



# Rental issues and support in Victoria

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AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY



# Resolving a rental issue

Every now and again, you may encounter issues while renting privately as a tenant. Whether it's a rent increase, or flat mates aren't paying for utilities, it's good to know what you can do to resolve disputes.

## YOUR RIGHTS AS A TENANT

Many tenants in Australia are unaware that they have rights which must legally be observed. These vary slightly from state to state so take time to check your relevant state's housing authority. The below resources will assist you in identifying your rights as a tenant:

### Consumer Affairs Victoria

This website can provide you with information regarding rental and property rights, particularly during the pandemic crisis.

### Victoria Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT)

Access this link for any instances where, as a tenant, you would like to make an application to the Tribunal to break lease due to financial hardship.

### Tenants Vic

Tenants' Advice and Advocacy Services provide free, independent information, advice and advocacy for tenants in Victoria.

### Legal Aid Victoria

Legal Aid provides free legal advice over the phone. Translators are available.

ACU students have access to additional services which may assist in resolving their rental issue:

### ACU Legal Service

A free service available for all ACU students.

### ACU Rental Advisory Service

A free service which will give you individual advice on how to proceed with your rental issue.

## STEPS TO TAKE

The first step to resolving any problem or complaint is to carefully read the terms of your rental agreement. If you have an issue supported by your agreement, then you should speak to your landlord/agent about reaching a resolution.

If an agreement cannot be reached, you may lodge a complaint with Queensland Residential Tenancy Authority to help mediate an agreement.

We recommend that if your case gets to this stage that you contact the ACU Rental Advisory Service for them to help advise you on proceeding with your case.

**INCORRECT TEXT PROVIDED - PLEASE UPDATE**



# Support available in Victoria

Federal and state governments offer support options to a range of people in need. The below options are resources which you can access in Victoria. Check the eligibility criteria to see if you can apply.

## ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE

### Worker Support Payments

The Victorian Government is providing one-off payments to support Victorian workers, including parents and guardians, who are required to self-isolate or quarantine due to COVID-19.

A **one-off \$450** payment to support Victorian workers, including parents and guardians, who are required to self-isolate while you wait for the results of your COVID-19 test.

A **one-off \$1,500 payment** to support Victorian workers who:

-Have been instructed by the Department of Health and Human Services to self-isolate or quarantine at home because they are either diagnosed with COVID-19 or are a close contact of a confirmed case.

-Have been instructed by the Department of Health and Human Services that their child aged under 16 needs to self-isolate or quarantine at home because they are either diagnosed with COVID-19 or are a close contact of a confirmed case.

For information on the support available and to register your interest, visit the [DHHS website](#).

### COVID-19 Rent

ProtectionNew temporary laws have been introduced to protect Victorian tenants and landlords from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The new laws create a moratorium on evictions, facilitate rent relief for eligible tenants, suspend rental increases, and establish a new dispute resolution process. The laws also make changes to how a tenant or landlord may end a tenancy during the six-month moratorium period. Details are set out under 'Information for tenants' and 'Information for landlords' on this page.

Where a tenant is seeking a reduction in rent, we encourage landlords, agents and tenants to try to reach an arrangement, put it in writing, and **register it with us**. If you can't reach an agreement, you can use the new, free dispute resolution service:

- [Guide to the process for rent reduction - tenants](#)
- [Selection of translated guides to the process](#)
- [Guide to the process for rent reduction - landlords](#)
- [Template for a temporary rent reduction agreement \(Word, 28 KB\)](#)

### Australian Homestay Network

The Australian Homestay Network has launched an Australia wide program called the International Student Support Network to provide short-term, heavily discounted homestay to eligible international students impacted by the global crisis.



# Support available in Victoria

## Emergency relief package

An emergency relief package contains essential food and personal care items for vulnerable Victorians who are needing to quarantine or isolate due to COVID-19.

Delivery of a free emergency relief package can be arranged for people who are unable to access food themselves or do not have support available to them.

## Extreme Hardship Support Program

The Extreme Hardship Support Program can provide financial assistance, information and referrals to people living in Victoria who are experiencing significant hardship as a result of COVID-19 and who are unable to access other forms of Victorian Government and Commonwealth Government income support. The program provides support for temporary and provisional visa holders and undocumented migrants with little or no income, savings or community support.

## Rent Relief Grant

If you are experiencing rental hardship due to COVID-19, you may be eligible for assistance.

Rent relief grants for Victorians experiencing rental hardship, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, provide a one-off grant to help Victorian renters maintain safe, secure and stable accommodation. The rental assistance fund provides rent relief payments of up to \$3,000 to Victorians experiencing rental hardship due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

## No Interest Loans Scheme

Small amount, no-interest loans are available to all eligible Victorians through Good Money community finance outlets in Morwell, Geelong, Collingwood and Dandenong and a network of 77 local community organisations across Victoria.

The No Interest Loans Scheme (NILS) provides individuals and families on low incomes with access to safe, fair and affordable credit.

Loans are available for essential goods and services such as fridges, washing machines, car repairs and medical procedures for up to \$1,500, repayable over 12 to 18 months.

Find out more at the [Good Money website](#) or the [NILS website](#).

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, no-interest household relief loans of up to \$3,000 are also now available to support low-income households with the costs of rent and utilities, repayable over 24 months.

Find out more at [Household Relief](#)

## Department of Social Services Grant Service Directory

The Department of Social Services (DSS) Grants Service Directory includes details of active grants and organisations providing service delivery.

## Ask Izzy

Ask Izzy is a search tool to help people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness find shelter, food, health and other critical support services.

## Access to superannuation

Australian citizens who have been in Australia longer than 12 months who find themselves in financial hardship are able to access their Australian superannuation.

Applications for early release of superannuation will be accepted through myGov from 20 April. Register your interest by logging in to [myGov](#) and following the 'Intention to access coronavirus support' instructions.

If you don't already have a myGov account, you can set one up by selecting 'Create an account'.

## Early Access To Super