

## Applying for Private Rental - Tip Sheet

The main things rental providers are looking for is a renter who will not create extra work for them, someone with a consistent income who will pay rent on time and look after the property. What this means is, you want to present yourself in the best way possible. Things like:

- **A cover letter** telling the rental provider about who you are, what do you do for a living and even the reason for your move. Try to be professional but not overly formal that your personality doesn't shine through. Give a brief overview of your rental history and make mention of any special circumstances such as pets.
- **Evidence that your income is consistent and reliable**
  - If you're working, attach 2-3 payslips to your application to evidence your income
  - If you're not working, you should attach 2-3 Centrelink income statements
  - You no longer need to attach full bank statements with daily transactions and agents cannot ask for these.
- **A copy of your rental ledger** - if you are currently renting or have rented previously and have paid rent on time frequently, ask the agent/property manager for a copy of your rental ledger to show this to any rental providers you're applying with. This will show that you're a reliable tenant.
- **Written references** from past/current employers, past/current rental providers or other professionals that speak to you being a responsible and reliable person.
  - References from current or previous real estate agents/rental providers look particularly good if you're able to get any.
  - An employment reference should include your hours and income.
  - A Juno worker may be able to write you a letter of recommendation if you are not able to obtain other references.
- **Once you have all the supporting documentation together** and you are ready to start searching for your next rental, if you find one that you're interested in that either does not have an inspection time listed, or an inspection time several days in the future, call the agent and ask if you can inspect it ahead of time. If you're able to, this may give you a chance to apply before the open for inspection takes place.
- **Be on time** to inspections – arriving early if you can, dressing neat, and being friendly and polite to agents can make a good impression.
- **Submit your application as soon as possible** - agents will often accept the first good application they review rather than going through all of the submitted applications as this saves them and the owner time and money.
- **Following-up** with the agent or owner to reiterate your interest after you have applied. Following up can not only mean the agent/landlord will remember your name, but sometimes this can set you apart from other applicants. We suggest you call agents directly if you feel confident doing this, otherwise you can email. Even if your application is unsuccessful, building rapport with the agent can mean they recommend other similar properties to you in future.

- **Ask for feedback** if your application is unsuccessful - some agents will tell you if there's something that could be stronger about your application, others might just say they simply chose another applicant. It can never hurt to ask.
- Unfortunately, the rental market is competitive, and prices have gone up due to the demand, so it does mean that people are offering to pay more than the advertised price per week to get their applications to the top of the pile, but just so you're aware, a rental provider can never ASK you to do this, it is now illegal.
- **Tenant databases or 'blacklists'**: There are only two reasons you can be listed on a tenant database. These are if:
  - You owe the rental provider more money than the bond will cover, or
  - VCAT has given the rental provider a possession order for the property [section 439E]
- If a rental provider wants to list you on a database, they must, without charging you a fee:
  - Give you a copy of the information to be listed, or take reasonable steps to give you this information
  - Give you at least 14 days to respond
  - Consider any objections or changes from you
- A listing can stay on a database for a maximum of 3 years.
- If your application for a rental property is rejected and you are not told why, you can send a written request to the rental provider asking if they checked any databases, if so which ones, and if they found any listings with information about you. The rental provider must tell you if they find a listing about you.

**Due to the rental law reforms, rental providers can no longer ask the following:**

- If you have previously been involved in legal action or dispute with a rental provider, such as going to the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT)
- Questions about your bond history, including whether a claim has ever been made against your bond
- Credit card or bank statements that contain your daily transactions
- Any information about you that could be discriminatory, under Section 6 of the *Equal Opportunity Act 2010*, unless you have been given written reason why the information is required [section 30C]

If you are asked any of these things you can report the rental provider, or agent, to Consumer Affairs Victoria (CAV) which can issue an infringement notice on the rental provider or agent if they have failed to follow the law.

For more information about your tenancy rights have a look at:

<https://tenantsvic.org.au/advice/starting-your-tenancy/applying-for-a-private-rental-property/>

<https://tenantsvic.org.au/advice/ending-your-tenancy/tenant-databases-blacklists/>