

HOUSING GUIDE

STUDENT HOUSING SERVICES



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VICTORIA UNIVERSITY
MELBOURNE AUSTRALIA

CONTACT US

Student Housing Services

Victoria University

Web: www.vu.edu.au/housing

Email: housing@vu.edu.au

Phone: 9919 8801 9919 2399 9919 4418

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ACCOMMODATION OPTIONS

Choosing the right type of housing can present a challenging task. Each option is worth investigating fully before signing a lease agreement or paying any money. Take time to explore all options!

Accommodation options include:

- Victoria University accommodation (halls, residences)
- shared housing
- private rental
- apartments
- homestay
- rooming houses (hostels).

There are also many hotels, motels, youth hostels and backpacker accommodation where you may like to stay temporarily while looking for ongoing accommodation.

Each accommodation option offers different benefits and costs. Rental prices will vary depending on which suburb you want to live in, the condition of the property and rental option you choose. Generally, the closer the property is to the city of Melbourne, the more expensive the rent.

When looking for housing, consider each of the options carefully to see which one meets your individual lifestyle needs and budget.

VU ACCOMMODATION

University owned accommodation refers to student rooms that are managed by University Residences. This type of accommodation may also be referred to as 'halls' or 'residences'.

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 one of the Victoria University student residences may be a great option.

Following are the contact details for each of Victoria University's residences.

VICTORIA PLACE

Victoria Place is a purpose-built apartment complex located in Footscray, across the road from the Footscray Park Campus. It has 41 fully furnished self-contained apartments designed for students and two deluxe 3 bedroom units with ensuite and disability access.

Email: victoria.place@vu.edu.au

Phone: +61 3 9304 6307

Fax: +61 3 9318 5232

STUDENT VILLAGE

Student Village is a residential campus of Victoria University. Conveniently located in Maribyrnong near several Victoria University campuses, it is 9kms from the centre of Melbourne and provides accommodation for over 500 tertiary students.

It physically comprises of six individual colleges, however all colleges interact as part of a strong community spirit.

Email: student.village@vu.edu.au

Phone: +61 3 9304 6300

Fax: +61 3 9318 5232

SUNBURY HALL

Sunbury Hall offers affordable living to students studying at the Melton and St Albans Campuses of Victoria University. Students from other campuses who have cars could also find Sunbury Hall a great option.

Email: sunbury.hall@vu.edu.au

Phone: +61 3 9919 3450

Fax: +61 3 9919 3449

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

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

It is also less expensive if you choose to move into an established share house as ‘the basics’ such as furniture, kitchen utensils and whitegoods (e.g. fridge, washing machine) are likely to be in the house already. 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
- closeness to campus and public transport
- shared house expectations and rules
- condition of the property
- safety inside and outside of the property
- secure locks and smoke alarms.

The Housing Checklist (page 14) 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 1997 does not differentiate between the rights and responsibilities of co-tenants in relation to each other. If something goes wrong, a landlord can pursue any one or all of the co-tenants 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.

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 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: The Dispute Settlement Centre of Victoria (DSCV) provides a free mediation service to help resolve disputes. Phone DSCV: 03 9603 8370

FINDING OR STARTING A SHARE HOUSE

Victoria University has a Housing Database which its students can access to view share house listings. The database can be accessed by visiting Student Housing Services at www.vu.edu.au/housing

Vacancies for share housing are usually advertised in newspapers, on the internet and through Student Housing Services at universities.

Alternatively, you could establish your own share house by organising a few friends to rent a property with you.

Victoria University has a House Hunting Friends Facebook Group where you can meet other students looking for accommodation. www.vu.edu.au/facebook-Groups

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

RENTING

Selecting to rent on your own 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:

- have a look through the VU Student Housing Services Database to view current rental vacancies
- check out the rental property listings in newspapers such as the 'Herald Sun' or 'The Age'
- search the real estate websites.

