

**Housing Information for
Women and Women with Children in Victoria**

Published by Women's Housing Ltd. Cremorne, Victoria
January 2016

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Overview

Housing breakdown can occur at any time in a woman's life and for many reasons. It can happen unexpectedly or it can be an accumulation of small things.

It can be a scary and uncertain time. But there are a number of services in the community to help you find alternative accommodation and plan for a stable future.

To help streamline services the Victoria government implemented a framework called 'Opening Doors'. This framework created a first point of contact (Access Point) for all people affected by homelessness or who are at risk of homelessness.

Approaching a service can seem daunting especially when you are unfamiliar with how the system works or if you have found services to be unhelpful in the past.

This booklet provides you with information about different housing options and aims to help you navigate your way through a sometimes complex housing and support system. It is a guide only. Each service and program will have their own eligibility criteria and processes.

Remember that community services are there to help you and you too have rights as a service user. Be open to options that are available instead of focusing on what is not available. Sometimes it's a stepping stone to something more suitable. Focus on moving forward towards your goals!



“All women have the right to safe, secure, affordable housing choices.”

ACCESS POINTS

Contact an Access Point for assistance if you are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

What is an Access Point?

Access Points provide housing and support assistance. They are your first point of contact if you are homeless or at risk of being homeless. Access Points provide you with information about available housing options and pathways, refer you to generalist and specialist support services, provide advocacy, distribute financial assistance, and help you complete applications.

Access Points are located across Victoria in each region. You only need to attend the Access Point closest to you.

What happens at an Access Point?

The first contact you will have at an Access Point is with the Initial Assessment and Planning (IAP) worker. They will complete an intake assessment with you to identify your housing and support needs. The assessment is based on your level of housing and support needs, any other risks identified and level of vulnerability.

The IAP worker will provide a number of options and responses for you. This can take some time and you may need to make a secondary visit. If you are not at immediate risk of homelessness or harm, you may be asked to come back in a few weeks to be assessed for support and planning.

Each Access Point may vary in their processes or services provided however they do have some commonalities. Each program will also have eligibility criteria and limited resources.

What assistance can Access Points provide?

In summary, Access Points can generally provide the following assistance:

- intake assessment for housing and support programs (including the transitional housing program)
- financial assistance (Housing Establishment Funds) to help with private rental arrears, private rent in advance, crisis accommodation and sometimes bond
- completion of Office of Housing Segment 3 applications (special housing needs)
- assistance with other housing applications or referrals e.g. rooming house, co-operative housing, long term community housing
- referral to private rental brokerage programs
- referral to specialist services such as mental health, drug and alcohol, domestic violence, youth specific, material aid, community legal services, financial counselling and family support services
- advocacy with landlords to maintain housing
- advocacy with other service providers to help you reach the best outcome

It is always best to seek advice and planning from an Access Point as soon as possible.

