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## A PRACTICAL TOOLKIT FOR YOUNG RENTERS IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA

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HOME PROJECT | SHELTER WA

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## Acknowledgement of Support

This resource was developed in partnership with Shelter WA to support young carers and other young people as they navigate the rental market for the first time. It addresses common challenges associated with renting and provides practical guidance based on feedback from young carers, who expressed a need for clear information on topics such as:

- Tenant and landlord rights and responsibilities
- Understanding bonds and different lease types
- Identifying key details in advertisements, listings, and open homes

This guide serves as a comprehensive resource to help young people confidently manage the rental process and overcome potential obstacles.

The initiative is proudly supported and funded by the Department of Communities Youth Engagement Grant, in collaboration with Shelter WA and Carers WA.

## Acknowledgement of Country

Ngany kaaditj Whadjuk Noongar moor kaadak boojar.

We acknowledge the Whadjuk people of the Noongar Nation as the Traditional Custodians of the land on which this report was developed and shared.

We acknowledge that sovereignty was never ceded, and that this land was, is, and always will be Aboriginal land.

Ngany kaaditj moorditj, keyen kaadak, ngalak wer yangal.

We pay our respects to Whadjuk Elders past, present, and future, and recognise the deep and ongoing connection they hold to land, waters, skies, and community.

We extend this respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

## Recognition of Lived Experience

We recognise and honour the lived and living experience of people impacted by homelessness and housing insecurity.

We acknowledge the strength, insight, and resilience of individuals, families, and communities who navigate these challenges every day. Your voices, knowledge, and advocacy are essential in shaping better systems, services, and support.

This report is informed by, and dedicated to, those with lived and living experience of homelessness and housing insecurity. We thank you. We see you. We walk alongside you.

## **Welcome to Your First Rental Guide: A Practical Toolkit for Young Renters in Western Australia**

Taking the leap into your first rental can be exciting, empowering, and sometimes, a little overwhelming. Whether you're moving out of home, starting a new job or course, or simply seeking more independence, understanding the rental process is a big step toward adulthood.

This guide has been designed especially for young people in Western Australia to help you navigate the rental journey with confidence. It breaks down key terms, offers practical advice, and includes tools and templates to support you every step of the way – from finding a place and submitting an application, to signing a lease and understanding your rights as a tenant.

We know everyone's situation is different, so this guide also includes dedicated information for low-income earners, students, LGBTQIA+ young people, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander renters, and those experiencing or escaping family and domestic violence. It also connects you with trusted organisations that offer support, advocacy, and information tailored to your needs.

Whether you're just starting your search or about to attend your first property inspection, this resource is here to empower you with knowledge – because every young person deserves safe, secure, and stable housing.

Let's get started.

## Key Definitions

Here's a brief introduction to key rental definitions that will help you better understand important terms related to renting a property. These definitions cover essential concepts like bonds, leases, and rent, providing a clear foundation for navigating the rental process with confidence.

**A bond** is a security deposit paid by a tenant at the start of a lease to cover potential damage or unpaid rent. It is usually refundable at the end of the tenancy if the property is left in good condition.

**A lease** is a legal agreement between a landlord or property manager and tenant that outlines the terms for renting a property, including rent amount, duration, and responsibilities.

**Breaking a lease** means ending a rental agreement before the agreed end date, which may involve penalties or specific legal steps depending on the lease terms and reasons for leaving.

**Rent** is the regular payment made by a tenant to a landlord in exchange for living in or using a property.

**Renting** is the process of paying money to use someone else's property for a set period of time, usually under a lease or rental agreement.

**Rental Inspection** is a check carried out by the landlord or property manager to assess the condition of the property, either before, during, or at the end of a tenancy.

**Subletting** is when a tenant rents out all or part of the rental property to another person (called a subtenant), usually with the landlord's permission.

**Utilities** are essential services for a property, such as electricity, water, gas, and internet, which may or may not be included in the rent.



## Things to Look Out for When Looking at Rental Advertisements

Before signing a lease or applying for a rental property, it's essential to carefully review the advertisement and understand exactly what you're agreeing to. This section will guide you through the key things to look out for when assessing a rental listing. From making sure the rent fits your budget and understanding what's included, to checking lease terms, pet policies, and the responsibilities for maintenance – these details can have a big impact on your living experiences and finances. Taking the time to evaluate each of these areas will help you avoid unexpected costs or misunderstandings down the track, and ensure the property is a good fit for your needs and lifestyle. You can find a list of reputable websites to search for rentals in WA in the Resources section of this guide.

### **Rent Amount:**

Make sure the weekly or monthly rent is within your budget, and factor in any other regular expenses you have. Check whether the rent includes essential utilities such as electricity, water, gas, or internet. If not, calculate how much extra you may need to spend monthly on these services to avoid unexpected costs.

### **Lease Terms:**

Review the length of the lease, which is usually 6 or 12 months, and find out if there's any flexibility to extend or shorten it if needed. Shorter leases can offer more flexibility, while longer issues leases may provide more security. Also, check if there's a break-lease clause and what conditions apply.

### **Mone-in/Move-out Dates:**

Double-check the property's availability date to ensure it fits with your schedule. Similarly, make sure the required move-out date won't conflict with any future plans. These dates are often non-negotiable and should be clearly stated in the lease.

### **Pet Policy:**

If you have a pet or plan to get one, confirm whether pets are allowed. Some rentals have strict no-pet policies, while others may permit pets with conditions – such as size or breed restrictions, pet bonds, or extra cleaning requirements.

### Location:

Consider the convenience of the property's location in relation to your daily needs. Is it close to your workplace, university, or school? How accessible is public transport? Are there nearby shops, healthcare services, parks, or other amenities? The location will significantly impact your lifestyle and commuting costs.