If you have selected a few properties that you would like to visit through a real estate agency, you should contact the agent to arrange a time to view the property.

If 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 may also be asked to provide details of employment and/other sources of income and rental history.

If you would like help completing the application form, contact Student Housing Services

Phone: 9919 8801 9919 2399 9919 4418.

When visiting a rental property it is a good idea to take along a street directory and become familiar with where facilities (eg. shops, public transport, chemist, doctor etc) are located in relation to the property.

It can be difficult to remember all the things you need to check about the property. For this reason, it's a good idea to take along the Housing Checklist (page 14). This is also handy for comparing properties.

ALLOW ENOUGH TIME TO FIND A RENTAL PROPERTY

Given that there is strong competition for rental properties in Melbourne, it is advisable to allow yourself at least 4 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.

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).

HOMESTAY/BOARDING

Homestay involves living with a family, couple or single person/s in their home. Generally, Homestay arrangements include a furnished room, meals and bills and shared access to common areas such as the kitchen, lounge/family room and bathroom. Additional services such as laundry may also be included.

Hosts come from a diversity of social and cultural backgrounds. A 'family' could be a mother/father with/without children, a single parent or a single person with no children. Hosts may or may not have pets, may smoke, be vegan, vegetarian or meat-eaters. Hosts may or may not identify as being religious, could be working, studying, unemployed or retired and could have disability access.

There are several Homestays that can arrange the placement of students into homes.

Homestay Victoria

Web: www.homestay-australia.com

Email: homestay@homestay-australia.com

Phone: +61 3 9974 1078

Australian Homestay Network (AHN)

Web: www.homestaynetwork.org

Phone: 1300 697 829

Familystay Australia

Web: www.familystayaustralia.com

Email: familystay@bigpond.com.au

Phone: +61 3 9574 7473

Student Accommodation Services

Web: www.student-accommodation.com.au

Email: saccomm@bigpond.net.au

Phone: +61 3 9486 1916

DISCLAIMER: The above mentioned Homestay providers are not owned or operated by Victoria University. Victoria University does not endorse any of these contacts and they are provided for your convenience only. Any arrangements, financial or otherwise, are strictly between the student and the Homestay provider.

Homestay charges vary. As a general guide, it costs between A\$240 and A\$290 per week. The rate may depend on whether the host is offering a single or shared bedroom, the type of accommodation (eg. house/unit) and the location of the residence. Private Homestay agencies who arrange the placement also charge a placement fee of up to A\$280.

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

WHEN PROBLEMS ARISE IN HOMESTAY

When living in a new space with new people, there is the possibility of problems arising. It is always a good idea to discuss and agree upon the living arrangements, preferably in writing, before moving in. This helps to establish guidelines and expectations at the beginning of the 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 or Student Housing Services

Phone: 9919 8801 9919 2399 9919 4418.

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

Phone: 9603 8370, 1800 658 528 - toll free for regional callers.

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

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

HOSTELS/ROOMING HOUSES

If you live in a house or building that has four or more people who rent a room and share facilities, this may be classified as a hostel or rooming house.

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

Bedrooms may be furnished with a bed, wardrobe, table and chair and lamp. You share the kitchen(s), dining room(s), coin-operated laundry(s), telephones/internet, etc. Most hostels usually have a café where you can buy meals and the larger hostels often have gyms, bars, travel agents, and business facilities.

Some things to consider:

- If you asked to share your room, you have to agree first and your rent must be reduced
- The maximum bond you can be asked to pay is up to 14 days rent
- 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.

TIP: It is a good idea to clarify prior to moving into the house what type of accommodation is being offered, as different laws apply under the Residential Tenancy Act 1997. Your rent usually includes bills at a Rooming House. You cannot be charged for utilities unless the room is separately metered. Check the Consumer Affairs website www.consumer.vic.gov.au

STUDENT APARTMENT BLOCKS

Student apartment blocks are run by private 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.

