

# How parents can help... Accommodation

## Types of Accommodation

- 1. Living in a rental property or share house**- usually involves dividing the overall rent between the number of residents, and paying an even share of the cost of expenses such as electricity and gas.
- 2. Homestay and rooming houses** – living in a private home that has one or more rooms for rent. You could be living with a family or with other boarders. In both types of accommodation you share common areas (kitchen, bathroom etc...) and pay a set amount of money each week which includes rent, bills and possibly food.
- 3. On-campus and student hostel accommodation** – On-campus accommodation is owned by the university and is located on or near the university campus. Student hostels are similar to on-campus accommodation but are privately owned. Both offer fully furnished rooms and shared common areas (kitchen, bathroom etc...).

## Before you Start

- 1.** Make sure you understand each type of accommodation properly and choose the one most suited to your circumstances.
- 2.** What are your priorities? For example: a room with windows, good heating for winter, or cooling for summer; are there locks on the windows and doors? Is there a power point in your room?
- 3.** Take public transport costs and availability into consideration when choosing accommodation.
- 4.** How does paying a higher rent to live closer to university or TAFE compare to living further away and paying more for travel?

## Arranging Accommodation

### ⇒ General Information

- Seek the assistance from the university or college Housing Service
- Look for advertised accommodation on university or TAFE websites
- Use The Age, The Herald Sun and local papers, as well as the internet to find accommodation



### ⇒ Regional students - Arranging housing from a distance

- Begin early and avoid rushing.
- Request floor plans or photos if they are available.
- Find out about contracts and agreements; when the accommodation is available and for how long.
- If possible arrange for friends or relatives to inspect the property on your behalf. They can check if the property and neighbourhood will meet your expectations.

### ⇒ Regional students - Arranging housing after arrival

- To arrange housing after arrival, young people need secure temporary housing while they search for suitable long-term accommodation. Relatives or friends may be able to help if the stay is short term.
- It may take 4 to 6 weeks or more to find suitable housing especially at the beginning of the year when many students are looking.
- Searching for accommodation after arrival has advantages such as, being able to physically inspect the property, checking the suitability of the neighbourhood, noise levels in the day and night etc.

## Tips and Advice



### ⇒ Rent & Bond

- Be financially prepared. It is usual to pay 4 weeks rent in advance and 4 weeks rent as a Bond. Bond assistance may be obtained from the University or College. Begin your inquiries with Housing Office.
- Before paying your Bond you must complete a Condition Report to record any existing damage to the property. Completing this carefully will ensure that deductions are not made from your Bond for damages that you did not do.

### ⇒ References

- Most landlords and agents will require references including evidence of income and financial stability. Be prepared and have these ready. If you have not rented before, include a Character Reference which demonstrates that you are reliable, honest and responsible.

### ⇒ Insurance

- Check if your personal items such as laptop, camera, phone and bike are covered under existing insurance policies. If not, arrange your own insurance using a well-know credible insurer.

## Where to Get Help



### ⇒ Consumer Affairs - [www.consumer.vic.gov.au](http://www.consumer.vic.gov.au), 1300 558 181

In Victoria, Consumer Affairs administers the Residential Tenancy Act. They have offices in Melbourne, Ballarat, Wangaratta, Morwell, Geelong and Bendigo, providing information and advice for tenants and landlords. *The publication titled: Renting a Home: A guide for Tenants and Landlords* sets out the rights and responsibilities of both parties.

### ⇒ Tenants Union of Victoria - [www.tuv.org.au](http://www.tuv.org.au), (03) 9416 2577

- The Tenants Union offers a number of services to tenants. The Tenants Union may:
- Help you fill in forms or agreements related to your tenancy
- Advise you on specific problems, eg repairs, rent increases
- Negotiate and advocate on your behalf with your landlord or real estate agent
- Assist to represent you at the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal