

COVID-19 Updates

At DREAMCHOICE REALTY we are thinking of all of the people who have been affected by COVID-19, and we appreciate the healthcare workers, local communities, and governments around the world who are on the front line working to contain this coronavirus.

As COVID-19 continues to spread we are actively monitoring the situation, following advice and implementing all relevant recommendations provided by the Australian Government and the World Health Organisation.

Operating in a “people industry” brings its challenges during these unprecedented times. We will continue to work as usual, but we will be taking several steps to prepare and protect ourselves from as much of the impact as possible and to limit the spread so that our staff and their families, together with you and your families remain safe.

We are still open for business during this situation, we are operating remotely but reassured we are more than happy to talk to you over phone, alternatively you may arrange an appointment with us you wish to speak.

Good news we can still assist you with your property needs via by private inspections, virtual property tours, virtual property appraisals and online/digital auctions.

If you would like more information from the Australian Government please click here: <https://www.health.gov.au/>

COVID-19 Tenant FAQ's

Does the COVID19 crisis change any of my rights or obligations as a tenant?

No, not currently. The State and Federal Governments have the power to announce measures that may impact some of your rights and obligations relating to your tenancy. Keep checking back here and/or with other updated pages to make sure you have the most current and accurate information about your legal rights about renting.

Fair trading has FAQs concerning COVID-19 on their website which may be useful.

<https://www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au/resource-library/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-faqs-consumer-and-business-rights>

I'm currently in self-isolation. Should I let my property manager know?

Tenants should let their landlord know if they are self-isolating or sick with COVID-19, especially if the agent, landlord or tradesperson plans to visit or enter the rental. They should also make sure any other tenants, flatmates or visitors are aware of the situation and how it will work. See self-isolation guidelines

<https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/diseases/Documents/covid-19-self-isolation-guidelines.pdf>

<https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/coronavirus-covid-19-self-isolation-faqs>

I have lost my job and I can't cover the rent. What should I do?

If you are unable to meet your rent obligations, you should let us know immediately. We have been told that there will be an announcement by our Prime Minister in due course regarding support for tenants and landlords who are experiencing financial hardship. We anticipate this announcement will provide some much-needed guidance and framework around how to get both our Tenants & Landlords through this difficult time of job loss across the board.

Once we receive your request and evidence to support your lost income or job, such as Employment Separation Certificate, we will contact the landlord. Some landlords will be more willing and able to accommodate requests for paying a reduced or deferred rent for a short period, especially if their mortgage costs are low and allow them to do so. However, there is no provision within the Residential Tenancies Act to compel landlords to act with leniency in this situation and some landlords may not be in a financial position to offer this to you.

We encourage you to consider the following:

- Have you had a discussion with your Employer as to whether your job is likely to be reinstated once the health crisis subsides?
- Do you know that you can contact the Department of Workplace Relations for guidance around employment during this time? More information can be found here - [Workplace Laws](https://coronavirus.fairwork.gov.au/)
- Are you covered via an insurance policy for Income Protection Insurance?
- Have you engaged with Centrelink with respect to an allowance that will likely also include rental assistance? More information can be found here - [Centrelink](https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/rent-assistance)
- Have you checked with your Superannuation Fund as to whether you can access your super early? More information can be found here - [Super](#)

https://treasury.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-03/Fact_sheet-Early_Access_to_Super.pdf

- If you have any mortgages or personal loans, have you checked with your financier as to whether you can pause payments due to hardship?

If you feel you that you are no longer able to continue residing at the property, please contact your property manager to discuss the options available.

Can my landlord continue holding inspections for sale and for lease?

The NSW government has banned open house inspections where premises are up for sale or lease.

Landlords and agents can still show a single party the premises after they have made an appointment with the tenant(s) for individuals.

Landlords and their agents must ensure they do not breach the reasonable peace, comfort and privacy of their tenants. At the moment this may require taking steps to prevent the spread of disease by people visiting during an inspection of your property. They may need to consider:

- Limit the number of people inside a property at any one time to maintain safe distances and adhere to the recent government announcement which prevents them from holding open homes for sale or lease. Please note that inspection by private appointment is still allowed
- Asking every person intending to attend an inspection if they have returned to Australia from overseas in the past 14 days and also if they are currently experiencing fever, sore throat, cough or shortness of breath (the current main symptoms associated with Covid-19). If the answer is yes, then the landlord or agent should tell the person that they cannot enter the house until they have self-isolated for 14 days or they have had a Covid-19 test that has come back negative for the virus
- Providing sanitiser/hand wash/alcoholic wipes for people to use when attending an inspection and making sure they and the agent use it
- Ensure no one touches anything fixtures or fittings while visiting the property

Can my landlord continue to conduct routine inspections?

Both property managers and tenants have ongoing legal and insurance obligations relating to routine inspections and COVID-19 does not remove these. Any tenant who is unwell or in self-isolation should inform us immediately by email so we can postpone your upcoming scheduled

inspection. Rest assured that our team will be taking special precautions whilst onsite at your property to minimise any risk.

I have maintenance to report. Will it get fixed?

Your property manager will be prioritising any urgent repairs at this time. That said, should you have any general repairs, they will be attended to when possible assuming there are skilled tradespeople available to carry out the work.

My property manager wants to send a tradesperson into my property but I'm not comfortable with it. What can I do?

If the repair is urgent such as a smoke alarm or hot water system, the repair must proceed as it is deemed urgent according to the Residential Tenancy Agreement. If you have concerns, contact your Property Manager and ask them what precautions the tradesperson will be taking prior and during visiting the property.

Can my landlord evict me during this crisis?

Right now, your property manager can proceed with the same legal processes as usual. However, they must still follow the processes laid out in the Residential Tenancies Act. You can't be evicted without Tribunal orders, and only the Sheriff can physically remove you.

You can attempt to negotiate with your landlord - if you are already in arrears, it's better to be proactive.

I'm having trouble with other household bills, what can I do?

If you are having trouble paying other household bills like electricity, gas or water contact your provider/retailer to find out about their customer assistance program and its eligibility criteria. All electricity and gas retailers are required to have a customer assistance program. If you are eligible under the program you are protected from disconnection and your retailer should work with you to develop a suitable payment arrangement and offer other relevant relief or support.

Have a look also at the Australian Energy Regulator's info for customers in hardship. Usefully they have their fact sheets in a range of languages other than English.

You can apply to have a phone hearing. Ensure you inform the Tribunal if you are in a higher risk category, for example, if you are immune suppressed or a carer for elderly relatives, so they can consider this when assessing and prioritising your request. While you are able to do a phone hearing on a mobile, in general landlines are preferred because of the reliability of the line.