### Utilities and Maintenance:

This includes several key areas:

- **Included Amenities:** Check whether the property comes with essential appliances like a refrigerator, washing machine, dryer, oven, or air-conditioning units. These can save you from having to purchase or rent them yourself.
- **Maintenance Responsibility:** Clarify who is responsible for repairs and upkeep. While landlords typically handle major repairs, tenants may be responsible for small fixes or regular garden maintenance. Ensure the lease outlines these responsibilities clearly.
- **Utilities:** Determine whether utilities such as electricity, gas, water, or internet are included in the rent or need to be set up and paid separately. This can significantly affect your monthly expenses and requires planning ahead to avoid service disruptions.

### Furnishing:

Find out if the property is fully furnished, partially furnished, or unfurnished. If it is furnished, ask for a detailed list of what is provided. This can include beds, couches, tables, kitchen appliances, and more. Furnished properties are often more convenient but may come at a higher rent.

### Inspection Process:

Before committing to a lease, it's important to inspect the property either in person or virtually. This allows you to identify any maintenance issues, assess cleanliness, and ensure the space meets your expectations. Some listings may offer open homes or private viewings – try to attend these whenever possible.

### Previous Tenants:

If available, seek out any reviews or feedback from previous tenants. This can give you insight into the property's condition, how responsive the landlord or property manager is to issues, and whether there are recurring problems. If it's a new listing or newly built, ask for more information about the property's history.

**Insurance Requirements:**

Some landlords may require you to have renters' insurance as a condition of the lease. Even if it's not mandatory, it's worth considering to protect your belongings against theft, fire, or other unexpected events. Clarify whether insurance is needed before signing the lease.

## Documents Required to Apply for a Rental in WA

When applying for a rental property in Western Australia, having the correct documentation ready can significantly improve your chances of securing the property – especially in competitive markets. Below is a detailed explanation for the documents commonly required by real estate agents or landlords.

### Photo ID:

You will need at least one form of government-issued photo identification to confirm your identity. Acceptable documents include:

- A driver's licence.
- A passport.
- Proof of Age card.
- WA Photo Card.

Make sure the ID is valid (not expired) and includes your full name and a clear photo. Some applications may require you to provide two forms of ID, so it's helpful to have more than one.

### Proof of Income:

This is essential to show that you can afford to pay rent regularly and on time.

Acceptable forms of income proof include:

- Recent payslips (usually 2-3 from your employer).
- A bank statement showing regular income deposits.
- A letter from your employer confirming your position, salary, and employment status.

### If you're a student, you can provide:

- A student ID card.
- A scholarship award letter or documentation of financial aid.
- Evidence of any part-time or casual employment.

Having multiple forms of income documentation adds credibility to your application, especially if your income fluctuates.

### **Recent Bank Statements:**

Landlords and property managers often request 1-3 months of recent bank statements. These statements should show consistent income and demonstrate that you have sufficient funds to cover rent and living expenses. Highlight any saving or financial support if you're not employed full-time.

### **Rental History/References:**

Providing evidence of a positive rental history shows that you are a reliable and respectful tenant. This may include:

- Contact details for current or previous landlords or property managers.
- Written references from previous landlords, highlighting your payment history and care of the property.
- If you haven't rented before, personal or professional references from an employer, teachers, or community leader can also be useful.

Ensure references include their full name, phone number, and email so the property manager can follow up if needed.

### **Proof of Residence:**

This confirms your current or previous place of residence. You can provide:

- A recent utility bill (electricity, gas, or water) with your name and address.
- A copy of a previous lease agreement or tenancy ledger.
- A letter from a landlord or housing service provider.

This helps verify your residential stability and may be especially helpful to those with limited rental history.

### **Guarantor Details:**

If you're a student, young renter, or do not meet the income requirements, you may be asked to provide a guarantor. A guarantor agrees to pay the rent if you are unable to.

You'll need to provide:

- A copy of your guarantor's photo ID.
- Proof of income (e.g. payslips or bank statements).
- Their full contact details.

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Make sure your guarantor is fully aware of their legal responsibility before listing them on your application.

### **Completed Rental Application Form:**

This form is usually provided by the real estate agency or landlord and must be filled out in full. It typically asks for:

- Personal details.
- Employment and income information.
- Rental history.
- Emergency contacts.

Incomplete applications may be rejected, so double-check all fields before submitting.

### **Cover Letter:**

Though not always required, a well-written cover letter can make your application stand out. It should:

- Introduce yourself and anyone else applying with you.
- Briefly explain your current situation (e.g. work, study).
- Emphasise your strengths as a tenant (e.g. reliable, clean, non-smoker, long-term plans).
- Explain how you plan to meet rental payments.

## How to Apply for a Rental as a Low-Income Earner or Student

Once you've gathered all the necessary documents, the next step is understanding how to use them effectively during the rental application process. For students or those on low income, applying for a rental can feel intimidating – but with the right approach and preparation, you can still stand out as a strong candidate. Here's how to put your application together.

### Prepare Proof of Income:

Even if your income is modest, it's important to show you have the means to pay rent.

- If you are employed (even casually or part-time), include your most recent pay slips or bank statements showing regular deposits.
- Students should include a letter from their education institution confirming enrolment and, if applicable, a scholarship award letter or documentation showing financial aid. This helps show that you have some form of regular income or financial support.

### Provide a Guarantor:

If your income alone doesn't meet rental requirements, you may need a guarantor.

- A guarantor is typically a parent, guardian, or trusted adult who agrees to cover the rent if you're unable to.
- You'll need to provide their photo ID, proof of income, and contact details.

Having a guarantor gives landlords extra peace of mind and can significantly improve your chances of approval.

### Show Savings or Financial Support:

If you don't have consistent income, you can still strengthen your application by showing evidence of financial stability.