TIP: Costs can vary between the above 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 listings (e.g. hotels, motels and backpackers) that can be accessed by visiting the Student Housing Services website www.vu.edu.au/housing

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 Victoria University's Student Village. This is a guide only and costs are subject to increase and may vary depending on location, lifestyle needs and choices.

	Private Share House		Student Village	
ESTABLISHMENT COSTS	\$	\$	\$	\$
Bond/damages/security deposit#		300-650		450
Rent or fees in advance##		300-650		1343
Application fee		0		50
Other charges				405
Furniture, linen, crockery etc		150-650^		150-250
Books & stationery		650		650
Overseas Student Health Cover##		435		435
Total establishment costs		1835-3035		3483-3583
WEEKLY COSTS	Per Week	Per Year*	Per Week	Per Year*
WEEKLY COSTS	\$	PER YEAR*	\$	PER YEAR*
Rent/accommodation fees	150	7800	150.19**	7831
Food/Beverages	100	5200	100	5200
Public Transport Zone 1 Met ticket	30	1560	30	1560
Personal care	20	1040	20	1040
Entertainment, sport, hobbies	20	1040	20	1040
Mobile/internet	30	1560	30	1560
Utilities (gas, electricity, water)	27	1404	7.70	401
ESTIMATED MINIMAL LIVING COSTS	\$377	\$19604	\$357.89	\$18632

*52 week year **academic year (2011) & summer (2012) Contract rates (includes internet). # A bond is refundable subject to no deductions for outstanding rent or damages. ##may not apply to domestic students unless you have your own health cover

^ Depending if room is furnished or unfurnished

A useful website to find out about rental trends and housing costs is www.housing.vic.gov.au/publications/reports/reports/rental-report

TIP: Student Welfare Staff 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 Student Welfare Officer by calling 9919 8801, 9919 2399 or 9919 4418.

STEPS TO STARTING A TENANCY

1. Lodge application
2. Application accepted
3. Real estate agent/landlord gives you a Residential Tenancy Agreement to read, understand and sign – keep a signed copy.
4. Pay the bond and one month's rent in advance for the house.
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 5 of the Housing Guide.
5. You are provided with a Bond Lodgement Form to complete and sign. You keep one copy.
6. Real estate agent/landlord forwards the bond to the Residential Tenancies Bond Authority (RTBA) within 10 business days of receiving the bond money.
7. The RTBA sends you a receipt within 7 days of receiving the bond.
8. A Condition Report on the premises is given to you by the landlord/real estate agent. This is a very important document as it 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 landlord or agent.
Note: You will use this at the end of your tenancy to help assist you with your bond claim. It is also recommended that you take photographs of the condition of the property and any existing damage prior to moving in.
9. Return a copy of the Condition Report with your written comments within 3 working days to the landlord or real estate agent. Keep a signed copy.
10. Settle in.

TIP: Keep all your tenancy documents (lease, condition report and any photos) rent receipts and correspondence with the real estate agent or landlord 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 landlord within 3 working days of moving into the property.

The Condition Report provides the evidence to support a claim by either you or the landlord or real estate agent in the event of a dispute between you and the landlord 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.

DURING A TENANCY

TENANT'S RESPONSIBILITIES

- Pay rent on time. If the rent is 14 days or more behind, the landlord or real estate agent issues you a Notice to Vacate.
- Take care to avoid damaging the property.
- Report any damage caused by you or your visitors.
- Notify the landlord 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.

LANDLORD/REAL ESTATE AGENT RESPONSIBILITIES

- Lodge bond money with the Residential Tenancies Bond Authority (RTBA).
- Provide you with information - Consumer Affairs Victoria booklets 'Renting a Home: A Guide for Tenants and Landlords' or 'Rooming Houses: A Guide for Residents, Owners and Managers. Landlords/ real estate agents can be fined up to \$500 for not providing this information.
- Must repair and maintain the property.
- Give you privacy and must give you a notice to visit or enter your property.

