
Topic 2 – Finding a place to rent

So where are you going to live? Are you looking for a unit or a house?

Finding a place to rent can take time.

First, make sure you check your budget to know what you can afford to pay.

The amount of rent depends on many things. For example:

- is it a house with a garden?
- a unit in a block of units?
- how many bedrooms has it got?
- how close it is to buses and trains?

Check with Centrelink if you qualify for rent assistance.

Start looking at rental listings in the newspaper, on the internet or community notice boards. Also check with real estate agents.

Many landlords use these agents to manage their property.

When you find a property that you can afford, call the agent and ask if you can inspect it.

Once you find a suitable property, ask the agent for a Rental Application form, fill it out, and give it back to the agent.

Lodging an application will not guarantee you'll get the property. Sometimes it helps to apply for more than one property.

Don't be tempted to pay more if you like the place. Paying more than your budget could get you into financial trouble, after you move in.

A reference letter from a previous agent and friends are very useful.

Agents may ask for supporting identifications such as:

- drivers licence
- payslips
- bank and centrelink statements
- gas, electricity and telephone bills
- key cards and credit cards.

The agent will select the strongest applications and recommend them to the landlord.

The landlord chooses the tenant, based on your application and supporting documents.

Agents work for landlords to:

- find good tenants
- collect rent payments
- arrange for plumbers or electricians to fix things when they stop working.

Paying rent on time and taking good care of a property are important things for an agent to know about their tenant.

Remember, you may rent many properties in the future. If you look after them and pay rent on time, the agent can give you a good reference when you move out.

If you are renting for the first time you can seek help from community organisations like Migrant Resource Centres.

For more information on tenants rights and responsibilities visit the Fair Trading website on www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au or phone 13 32 20.

If you need language assistance ring 13 14 50.