- Include bank statements showing savings or regular transfers from family or supporters.
- If someone else (e.g. a family member) is contributing to your rent, include a letter of support stating this commitment.

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This shows you're financially prepared to meet rental obligations, even if you aren't earning a steady income.

### **Provide References:**

Reliable personal or professional references can make a big difference.

- If you have rented before, provide contact details or written references from previous landlords or property manager.
- If you haven't rented before, include references from employers, teachers, mentors, or even volunteer coordinators who can vouch for your character and responsibility. Make sure your references know you're listing them and are willing to speak on your behalf.

### **Fill Out the Application Fully:**

Incomplete or messy applications are often rejected straight away.

- Double-check that all sections of the rental application are filled out accurately, including your contact info, income details, rental history, and references.
- Write neatly or use digital forms when available and ensure all supporting documents are attached.

A complete and professional-looking application signals that you're serious and organised.

### **Include a Cover Letter:**

A well-written cover letter adds a personal touch to your application.

- Briefly introduce yourself and explain your current situation (e.g., full-time student, part-time worker, recent graduate).
- Highlight your strengths as a tenant – such as being tidy, responsible, quiet, or planning to stay long-term.
- Reassure the landlord that you can and will meet rental payments and mention any extra support you have in place.

This letter can help you stand out from other applicants, especially if your income is lower.



### **Highlight Any Financial Aid or Support:**

Be sure to mention any other financial assistance that supports your ability to pay rent.

- This could include Youth Allowance, Austudy, Centrelink payments, scholarships, or student loans.
- Attach official letters or screenshots that clearly show your entitlement and payment amounts.

This reinforces that you have a consistent source of funds beyond employment.

### **Search for Rent Assistance Programs:**

There are often support programs that can help low-income earners or students with housing costs.

- Look for government subsidies, non-profit services, or university accommodation support.
- In WA, you can check with Centrecare, Anglicare WA, Mission Australia, or Department of Communities – Housing for help.

Applying for these programs in advance can help cover bond, rent in advance, or emergencies.

### **Be Honest and Transparent:**

Being upfront about your situation helps build trust with landlords.

- If you're low income, explain your plan for making rent (e.g., through savings, support, or a guarantor).
- Avoid hiding gaps in income or history – landlords will appreciate your honesty and proactive attitude.

Clear communication now can prevent problems later and gives you a better chance of approval.

### **Consider Shared Housing:**

If renting a whole unit or house is too expensive, consider renting a room in a shared house or applying with friends or roommates.

- Shared housing reduces your individual rent burden and utility costs.
- Be sure that all housemates are reliable and willing to co-design the lease.

This is a great option for students or first-time renters trying to enter the rental market affordably.

## Documents required for a rental in WA Checklist

To assist you with your rental application process, below is a checklist of the required documents to submit a rental application, as well as an example of a cover letter that you can edit to reflect your personal circumstances.

Document	Do I have access to this?
Photo ID (e.g. driver's license, passport, proof of age card, etc.)	
Proof of income (payslips, bank statements, student details)	
Rental history	
References	
Proof of residence	
Guarantor details	
Completed application form	
Cover letter	

## Example Cover Letter

Dear [Landlord's or Property Manager's Name],

I hope this message finds you well. My name is [Your Full Name], and I am a [student at XYZ / recent graduate / part-time worker] currently seeking my first rental home. I am very interested in the property at [property address] and would love the opportunity to be considered as a tenant.

Although I am early in my rental history, I am responsible, respectful, and committed to maintaining a clean, safe, and quiet living environment. I currently earn a modest income through [part-time work / a scholarship / government support], and I budget carefully to ensure I can meet my financial obligations. I am also happy to provide references from [an employer, professor, or personal contacts] who can speak to my character and reliability.

Thank you for considering my application. I would be grateful for the chance to discuss how I can be a positive and dependable tenant.

Warm regards,  
[Your Full Name]  
[Phone Number]  
[Email Address]

## Understanding and Signing a Lease

Signing a lease is one of the most important steps in securing a rental property. It's a legally binding contract that outlines the rights and responsibilities of both you and the landlord. Before you sign, it's essential to understand exactly what you're agreeing to so you can avoid misunderstandings, unexpected costs, or legal issues. Below is a breakdown of the key things to check in any lease agreement.

### Lease Term:

Pay close attention to the duration of the lease – common terms are 6 or 12 months.

- Check the start and end dates of the lease, and make sure they align with your plans.
- Ask if the lease can be renewed or extended at the end of the term, and whether there's a break lease clause if your situation changes unexpectedly.

Understanding the lease term helps you avoid penalties or being locked into a contract longer than you need.

### Rent Amount and Payment Details:

The lease should clearly state the exact amount of rent you'll be paying.

- Confirm whether any utilities (water, gas, electricity, internet) are included in the rent or must be paid separately.
- Check how often the rent is due – this is usually weekly, fortnightly, or monthly.
- Find out how rent must be paid (e.g., bank transfer, BPAY, online portal, or direct debit).

Late payments can lead to notices or penalties, so it's important to know the payment schedule and method from the beginning.

### Bond/Security Deposit:

The bond is a refundable deposit held as security in case of unpaid rent or damage to the property.

- Confirm how much bond is required – usually up to 4 weeks' rent in WA.
- The bond must be lodged with the Bond Administrator (through the Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety – DMIRS).

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- Ask about the process for getting your bond refunded at the end of the lease and what deductions may apply.

Always get a receipt and confirmation that the bond has been properly lodged.

### **Responsibilities for Repairs and Maintenance:**

Your lease should outline who is responsible for different types of repairs.

- Landlords are generally responsible for major repairs and maintaining the structure of the property.
- Tenants are responsible for keeping the property clean and reporting any maintenance issues quickly.
- Ask what process to follow if something breaks (e.g., who to contact, response times, emergency procedures).

