back. This should be finalised before you move in.

Consumer Affairs Victoria (CAV):

CAV is the government agency responsible for the Residential Tenancies Act. CAV is home to the majority of information about renting a home, and a great place to start when conducting your own research.

Fair wear and tear:

Fair wear and tear is deterioration because of:

- Reasonable use of the property
- Natural environmental forces

Examples of fair wear and tear might be faded curtains, worn kitchen bench tops or faded carpet, while ripped or torn curtains, or broken bench tops, might be considered damage.

Lease:

A lease is the the contract that outlines the terms of the rental. This usually contains the amount of rent, the length of the lease, the amount of bond and any other conditions or rules of the property.

Minimum standards:

Minimum standards are defined in the Residential Tenancies Act and detail the state a property must be in to rent. These are things like working hot water, a toilet, window coverings (curtains or blinds) and a stove.

Rooming house operator:

The person who manages a rooming house. They act similarly to a rental provider. They can own the rooming house, or they can be rented from the person who owns the house.

Rental provider (landlord):

The person who rents you the house or room. They often own the property, and in some cases, can be living in the property with you.

Renter (tenant):

The person who pays rent to live in a house.

Co-tenant:

Co-tenants are two or more tenants who rent the same property under the same lease or rental agreement.

Sub-tenant:

Unlike a co-tenant, a sub-tenant is not named on the lease or rental agreement, and is renting from another tenant. This means there are two contracts: between the owner of the house and the head tenant, and between the head tenant and the sub-tenant.

Residential Tenancies Act:

The full reference is the Residential Tenancies Act 1997 (Vic) and is sometimes also shortened to the 'RTA'. This is the law that covers most renters in Victoria. The law applies to tenancy agreements, sub-leases, rooming house agreements, caravan park and site agreements, and some retirement villages.

This law does not cover license agreements or most disputes between tenants, and does not cover student accommodation when there is an agreement between the university and the provider. University residences don't have to use the RTBA to hold bonds, but hopefully in the future this will change so they are held by an independent body.

Residential Tenancies Bond Authority (RTBA):

A government agency that keeps your bond safe until you move out. The bond is lodged with the RTBA and can be refunded once a tenancy has ended.

Urgent and non-urgent repairs:

Repairs to a property are either defined as 'urgent' or 'non urgent'. Rental providers must make urgent repairs immediately. Rental providers must make non-urgent repairs within 14 days of getting a written request.

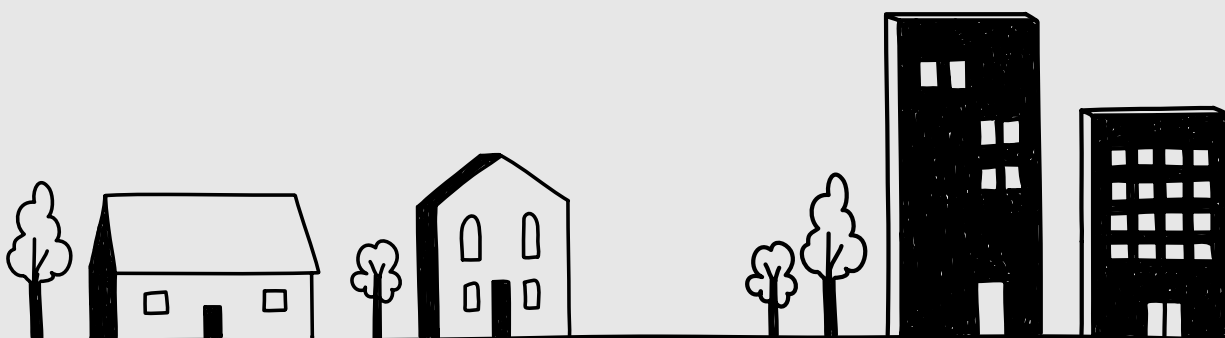
Urgent repairs are defined by the law. Anything else is a non-urgent repair. A repair is non-urgent if the renter can continue to safely live in the property. Non-urgent repairs include things like a broken dishwasher or loose bathroom tiles.

Utilities:

Utilities are services vital to living in a house, like power or electricity, gas, water and internet.

Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT):

VCAT is an independent tribunal that can help to resolve disputes between tenants and rental providers in Victoria. It is a type of court, but the process is more informal, and you can represent yourself. There is a cost to have your case heard. This ranges in price based on what the issue is. For most rental related cases the fee is around \$70.



KNOW YOUR
**HOUSING
RIGHTS**

latrobesu.org.au/advocacy

itsu.advocacy@latrobe.edu.au

(03) 9479 2469