

information sheet

Information and Advice for Tenants

Shelter WA receives numerous inquiries by tenants. The inquiries cover a wide range of issues, including tenants rights, where to get bond assistance, and what to do in the case of rent arrears or rental debts. Since Shelter WA is not resourced to deal with such questions, many inquiries are referred to other agencies.

This Information Sheet includes a range of services that tenants can draw on. It is split into two parts. The first part lists the services provided by the

Tenancy Network, which provides advice and information on tenancy issues and includes the contact details of Local Service Units throughout Western Australia. The second part of the Sheet lists contact details for other services that tenants may find useful.

Shelter WA thanks Joanne Walsh from the Tenants Advice Service for her input into this Information Sheet.

Tenancy Network

The Tenants Advice and Education Program (TAEP – also known as the Tenancy Network) is funded from the interest on tenants' rental bond monies to provide services to tenants throughout WA. Services provided through "local service units" (LSU's) include:

- ✓ face to face advice and information
- ✓ community legal education
- ✓ representation

Tenants who need assistance can ring the Tenants Advice Service (TAS) Tenants Advice Line on 9221 0088. Country tenants can ring the TAS toll free number on 1800 621 888. Advice line workers will be able to provide tenancy information over the phone and send a follow up package of relevant information sheets and publications. The Advice line workers can also provide referrals to appropriate services including the LSU's (see contact details below).

Tenants Advice Service acts as a resource unit providing information, advice and education services to LSU's and other people who work with tenants (such as Financial Counselors, Social

Workers and Community Nurses). TAS also produces a variety of useful publications for tenants and people working with tenants. And TAS represents tenants interests in matters identified as requiring policy or law reform. TAS can be contacted on 9221 9499 or via the TAS web-site at www.taswa.org where a number of publications and useful links are provided.

Local Service Units contact details:

- ✓ Community Legal and Advocacy Centre
Fremantle - Phone 9432 9790
Tenancy Worker: Anne Marie Paulsen
- ✓ Geraldton Resource Centre
Phone 9964 3533
Tenancy Worker: Greg Cross
- ✓ Goldfields Community Legal Centre
Phone 9021 1888
Tenancy Worker: Don Montefiore
- ✓ Gosnells Community Legal Centre
Phone 9398 1455
Tenancy Worker: Denise Higgenson

- ✓ Kimberley Community Legal Service
Kununurra - Phone: 9169 3100
Tenancy Worker: Elisabeth Purser
- ✓ Midland Information, Debt and Legal Advice Service (MIDLAS) - Phone: 9250 2123
Tenancy Worker: Dylan Desaubin
- ✓ Northern Suburbs Community Legal Centre
Mirrabooka - Phone: 9440 1663
Tenancy Worker: Sue Chadwick
- ✓ Pilbara Community Legal Service
South Hedland - Phone: 9140 1613
Worker: Zabia Chmeilewski
- ✓ Pilbara Community Legal Service
Roebourne - Phone: 9182 1169
Tenancy Worker: Nita Cant
- ✓ Southern communities Advocacy Legal Education Services, Rockingham
Phone: 9528 6077
Tenancy Worker: Anna Copeland
- ✓ Sussex Street Community Law Service
Victoria Park
Phone: 9470 2676
Tenancy Worker: JD Rousety
- ✓ Tenant Advocate South West (Bunbury)
Phone: 9791 1877
Tenancy Worker: Kerri Powell
- ✓ Welfare Rights and Advocacy Service
East Perth
Phone 9328 1751
Tenancy Worker: Kath O'Donaghue

Other Services

- ✓ Financial Counsellors provide free information and support to families and individuals who are experiencing financial problems. This includes providing information about rules and laws relating to debts and bills; negotiating with creditors; ensuring that people are receiving the government assistance to which they are entitled; help with some consumer problems; assistance with budgeting; providing information on bankruptcy; explaining what you can do if you can't pay bills, fines or debts; and referring you to other organisations which may be able to help.

For information about a service near you contact the Financial Counsellors Resource Project on 08 9221 9411 or fcrp@iinet.net.au; web: www.iinet.net.au/~fcrp.
- ✓ The Department of Housing and Works offers bond assistance as an interest-free loan to help people obtain accommodation in the private rental market. Applicants must meet public housing income and asset limits, and should be 16 years or over. The bond loan cannot be used for other expenses such as advance rent or letting fees, and rent cannot be more than 60 per cent of an applicant's gross income. The bond must not have already been paid. For further information on bond assistance, phone DHW on 08 9476 2444.
- ✓ Women's Refuges provide a broad range of vital support services to women and children escaping family and domestic violence. These services are primarily preventative and are aimed at preventing further violence and abuse to women and children. They offer women and children a safe place where they can be assisted to recover from the impact of violence and abuse and begin to rebuild their lives. Phone the Women's Refuge Group on 08 9420 7264 for contact details of women's refuges in your area.
- ✓ There are many other agencies that provide services on tenancy related issues including:
Salvation Army: 08 9227 7010
Wesley Mission Fremantle: 08 9335 1775
Anglicare: 08 9325 7033
Equal Opportunities Commission: 08 9216 3934 or 1800 198 149
Ombudsman: 08 9220 7555 or 1800 117 000
- ✓ Shelter WA recently published an *Overview of Government Housing Services* provided by State, Commonwealth and Local Government bodies in Western Australia. This is available free from www.shelterwa.org.au (papers & reports) or at cost price by phoning Shelter WA on 08 9325 6660.