Understanding this can prevent disputes and help you avoid being blamed for damage that wasn't your fault.

### **Pet Policy:**

If you have a pet or plan to get one, check the lease for any rules around animals.

- Some properties don't allow pets at all, while others may allow them under specific conditions (e.g., size, breed, or number of pets).
- You may need to pay a pet bond or agree to extra cleaning at the end of your lease.

Always get written approval for pets and keep a copy for your records.

### **Entry Rights:**

Landlords and agents can enter the property, but there are rules about how and when.

- They must usually give at least 7 days written notice for routine inspections and 24-48 hours for urgent repairs.
- Entry must be during reasonable hours (usually between 8am and 6pm on weekdays).

This protects your right to quiet enjoyment of your home, so it's important to know when and how they can legally enter.

### **Subletting Guests:**

Most leases will have conditions around who can stay at the property.

- If you want to sublet (rent out a room or share the property), you will likely need written permission from the landlord.
- Long-term guests (e.g., someone staying more than a few nights a week) may also need to be declared.

Breaking the rules can result in breaches or even eviction, so clarify what's allowed before inviting others to stay long-term.

### **Early Termination of the Lease:**

Life changes sometimes require ending a lease early.

- Check if your lease includes a break lease clause, which outlines any fees or conditions for ending the agreement before the end date.
- Typical fees include paying rent until a new tenant is found, re-advertising costs, and possibly a break lease penalty.

Knowing your rights and obligations in advance can help reduce financial and legal stress if your circumstances change.

### **Read Everything Carefully and Get a Copy:**

Never sign a lease without reading and fully understanding all the terms.

- Don't hesitate to ask questions or request clarification – especially around anything that feels unclear or concerning.
- You have the right to take the lease away and review it before signing.
- Once signed, make sure you receive a copy of the fully signed lease for your records. This is your legal proof of agreement.

## Understanding How and Why to Break a Lease

Breaking a lease means ending your rental agreement before the agreed-upon end date. While leases are legally binding, there are valid situations where ending a lease early is necessary or unavoidable. Whether you're facing financial hardship, personal challenges, or need to relocate, it's important to follow the correct process to avoid penalties, protect your rental history, and ensure you get your bond back. This section will help you understand your rights, responsibilities, and the correct steps to take when breaking a lease.

### Valid Reasons to Break a Lease

#### Personal or Financial Hardship:

Sometimes, life circumstances change unexpectedly.

- If you lose your job, have a sudden drop in income, or face personal issues (such as family breakdown or crisis), continuing to pay rent might become impossible.
- In these cases, you may be able to negotiate an early exit with your landlord on compassionate grounds.

#### Health Issues:

Health or disability-related concerns may make the property unsuitable.

- You may need to move closer to medical services or into a home that's more accessible.
- A letter from a medical professional can support your case if you need to end the lease early.

#### Property Problems:

If the property becomes uninhabitable due to safety issues or major maintenance failures, you may have the right to end your lease.

- This includes serious water leaks, electrical faults, mould, vermin infestations, or lack of essential services that are not addressed in a reasonable timeframe.
- Always report problems in writing and give the landlord a chance to fix them.

### **Job Relocation:**

If your job requires you to move to another city or region, it may not be practical to continue the lease.

- Many leases do not allow early exit without penalties, but some landlords may allow it if you provide notice to assist with finding a new tenant.

### **Family and Domestic Violence (FDV):**

WA tenancy laws protect renters escaping domestic or family violence.

- You can end the lease immediately, with no minimum notice period, and you do not have to pay break lease fees.
- You're also not required to inform co-tenants or share your new address.
- Your reason and information must remain confidential by law.

## **Steps to Break a Lease Properly**

### **Review Your Lease Agreement:**

Read the lease to check for early termination clauses.

- Look for any conditions or penalties that may apply, and what steps are required to end the lease legally.
- Understanding your rights and obligations will help you negotiate or act confidently.

### **Notify the Landlord in Writing:**

Provide written notice as early as possible.

- Include your reason for leaving and the intended date of termination.
- For most situations, the notice period is typically 30 days, unless otherwise stated in your lease.

### **Pay Any Penalties or Fees:**

Depending on your lease, you may need to pay:

- Rent until a new tenant is found.
- Re-advertising costs.
- A fixed break lease fee (if included in the lease agreement).



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- Discuss with your landlord whether these can be reduced or waived based on your circumstances.

### **Find a Replacement Tenant:**

Offering to help find a new tenant shows goodwill and may reduce your financial burden.

- Ask if the landlord or agent will accept your help in advertising, showing the property, or recommending suitable applicants.

### **Conduct a Final Property Inspection:**

Before handing over the keys, organise a final inspection with the landlord or agent.

- Clean the property thoroughly, remove all belongings, and repair minor damage.
- This helps to avoid disputes and ensures you're eligible to receive your full bond back.

### **Settle Outstanding Rent:**

Ensure all rent is paid up to the date of handover, including any fees or outstanding bills.

- Failure to pay can result in debt collection or a mark against your rental history.

### **Return the Keys:**

Return all sets of keys, to the property manager or landlord as part of officially ending your tenancy.

- Make sure this is done by the agreed date to avoid further charges.

## **Family and Domestic Violence (FDV): Special Protections**

### **Notice to End Tenancy (Form 2):**

If you're ending your lease due to FDV, you must submit the approved Form 2 – Notice of Termination of Tenant's Interest. The lease will end 7 days after the notice is given, unless you specify an earlier date.

### **Supporting Evidence:**

You must include one of the following:

- Family Violence Restraining Order (FVRO) or Violence Restraining Order (VRO).
- Court Order (e.g., from the Family Court).
- Police report or criminal charge related to FDV.
- Statement from a designated professional, such as a doctor, psychologist, counsellor, police officer, or social worker.

