

# *information sheet*

# Renting in WA

*This information sheet briefly outlines the types of housing available in Western Australia for people wishing to access some form of rental housing, together with current housing contacts and resources. For more information on private renting see **A Guide To Renting in Western Australia** or **A Guide To Renting in Western Australia for Young People**, both available from the Tenants Advice Service.*

## **Private Rental**

Most rental housing in Australia is rented in private arrangements where a property owner leases directly to a tenant or through a real estate agent. The Tenant signs a lease that contains the conditions of the tenancy. The Residential Tenancies Act is the law that states the rights and responsibilities of landlords and tenants and tenants regarding such leases. Rental properties are usually advertised in newspapers, through Real Estate Agents or on the Internet.

While it is advisable to obtain advice as individual circumstances vary between tenancies, the following general points should be kept in mind when seeking to rent a property in WA:

### **Finding a house to rent**

- Check the condition of the house/unit – make sure any needed repairs are written into the lease agreement *before* you sign it.
- Do not rent a sub-standard property or one unsuitable for your needs.

### **Moving in**

- Read any lease carefully before you sign.
- It is advisable that you and the landlord check and sign a Property Condition Report (PCR). You may need this when you move out eg to prove that you do not cause any damage to the property

### **Living in the house**

- The landlord must give you the housing in a reasonably clean and safe condition and you must ensure that it remains reasonably clean.
- You must pay your rent on time or you may be evicted after seven days written notice.
- Unless directly paid from your bank account, get a receipt for every rent payment.
- Your landlord must give you 60 days written notice before increasing your rent, and it cannot be raised more than once every six months.
- The landlord must make prior arrangements with you before coming inside the property (except in emergencies).

## Moving Out

- The landlord cannot evict you without written notice. The notice period varies depending on what kind of lease you have entered into.
- If you move out before the finishing date of a fixed term lease you will have to pay a fee (if you are dealing with an estate agent), ongoing rent and advertising costs until new tenants are found.
- You usually must give 3 weeks notice to the landlord if you want to move out and you are on a rolling lease.
- Decide with the landlord how much bond money you should get back (it should be the full amount unless you caused any damage to the property) *before* you sign a bond disposal form .

### Contact

Tenants Advice Service: Metro Line (08) 9221 0088, Country Line 1800 621 888

Web site: [www.taswa.org](http://www.taswa.org)

Department of Consumer and Employment Protection General Advice Line 1300 30 40 54

Web site: [www.docep.gov.au](http://www.docep.gov.au)

## Public Housing - Homeswest

Homeswest is a state government agency providing affordable housing to low income people. Rents are based on 25 percent of gross assessable household income; this is often much lower than in private rental. A number of special needs are catered for including priority assistance for people in extreme need of housing and targeted housing programs for people with disabilities, Indigenous people and young people.

### Applying for a home

In order to receive Homeswest assistance, applicants must:

- Be Australian citizens or permanent residents.
- Live in Western Australia and receive income here.
- Not own property or land.
- Not have cash assets in excess of \$33,400 (singles) or \$55,800 (couples).
- Have proof of identity.
- Be 18 years of age or above at time of allocation - supporting parents under 18 years may apply for special consideration to their application for housing prior to turning 18 years. YES and FRESH programs are available to provide support for persons under 18 years.
- Have an income below the following limits:

NUMBER OF PERSONS IN HOUSEHOLD	WEEKLY INCOME				FOR PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY			
	METRO & COUNTRY		NORTHWEST REMOTE		METRO & COUNTRY		NORTHWEST REMOTE	
	Single Income	Dual Income	Single Income	Dual Income	Single Income	Dual Income	Single Income	Dual Income
1 Person	\$390	-	\$550	-	\$490	-	\$690	-
2 Persons	\$520	\$600	\$740	\$850	\$650	\$750	\$920	\$1060
3 Persons	\$630	\$720	\$880	\$1010	\$780	\$900	\$1100	\$1280
4 Persons	\$730	\$840	\$1030	\$1190	\$920	\$1050	\$1290	\$1480

Source: [www.housing.wa.gov.au](http://www.housing.wa.gov.au) 2002

## Priority Assistance

If you need housing urgently, you may be eligible for priority assistance ahead of your turn on the waiting list. You will need to speak to a Homeswest officer regarding your situation and provide proof of your claims, such as medical and other support letters. Alternatively the Homeless Helpline may be able to assist you.

## Bond Assistance

The Department of Housing and Works offers bond assistance as an interest-free loan to assist people in obtaining accommodation in the private rental market. The loan is repaid in regular payments of at least \$15 per fortnight. Applicants must meet public housing income and asset limits, and should be aged 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.

## Appeals

The Department of Housing and Works recognises that the decisions it makes have a significant impact on customers. Second Tier Appeals are heard before an Appeals Committee comprising of a senior department officer and an independent community member. Third Tier by three independent community members.

### **Contact**

Homeswest  
Ph: (08) 9222 4666  
Homeswest Toll Free Number: 1800 093 325  
Web: [www.housing.wa.gov.au](http://www.housing.wa.gov.au) and click the *rental homes* link.  
Homeless Helpline 1800 065 892

## Crisis Accommodation

- Government and non-government funded agencies provide support and assistance for individuals and families in crisis and in need of safe and affordable housing.
- Special purpose housing is available for women escaping domestic violence, young people, people with disabilities, couples, families, Indigenous and single people.
- Accommodation is usually short-term and may be in the form of hostels, flats or houses.

### **Contact**

Department of Community Development, Crisis Care 9223 1111 or 1800 199 008 (free STD)  
Salvation Army Care Line (08) 9227 8655  
Women's Refuge Group (08) 9420 7264

## Co-operative Housing

Housing co-operatives are non-profit incorporated associations managed by their members offering secure, long-term, quality housing.

- Each co-operative is unique as it reflects the needs and ideas of its members.
- Co-operatives can be a positive alternative if you want to have a say in the management and, for establishing co-ops, the design of your housing.
- There are also the benefits of living in a supportive community
- Co-operatives have some of the benefits of home ownership without the financial problems.
- Rents are capped at 25 percent of gross income (plus any rent assistance received) up to market rent.
- Waiting lists and membership processes apply and you must meet Homeswest eligibility criteria.

### **Contact**

Federation of Housing Collectives  
Phone: (08) 9331 7347 (Wednesdays only)  
Email: [fohcol@vianet.net.au](mailto:fohcol@vianet.net.au)

## Housing Associations

Housing Associations are run on the Principles of Co-operation and :

- Are democratic, non-profit and do not discriminate against people;
- Aim to educate their members and the wider community in democratic and economic co-operation;
- Actively co-operate with other co-operatives on a local, national and international level;
- Housing associations are like housing co-operatives, but the people who manage the housing are not usually the tenants;
- Housing Associations are committed to providing long-term affordable accommodation for people on low incomes;
- Waiting lists apply in most cases.

### **Contact**

Community Housing Coalition of WA  
Phone (08) 9221 7933  
Email [reception@communityhousing.com.au](mailto:reception@communityhousing.com.au)  
Website: [www.communityhousing.com.au](http://www.communityhousing.com.au)

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