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

Student Housing Services, Victoria University
Phone: 9919 8801 9919 2399 9919 4418.

Tenants Union of Victoria
See: www.tuv.org.au
Phone: 9416 2577

Consumer Affairs Victoria
See: www.consumer.vic.gov.au
Phone: 1300 558 181

MOVING

Moving house can be a stressful and busy time. Being organised and taking care of your rental responsibilities may help you with the move.

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 LEASE

If you are living in shared housing (and not on the lease), 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 lease, you need to tell your housemates and give 28 days written notice to the landlord 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 landlord or agent.

If you are living in your own apartment, you need to give at least 28 days notice in writing to the landlord or real-estate agent. This does not apply to Rooming House occupancies. In these circumstances, you need to give 2 days notice.

THE FINAL INSPECTION

The real-estate agent or landlord 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 lease. 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 phone) on your vacating date. All keys and borrowed goods also need to be returned to the landlord on the vacating date. Extra rent may be charged if the keys are returned late.

BREAKING A LEASE EARLY

If your lease (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 landlord needs to take all reasonable action to re-let a vacant property and cannot discriminate against potential tenants. Phone the landlord 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. See Student Housing Services asap if you need advice.

Landlords may also legally apply to the Victorian Civil Administration Tribunal (VCAT) for you to pay compensation if you break your lease early.

For free confidential advice, contact Student Housing Services
Phone: 9919 8801 9919 2399 9919 4418
Email: housing@vu.edu.au

You can advertise for free at www.vu.edu.au/housing or with another tertiary institution to see if another student will take over your lease when you leave. If you have immediate reasons for breaking the lease, such as the rented property being unfit for human use or major repairs have not been undertaken as requested, seek advice from:

Student Housing Services

Phone: 9919 8801 9919 2399 9919 4418

Tenants Union of Victoria Phone: 9416 2577

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

CLEANING

If you are leaving your own hostel, flat or apartment then you are required to ensure:

- 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.

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 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.

BOND RETURNS

Bond returns may take a few weeks. Before inspection, complete a Bond Claim form in pen - avoid leaving any blank sections on the form and never sign a blank Bond Claim form. The Student Housing Service can provide assistance if needed.

If your bond was lodged with the Residential Tenancy Bond Authority (RTBA), it can take up to 14 working days to be deposited into your bank account. The RTBA provides no counter cheques and the Bond Claim form must be signed by the landlord before lodging.

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.

If you paid a bond/security deposit in shared housing that was lodged with the RTBA, then you need to complete a Tenant Transfer (pink) form. The new tenant pays you the bond money you are owed. The new tenant is then included on the lease and their share of the bond is recorded in their name. You should check with the real estate agent/landlord that your name has been removed from the lease.

CANCELLING THE GAS, ELECTRICITY, WATER, PHONE AND INTERNET

If you are in shared housing and are moving out, you should ring the company and ask to have your name removed from the account and send you a 'bill to date'. Likewise, it is a good idea to disconnect accounts if you were renting alone.

When you leave the property, ensure that a final reading is taken (give at least 48 hours notice for a utilities reading). This will help to avoid you being charged for utilities after you vacate the property.

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

MAIL REDIRECTION

Complete a Mail Redirection form at the post office to have your mail sent from your current address to another local or overseas address. The cost of this service is around \$12 per month and you can organise it in advance. Redirecting of letters overseas does not incur extra costs but they will be redirected via sea.

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

UNDERSTANDING YOUR RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

When you start renting a property, you enter into a lease. There are two types of leases: fixed term and periodic.

Fixed term leases are for a set period of time, usually 6 or 12 months. Conversely, a periodic lease generally runs from month to month.

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

It is important that you completely understand what you are signing. Remember that you are entitled to negotiate the terms of the lease with the landlord - the law does not require that a lease is for 6 or 12 months. It is just common practice. For example, you can ask the landlord to change the lease period to fit the academic year.