### **You Do NOT Have to:**

- Pay lease break fees.
- Get consent from co-tenants.
- Share your forwarding address.
- Justify your decision beyond the required evidence.

### **Confidentiality:**

Your landlord or property manager must keep your information private, including the reason for ending the lease. This is protected under law.

## **Why Following the Process Matters**

### **Avoid Legal Issues:**

Improperly breaking a lease can result in legal action, damage to your rental history, and being listed on a tenant database.

### **Protect Your Bond:**

If you leave the property in good condition, follow notice periods, and communicate clearly, you're more likely to get your bond refunded in full.

### **Minimise Costs:**

By working with the landlord and taking steps like helping to find a new tenant, you may be able to reduce or avoid penalties and fees.

## Rights and Responsibilities of the Landlord

Understanding a landlord's rights and responsibilities helps maintain a fair and balanced rental relationship. While landlords own the property, they are also legally required to respect the rights of their tenants. The section outlines what landlords are allowed to do under WA tenancy laws, what they are responsible for, and how tenants can expect to be treated during their lease.

### Landlord Rights:

#### Right to Set Rent:

- A landlord has the right to decide how much rent to charge when offering the property for lease.
- During an active lease, they can only increase the rent under specific conditions – usually not within the first 6 months, and only if the lease allows for it.
- Any increase must be done in writing and with at least 60 days' notice.

#### Right to Inspect the Property:

- Landlords are allowed to inspect the property to ensure it's being well-maintained and to check for any needed repairs.
- Inspections must be conducted no more than four times a year, and tenants must be given at least 7 days' notice.
- Inspections must happen at reasonable hours, typically during the day.

#### Right to Enter the Property:

- Landlords may enter the property for reasons such as conducting repairs, performing inspections, or showing the property to potential new tenants or buyers.
- Except in emergencies, landlords must give written notice (usually at least 7 days) and obtain the tenant's consent where required.
- Entry must respect the tenant's privacy and occur at reasonable times.

#### Right to Terminate the Lease with Proper Notice:

- A landlord can end a tenancy if the tenant breaches the lease (e.g., doesn't pay rent or damages the property), or if the fixed-term lease is ending.

- They must provide the correct written notice and follow the required notice period – usually 60 days before the lease ends or as otherwise outlined in the tenancy agreement.
- Evictions must follow legal procedures – landlords cannot force tenants out without proper process.

#### **Right to Charge for Damage:**

- If a tenant causes damage beyond normal wear and tear, the landlord is entitled to charge for repairs.
- Examples include broken windows, stained carpets, or holes in walls not caused by regular use.
- These costs are usually deducted from the tenant's bond, but landlords must provide evidence (e.g., invoices or condition reports).

#### **Landlord Responsibilities**

##### **Maintain a Safe and Habitable Property:**

- The landlord is legally required to ensure the rental property is safe, secure, and in good condition.
- This includes:
  - Working smoke alarms.
  - Secure locks and doors.
  - Structural wiring and plumbing.
  - Structural stability.
- Any health and safety hazards must be fixed promptly, and emergency repairs should be addressed as soon as possible.

##### **Respect Tenant Privacy:**

- Tenants have the right to live in the home without unnecessary intrusion.
- Landlords must provide advance notice (at least 7 days) before entering the property for inspections, repairs, or other valid reasons.
- Tenants can deny access if the correct notice is not given or if the entry is at an unreasonable time.

### **Return the Bond:**

- At the end of the lease, the landlord must return the security bond (usually up to four weeks' rent), minus any agreed-upon deductions.
- Deductions can only be made for:
  - Unpaid rent.
  - Damage beyond fair wear and tear.
  - Cleaning costs (if the property is not returned in the condition it was received).
- The bond must be returned promptly, and disputes can be taken to the Magistrates Court or the Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety (DMIRS).

### **Why These Rights and Responsibilities Matter**

- Understanding the balance of power helps both tenants and landlords avoid conflict.
- Landlords who follow the law build better relationships with tenants and protect the value of their property.
- Tenants can feel more confident and secure when they know what landlords can and cannot legally do.
- Disputes often arise from misunderstandings, so clear communication and knowledge of the law are key.

## Rights and Responsibilities of the Tenant

Tenants in Western Australia have a number of important rights designed to protect their comfort, privacy, and safety – but they also have legal responsibilities that help maintain a respectful and functional relationship with their landlord. Understanding both is essential for a successful tenancy experience.

### Tenant Rights

#### Right to Quiet Enjoyment:

- As a tenant, you have the legal right to use and enjoy the property without unnecessary interference from the landlord, property manager, or others.
- This includes protection from unannounced visits, excessive inspections, or disruptive maintenance work.
- Your home should be a place of privacy and peace – landlords must respect that, even though they own the property.

#### Safe and Habitable Property:

- Tenants have the right to live in a property that is structurally sound and safe, with functioning amenities like electricity, plumbing, and heating.
- The property must comply with health and safety regulations, including secure locks, working smoke alarms, and adequate sanitation.
- If these standards are not met, tenants can request repairs or report the issue to the relevant authorities.

#### Bond Protection:

- If a bond (security deposit) is paid, it must be lodged with the Bond Administrator through the Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety (DMIRS) - not held by the landlord.
- Tenants should receive a Bond Lodgement Form and confirmation of lodgement.
- The bond is held securely and can only be accessed at the end of the lease, with both parties' agreement (or by tribunal order if there's a dispute).

#### Notice for Entry:

- Landlords and agents must give proper written notice before entering the rental property.
- Generally, this is:

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- 7 days for a general inspection.
  - 24 to 48 hours for urgent repairs or viewings.
- Entry must occur at a reasonable time (e.g., not late at night or early morning), and tenants can deny access if the correct procedure is not allowed.

### **Tenant Responsibilities**

#### **Pay Rent on Time:**

- One of the most important responsibilities is paying your rent in full and on time, as agreed in the lease.
- Late or missed payments can lead to warnings, breach notices, or eviction.
- If you're struggling financially, it's important to communicate early with your landlord or agent to discuss possible solutions.

#### **Keep the Property Clean:**

- Tenants are expected to keep the home reasonably clean and tidy throughout the lease.
- This includes regular cleaning, proper rubbish disposal, and looking after both the interior and any outdoor spaces you're responsible for.
- Tenants must not cause damage, and the property should be left in a similar condition to how it was when you moved in (excluding normal wear and tear).

#### **Report Damage or Repairs:**

- If something breaks or requires maintenance – especially if it could get worse over time (e.g., leaking pipe, broken lock) - it's your duty to notify the landlord or agent promptly.
- Reporting early can prevent more serious issues, protect your bond, and ensure your safety.
- Tenants are not responsible for damage that occurs from normal use, but you are responsible for damage caused by negligence or misuse.

#### **Follow the Lease Agreement:**

- Every tenancy agreement includes terms and conditions you are legally required to follow.
- This can include:
  - Not subletting or renting out rooms without permission.
  - Not keeping pets unless allowed.

- Following noise rules and any strata regulations (for apartments).
- Ignoring these terms can result in breach notices, loss of bond, or eviction.

### **Why This Matters:**

Understanding your rights and responsibilities as a tenant helps:

- Protect you from unfair treatment.
- Avoid conflicts with your landlord.
- Keep your rental history in good standing.
- Ensure a safe and pleasant living environment.
- Improve your chances of having your bond fully refunded.

### **Activity**

Below is a list of common tenant-landlord scenarios. Based on your knowledge of tenant and landlord responsibilities, guess who is responsible in each scenario. A list of the correct answers can be found in the Resources section of this guide.

1. Broken hot water system.
2. Damage from hanging heavy wall art without permission.
3. Termite infestation in roof space.
4. Leaking roof during rain.
5. Missed rent payments.
6. Mould caused by poor ventilation (e.g., not opening windows).
7. Old oven stops working.
8. Broken window from playing sports indoors.
9. Non-compliant smoke alarms.
10. Yard overgrown due to neglect.



## **Conclusion: Your Rental Journey Starts Here**

Stepping into the rental world for the first time is a major milestone – and it comes with a lot to learn. From reading rental ads and preparing your documents to understanding leases, inspections, and your rights as a tenant, this guide has given you the tools to approach each step with clarity and confidence.

Remember, renting isn't just about finding a place to live – it's about knowing your rights, asking questions, and seeking support when you need it. Whether you're a student, a low-income earner, part of the LGBTQIA+ community, Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, or navigating challenges like family and domestic violence, there are organisations and resources here to help you.

You deserve to feel safe, respected, and informed in your rental journey. Keep this guide handy, trust yourself, and don't be afraid to reach out for help along the way.

You've got this – and this guide will be here whenever you need it.

## Resources

### Rental Property Inspection Checklist

#### General Interior

- Walls: Check for cracks, holes, peeling paint, or stains
- Ceilings: Look for water damage, mould, or sagging
- Flooring: Inspect for damage, stains, or loose tiles/carpet
- Windows: Test locks, screens, and ease of opening/closing
- Doors: Ensure they open/close/lock properly
- Light Fixtures: Working bulbs and switches
- Smoke & CO Detectors: Test function and battery life
- Heating & Cooling: Test thermostat and system operation
- Outlets: Check for power and condition
- Internet/Cable Ports: Note location and functionality
- Odors: Check for musty, smoke, or pet smells

#### Kitchen

- Appliances: Test stove, oven, refrigerator, dishwasher, microwave
- Cabinets & Drawers: Open/close all, check for damage
- Sink & Faucet: Run water, check for leaks and water pressure
- Garbage Disposal: Test operation and noise level
- Countertops: Check for chips, burns, or stains
- Backsplash & Tiles: Inspect for damage or missing grout
- Exhaust Fan/Range Hood: Functioning and clean

#### Bathrooms

- Toilet: Flushes properly, no leaks
- Sink & Faucet: Good water flow, no leaks
- Shower/Bathtub: Functioning, sealed, and no mould
- Exhaust Fan: Working and not too noisy
- Mirrors & Fixtures: Secure and uncracked
- Tile & Grout: Intact and mould-free
- Cabinetry: Water damage or mould under sink?

#### Bedrooms and Living Areas

- Closet Doors & Shelving: Open/close smoothly, not damaged
- Window Treatments: Blinds or curtains working

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- Ceiling Fans: Working and stable
- Floor/Ceiling Vents: Unobstructed and clean

### **Laundry Area**

- Washer/Dryer: Test operation (if provided)
- Hookups: Leak-free, accessible, and secure
- Ventilation: Dryer vent clear of lint

### **Exterior**

- Roof: Visible signs of damage (from ground)
- Gutters & Downspouts: Attached and draining properly
- Siding/Paint: No peeling or major cracks
- Windows: No broken panes or caulking issues
- Outdoor Lighting: All fixtures working
- Walkways/Driveway: Safe, level, and crack-free
- Yard/Landscaping: Maintained, no excessive debris
- Fence/Gate: Stable and locks properly
- Garage/Storage: Accessible, clean, and secure

### **Safety and Compliance**

- Entry Locks: All doors secure with functioning deadbolts
- Security Features: Alarm system, cameras (if applicable)
- Fire Extinguisher: Present and up to date
- Egress: All bedrooms have legal exits
- Pest Signs: Look for droppings, nests, or damage

## Top Rental Property Websites in Western Australia

### REIWA (Real Estate Institute of Western Australia)

- **Website:** [reiwa.com.au/rent](https://reiwa.com.au/rent)
- **Overview:** As the peak body for real estate in WA, REIWA offers comprehensive listings across Perth and regional areas. It provides detailed suburb insights, median pricing, and demand trends.