If you are moving in with other people, you and the other tenants all need to sign the lease.

If you are moving into an already established share house, you should request written permission from the landlord to have your name added to the tenancy agreement. Including your name on the lease 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 tenant who is leaving. Ask the landlord 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 tenant assumes the role of landlord and sub-lets property. This can make it tricky if a problem or dispute arises. More information on this type of housing arrangement is available from:

Tenants Union of Victoria
Phone: 9416 2577

Consumer Affairs Victoria
Phone: 1300 51 81 81.

As a tenant, it is important that you read the Renting a Home: A Guide for Tenants and Landlords (private rental) or Rooming Houses: A Guide for Residents, Owners and Managers, produced by Consumer Affairs Victoria.

These booklets provide basic information about yours and your landlord's/rooming house owner's rights and responsibilities. It is required by law that you are given one of these guides by the landlord or real estate agent. Student Housing Services also has copies of these booklets.

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

Student Housing Services
Phone: 9919 8801 9919 2399 9919 4418.

Tenants Union of Victoria
www.tuv.org.au - useful housing factsheets
Phone: 9416 2577

Consumer Affairs Victoria
www.consumer.vic.gov.au
Phone: 1300 558 181

TIP: It is wise to do as much research as possible on your rights and responsibilities prior to entering into any tenancy arrangement. Tenancy Law can be complicated and the onus of responsibility is with you in understanding your rights and obligations. Remember, any arrangements are strictly between you and the housing provider.

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:

VU Housing Services and Housing Database

provides housing information and vacant rental and share housing listings
www.vu.edu.au/housing

Tenants Union of Victoria

provides many useful fact sheets and an excellent section on Student Housing www.tuv.org.au

Consumer Affairs Victoria

provides useful rental information
www.consumer.vic.gov.au

Community Housing

www.wesley.org.au

Accommodation Websites

www.domain.com.au
www.realestate.com.au
www.flatmates.com.au
www.flatmatefinders.com.au

Real Estate Institute of Victoria

www.reiv.com.au

Sustainable Renting

Tips on how to reduce your environmental impact
www.environmentvictoria.org.au/rentersguide

Government Bond Assistance

<http://www.housing.vic.gov.au>

Crisis Accommodation

www.frontyard.org
www.melbournecitymission.org.au
www.melbourne.homeless.org.au

Transitional Housing Management

www.ych.org.au
www.salvationarmy.org.au

Public Housing

www.housing.vic.gov.au

Dispute Settlement Centre of Victoria

The Dispute Settlement Centre of Victoria (DSCV) helps people to resolve their own disputes, including tenancy issues. Many disputes can be resolved through communication and negotiation. The service is free.

www.justice.vic.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/DOJ+Internet/Home/The+Justice+System/Disputes

Victoria Civil & Administrative Tribunal (VCAT)

www.vcat.vic.gov.au

Residential Tenancies Bond Authority

www.rentalbonds.vic.gov.au

HOUSING CHECKLIST

ADDRESS:

Property 1

Property 2

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 phone?	
What furniture, utensils and linen do you need?	

IF YOU ARE CHOOSING SHARE HOUSING, DO YOU WANT TO LIVE WITH:

Males or females?	
Older or younger people?	
Students, unemployed or working people?	
People who smoke cigarettes, drink alcohol or take drugs?	
Messy or tidy people?	
People who keep different hours to you?	

COMPARING PROPERTIES

HOUSING QUESTIONS GENERAL

	PROPERTY 1	PROPERTY 2
Will you be sharing with anyone?		
What is the landlord'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?		
Are pets allowed at the property?		
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 landlord and tenant?		
How long is the lease?		
How much written notice do you need to give to end the lease?		
How much will it cost to break your lease early?		
How many people are on the lease?		
Can I put my name on the lease/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 tenants 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**

Note: The tenant needs to connect the utilities if moving into a vacant property

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

TELEPHONE

	PROPERTY 1	PROPERTY 2
Is the telephone provided?		
Are there any 'pin' or 'time' restrictions when making calls on the phone?		
How is the phone bill divided?		