### Realestate.com.au

- **Website:** [realestate.com.au/rent/in-wa](https://realestate.com.au/rent/in-wa)
- **Overview:** A leading national platform featuring a vast selection of rental properties in WA, including houses, apartments, and townhouses.

### Rent.com.au

- **Website:** [rent.com.au/properties/wa](https://rent.com.au/properties/wa)
- **Overview:** Offers a user-friendly interface with features like renter resumes and application tracking. It includes a wide range of rental listings across WA.

### Property.com.au

- **Website:** [property.com.au/wa/rent](https://property.com.au/wa/rent)
- **Overview:** Provides extensive rental listings throughout WA, with detailed property information and search filters.

### Allhomes

- **Website:** [allhomes.com.au/browse-rent/perth-metro-wa](https://allhomes.com.au/browse-rent/perth-metro-wa)
- **Overview:** Specializes in residential rentals in Perth, offering detailed listings and neighborhood insights.

### No Agent Property

- **Website:** [noagentproperty.com.au/private-real-estate/rental/wa](https://noagentproperty.com.au/private-real-estate/rental/wa)
- **Overview:** Caters to private landlords listing properties without agents, providing direct communication between tenants and landlords.

### Rentola

- **Website:** [rentola.com.au/for-rent/western-australia](https://rentola.com.au/for-rent/western-australia)
- **Overview:** Connects tenants directly with private landlords, offering a variety of rental options across WA.

## Income vs. Expenses Spreadsheet

### Fixed Expenses

Expense	Amount (\$)
Rent	
Utilities (electricity, gas, water)	
Internet	
Phone Bill	
Transport (public transport, fuel, car repayments)	
Groceries	
Insurance (health, car, contents)	
Debt Repayments (HECS/HELP, credit cards, personal loans)	
Subscriptions (Netflix, Spotify, gym)	
<b>Total Fixed Expenses</b>	

### Variable Expenses

Expense	Amount (\$)
Eating Out / Takeaway / Coffee	
Entertainment / Going Out	
Clothing and Accessories	
Gifts and Donations	
Personal Care (haircuts, skincare, toiletries)	
Miscellaneous (unexpected or one-off purchase)	
<b>Total Variable Expenses</b>	

### Summary

Description	Amount (\$)
Total Expenses = Fixed + Variable	
Net Income = Total Income – Total Expenses	
Savings Potential (money leftover)	
Negative Spendings (you're spending more than you earn)	

## Key Organisations for Young Renters in WA

### Legal Aid WA

- **Services:** Offers legal advice on tenancy matters, including disputes with landlords and understanding tenant rights under the Residential Tenancies Act 1987.
- **Contact:** [legallaid.wa.gov.au](http://legallaid.wa.gov.au)

### Anglicare WA – Private Tenancy Support

- **Services:** Assists tenants facing difficulties in maintaining their private rental accommodation, including budgeting support and referrals to community legal services.
- **Contact:** [anglicarewa.org.au](http://anglicarewa.org.au)

### Circle Green Community Legal

- **Services:** Provides free legal assistance for tenants dealing with issues such as bond disputes, rent arrears, and lease agreements.
- **Contact:** [circlegreen.org.au](http://circlegreen.org.au)

### Consumer Protection WA

- **Services:** Offers information on tenant rights and responsibilities and can assist in resolving disputes between tenants and landlords.
- **Contact:** [consumerprotection.wa.gov.au](http://consumerprotection.wa.gov.au)

### Department of Communities – Housing Division

- **Services:** Provides rental accommodation to eligible households and information on public housing policies.
- **Contact:** [wa.gov.au](http://wa.gov.au)

### Citizens Advice Bureau WA

- **Services:** Offers free, impartial, and confidential advice on housing matters, including renting and buying a home.
- **Contact:** [cabwa.com.au](http://cabwa.com.au)

## Family and Domestic Violence Resources

If you or someone you know is experiencing family and domestic violence (FDV) in Western Australia, there are several services available to provide support, safety, and guidance. Here's an overview of the key resources available:

### Immediate Assistance and Emergency Contacts

- **Emergency Services (Police):** Dial **000** for immediate danger or life-threatening situations.
- **Crisis Care (After Hours):** Call **1800 199 008** for urgent housing and homelessness support.

### 24/7 Helplines

- **Women's Domestic Violence Helpline (WA):** Free call **1800 007 339**. Offers support for women and children experiencing FDV, including referrals to safe accommodation.
- **Men's Domestic Violence Helpline (WA):** Free call **1800 000 599**. Provides information and referrals for men concerned about their own or others' violent behaviours.
- **1800RESPECT (National):** Call **1800 737 732** or text **0458 737 732**. Offers confidential online and phone counselling for anyone affected by sexual assault, domestic or family violence.
- **Kids Helpline:** For young people aged 5–25, call **1800 55 1800** or use online chat.

### Safe Accommodation and Housing Support

- **Refuges & Safe Houses:** Specialist services provide emergency accommodation and support for women and children.
- **Safe at Home Programs:** Allow individuals to stay safely in their own homes while perpetrators are removed.
- **Outreach Services:** Offer support and advocacy to those in regional areas or unable to access in-person services.

### Legal and Court Support

- **Family Violence Courts:** Handle family violence matters exclusively, supporting victims and holding offenders accountable.
- **Legal Aid WA:** Provides free legal advice and representation. Call **1300 650 579**.
- **Sexual Assault Resource Centre (SARC):** Offers emergency sexual assault services. Call **1800 199 888** or **08 9340 1828**.

### **Specialist Support Services**

- **Anglicare WA:** Provides support for individuals affected by FDV, including men, women, and children.
- **Ruah Community Services:** Offers safety planning, accommodation assistance, and counselling for women and children.
- **Luma (Joondalup & Northbridge):** Provides counselling, art therapy, and support groups for young people aged 12–17.
- **Centre for Women’s Safety and Wellbeing:** Offers a directory of FDV services across WA, including refuges, counselling, and advocacy.
- **Relationships WA – Djinda Service:** Provides culturally secure support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children.

### **Support for Children and Young People**

**Waratah Children’s Domestic Violence Service (Bunbury, Busselton, Collie):** Offers counselling for children aged 5–15 who have experienced or witnessed FDV.

### **Additional Resources**

- **Path to Safety:** WA’s whole-of-government strategy to reduce FDV, providing resources and information.
- **Shelter WA – FDV Kit:** A comprehensive guide to FDV services, including accommodation options and contact information.



## **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Resources**

Here are some of the resources available to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Western Australia, encompassing health, legal, family support, and cultural services:

### **Health and Wellbeing Services**

- **Aboriginal Health Council of Western Australia (AHCWA)**  
Supports Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services (ACCHS) across WA, offering culturally appropriate healthcare.
- **Yorgum Healing Services Aboriginal Corporation**  
Provides a range of support services, including child safety and community wellbeing initiatives.
- **13Yarn**  
A free, confidential 24/7 crisis support line run by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

### **Legal and Advocacy Support**

- **Aboriginal Legal Service of Western Australia (ALSWA)**  
Offers legal representation and support services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in WA.
- **Council of Aboriginal Services Western Australia (CASWA)**  
Represents Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) across WA, providing a unified voice for the sector.

### **Family and Community Support**

- **Aboriginal In-Home Support Service (AISS)**  
A targeted program offering culturally responsive support to families, delivered by Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations.
- **Southcare Aboriginal Family Support**  
Provides information, education, support, advocacy, and referral services to Aboriginal families in the Perth metropolitan area.
- **Wungening Aboriginal Corporation**  
Offers culturally secure, confidential, and free-of-charge services to Aboriginal people in the Perth metropolitan area.

### **Mental Health and Crisis Support**

- **ReachOut – Yarn Up**  
Features stories from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people on how they stay safe and strong.

- **Black Dog Institute – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Support**  
Provides resources and support for mental health issues specific to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

### **Cultural and Community Resources**

- **Indigenous.gov.au**  
Connects with First Nations Australians, featuring community stories, grants, and consultations.
- **ANTAR – Justice, Rights & Respect**  
A national advocacy organisation dedicated to achieving rights, justice, and respect for First Nations peoples.

### **LGBTQIA+ Resources**

Here are some resources available to Queer and Trans people in Western Australia, offering support across mental health, peer networks, healthcare, and legal advocacy:

### **Peer Support and Community Services**

- **Living Proud**  
A community-controlled organisation providing support, information, and resources to the Western Australian LGBTQIA+ community. They offer peer counselling, health and wellbeing initiatives, and community capacity building.
- **Freedom Centre (WAAC)**  
Offers a safe space for young people aged 12–25 to explore issues related to sexuality, gender identity, and relationships. Services include peer-led support, information, and social groups.
- **TransFolk of WA**  
Provides peer support for transgender and gender-diverse individuals and their loved ones. They offer online support spaces, including groups for different gender identities and family members.
- **The Chameleon Society**  
A support and social group for crossdressers, transsexuals, and their partners, based in Perth. They maintain an extensive library on transgender and cross-dressing issues and provide referrals to supportive services.

### **Counselling and Mental Health Support**

- **QLife**  
A national service offering anonymous and free LGBTQIA+ peer support and referral services via phone (1800 184 527) and online chat.

- **Relationships WA**

Provides counselling and support services for individuals and couples, including those identifying as LGBTIQ+, in a safe and supportive environment.

- **Richmind WA**

Offers mental health services with a commitment to LGBTIQ+ inclusive practice, aiming to reduce mental distress among LGBTIQ+ individuals.

### **Healthcare and Gender-Affirming Services**

- **Equinox Gender Diverse Health Service**

Provides gender-affirming healthcare, including bulk-billed GP services and low-cost counselling for trans and gender-diverse individuals.

- **Clinician Assist WA – Transgender Health Pathway**

Offers guidance for healthcare professionals in providing appropriate care for transgender, gender-diverse, and non-binary individuals, including assessment and referral pathways.

### **Resources for Families and Allies**

- **Transcend Australia**

Supports families of trans, gender-diverse, and non-binary children through advocacy, resources, and guidance.

- **Gender Help for Parents – WA**

Provides information and support for parents of transgender children in Western Australia.

### Activity Answers

1. Broken hot water system: Landlord. The landlord must repair or replace the hot water system as it is considered an essential service.
2. Damage from hanging heavy wall art without permission: Tenant. Damage caused by drilling into walls without consent is the tenant's responsibility.
3. Termite infestation in roof space: Landlord. Pest control infestations not caused by the tenant (like termites in the structure) is the landlord's duty.
4. Leaking roof during rain: Landlord. Structural repairs, like roof leaks, fall under the landlord's responsibility.
5. Missed rent payments: Tenant. Tenants must pay rent on time and in full as per the lease agreement.
6. Mould caused by poor ventilation: Tenant. If the mould is due to the tenant's failure to ventilate properly, they must resolve it.
7. Old oven stops working: Landlord. Appliances provided with the property must be maintained in working order by the landlord.
8. Broken window from playing sports indoors: Tenant. Damage caused by the tenant or their guests through misuse or negligence must be repaired by the tenant.
9. Non-compliant smoke alarms: Landlord. Landlords must ensure smoke alarms are installed and compliant with safety laws.
10. Yard overgrown due to neglect: Tenant. If yard maintenance is the tenant's responsibility under the lease, they must keep it tidy.