FOXTEL AND INTERNET

	PROPERTY 1	PROPERTY 2
Is Foxtel television provided? Does this cost extra?		
Is internet access provided? Does this cost extra?		

BEDROOM FURNITURE

Property 1:	bed	wardrobe	desk	drawers	heater	fan	computer	lamp	other
Property 2:	bed	wardrobe	desk	drawers	heater	fan	computer	lamp	other

WHAT IS AVAILABLE FOR **SHARED** USE?

(TICK WHAT IS PROVIDED ✓)

PROPERTY 1	✓	PROPERTY 2	✓
DVD Player		DVD Player	
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

(SAMPLES ONLY)

Bond Receipt (Example)

Date Paid:

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

Both Signatures

Rent Receipt (Example)

Date Paid:

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

Both Signatures

SUPPORT SERVICES

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

COUNSELLING SERVICES		
SERVICE	DESCRIPTION	CONTACT
LifeLine	Lifeline provides a confidential telephone counselling services service	Phone: 13 11 14 Web: www.lifeline.org.au
Suicide Line	Suicide prevention and counselling and support	Phone: 1300 651 251
Beyond Blue Info Line	Provides access to information, advice and referrals around depression, anxiety and related conditions.	Phone: 1300 22 46 36 Web: www.beyondblue.org.au
Gay and Lesbian Switchboard Victoria	Counselling and information	Phone: 1800 184 527 6 -10pm Daily and 2-10pm Wednesday
CRISIS ACCOMMODATION		
Crisis Accommodation Info Line	Provides a variety of support to people who are homeless or risk of homelessness.	Phone: 1800 627 727 10am - midnight daily
OTHER USEFUL NUMBERS		
Emergency	Fire, Police, and Ambulance services	Phone: 000
Poison Information Line	Provides a timely, safe information service in poisonings and suspected poisonings.	Phone: 13 11 26

STUDENT **ENGAGEMENT** DEPARTMENT

The Student Engagement Department provides a range of support services to Victoria University students. Student Engagement staff can assist with many issues or refer you to the appropriate services. Student Engagement staff are based on every Victoria University campus and are available during the University calendar year.

To get advice and information,
phone 9919 8801 9919 2399 9919 4418

HOW STUDENT WELFARE STAFF CAN HELP YOU

CENTRELINK

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

FINANCES

- ✓ Money management
- ✓ Debtor Rights
- ✓ Using credit
- ✓ Contract advice
- ✓ Short term interest free student loans of up to \$500 (upon approval)
- ✓ Eligibility for HECS Help,
- ✓ Fee extensions and fee waivers

HOUSING

- ✓ Tenancy laws and issues
- ✓ Database of student housing options
- ✓ Housing mentoring program
- ✓ House Hunting Friends Facebook Group
- ✓ Utility aid and payment advice

OTHER ISSUES

- ✓ Transition issues
- ✓ Explaining University processes
- ✓ Legal information and referral
- ✓ Understanding and paying fines
- ✓ Referrals to external community agencies.

www.vu.edu.au/facilities-and-services/advice-and-counselling/welfare-services

SCHOLARSHIPS

- ✓ A range of scholarships are available for enrolled students
- ✓ International Scholarships are also available to government sponsored students.

www.vu.edu.au/courses/fees-and-scholarships/scholarships

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT ALSO PROVIDES THE FOLLOWING SERVICES:

- ✓ Counselling
- ✓ Disability Services
- ✓ Student Life
- ✓ Student Advisory Service
- ✓ Sport and Fitness

www.vu.edu.au/current-students/services-for-current-students

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/landlord/agency/agent.

CONTACT US

Student Housing Services

Victoria University

Web: www.vu.edu.au/housing

Email: housing@vu.edu.au

Phone: 9919 8801 9919 2399 9919 4418