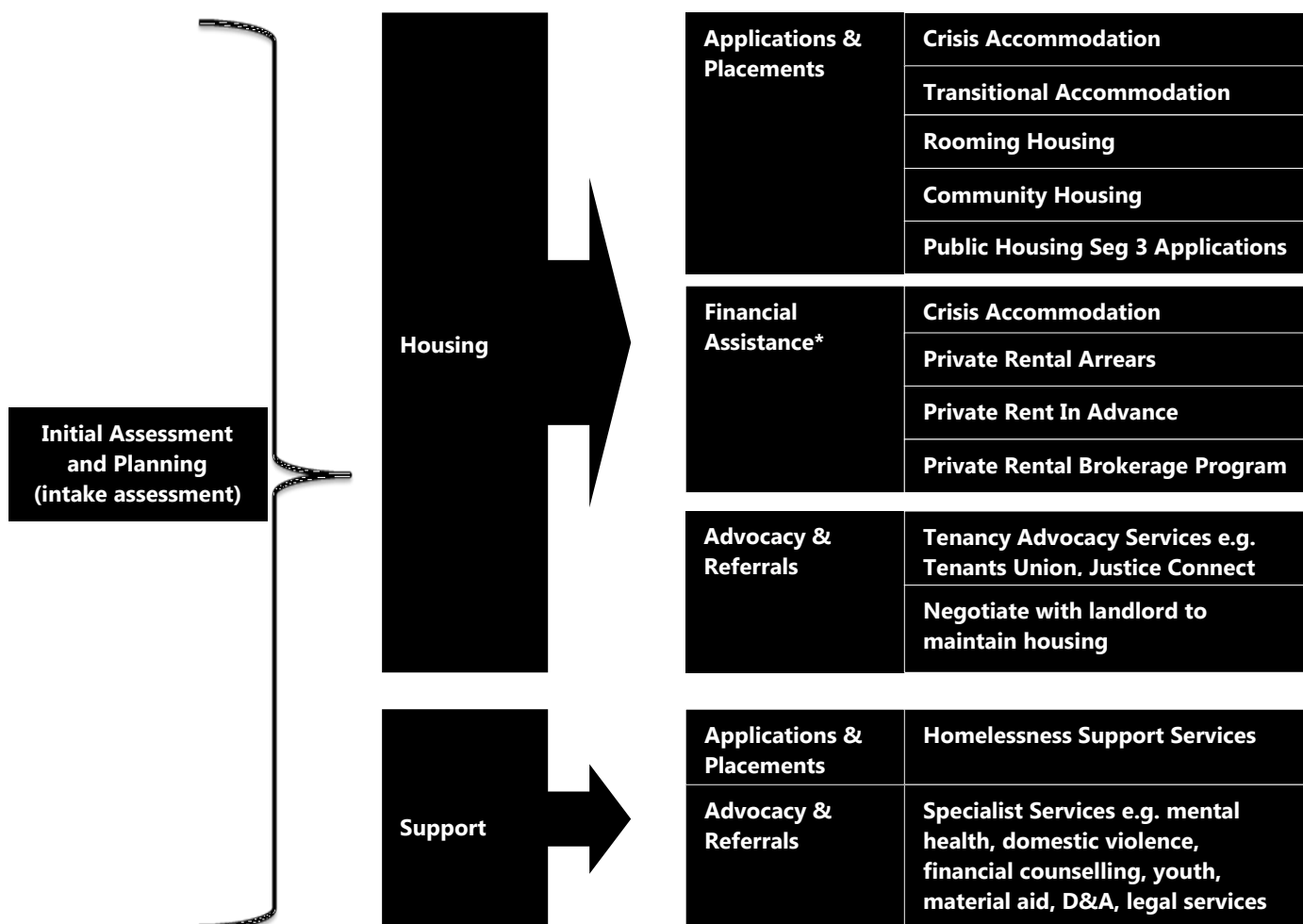


Figure 1. General services of an Access Point

Each agency will provide different services and may have slightly different processes. All programs are subject to eligibility criteria and availability.

*Funds are limited and subject to eligibility criteria

HOUSING OPTIONS

Let's explore the different housing options. Remember, sometimes the most appropriate accommodation option may not be available. Keep an open mind and consider the options that *are* available. A housing option that is not ideal is a stepping stone to your goal.

Continue to engage with your Access Point. You will work on a more stable housing and support plan with the IAP worker.

Always remember that you have the right to make your own decisions based on your, and your family's, needs.

Crisis Accommodation

There are many reasons for seeking crisis accommodation. Some reasons include living in an unsafe environment, eviction, and no availability of stable accommodation.

If you are in urgent need of somewhere to stay tonight and you have tried all other options (including friends and family) you can access crisis accommodation assistance at an Access Point.

IAP workers can access the Housing Establishment Funds (HEF) to pay one or two nights at an accommodation provider such as a motel or caravan park. *It is a last resort service and funds are extremely limited.*

The location of the motel will be dependent on where the vacant beds are available, how much funds are available and whether motels are open to accepting homelessness bookings.

Access Points will use HEF to pay for the accommodation only. HEF is not to be used to for security deposits or other expenses. You remain the sole hotel patron and are responsible for what occurs at the motel. You will be responsible for any other costs you incur such as meals, laundry, lost keys, damages and room service. Thus we strongly encourage you not to have visitors during your stay as you will also be responsible for their behaviour and any consequences.

You must continue working with the IAP worker on a short and medium term housing plan. It is best to remain open to other options that are more stable than motel accommodation. Remember, an accommodation option that is not ideal is a stepping stone to your goal.

Women's Crisis Accommodation Services

There are two women's crisis accommodation centres located in southern metropolitan Melbourne. Access to bed vacancies is via the Access Points.

The accommodation is short term, generally up to 6 weeks stay. It is for single women only. There is both single and shared accommodation and you will be charged an affordable weekly rent. To ensure the safety and privacy of all residents, there are conditions such as curfew restrictions and no visitors, alcohol or drugs allowed on the premises. You will also be allocated a support worker who will develop an agreement with you specifying how often you will meet. Together, you will create a plan to work on more stable accommodation and to ensure your support needs are met.

Refuge

There are different types of refuge accommodation. Some are designated for youth and some are provided specifically for women and their children escaping family violence.

Refuges for Women Escaping Family Violence

Refuges for women escaping family violence are usually high security refuges. Some organisations also have safe houses and are temporary short term options.

A refuge is a safe place that will allow you time to think through your options and seek appropriate advice. A case manager will link you in with any support or specialist services you need such as counselling or legal services. They will also work on an exit plan with you as refuges are short term accommodation placements of up to 6 weeks. The case manager will discuss options such as transitional housing, private rental, public housing or long term community housing.

Contact SafeSteps (family violence response centre) on 1800 015 188 if you are experiencing family violence and need crisis accommodation and support.

Youth Refuges

If you are under 25 years of age you can access youth services. Youth refuges are mainly shared accommodation places and are short term only, usually up to 6 weeks. However staying at a youth refuge means you will have access to supports. A worker will help you navigate the homelessness system and work on a goal plan with you. You may have a private room with shared communal facilities like bathrooms and kitchens. Or you may have to share a room with another person.

Rooming House

Rooming houses or boarding houses are suitable for single persons. Privately managed rooming houses are often a house with several rooms. Rooming houses managed by community agencies can also be single houses or larger buildings that contain over 30 rooms.

Conditions and facilities vary between rooming houses. Some have shared bathroom facilities while others provide an en-suite. Some provide exclusive occupancy rights while others offer shared rooms. There is usually a communal kitchen, living room and laundry. Community managed rooming houses may also offer community development activities such as community garden projects, job skills training, community lunches and wellbeing workshops.

Rent varies between rooming houses. Privately managed rooming house rent can be up to \$220 per week (including utilities). Community managed rooming house rent can be up to \$180 per week (including utilities). Some rooming houses require bond.

Living in a rooming house can be challenging as you are sharing a property with other people. Rooms are in close proximity and noise can be an issue. It is important that you are mindful of others living next to you to maintain a peaceful environment. Access to facilities and availability of facilities may also be an issue when there are many people living in one property. It is important to cooperate and practice patience.

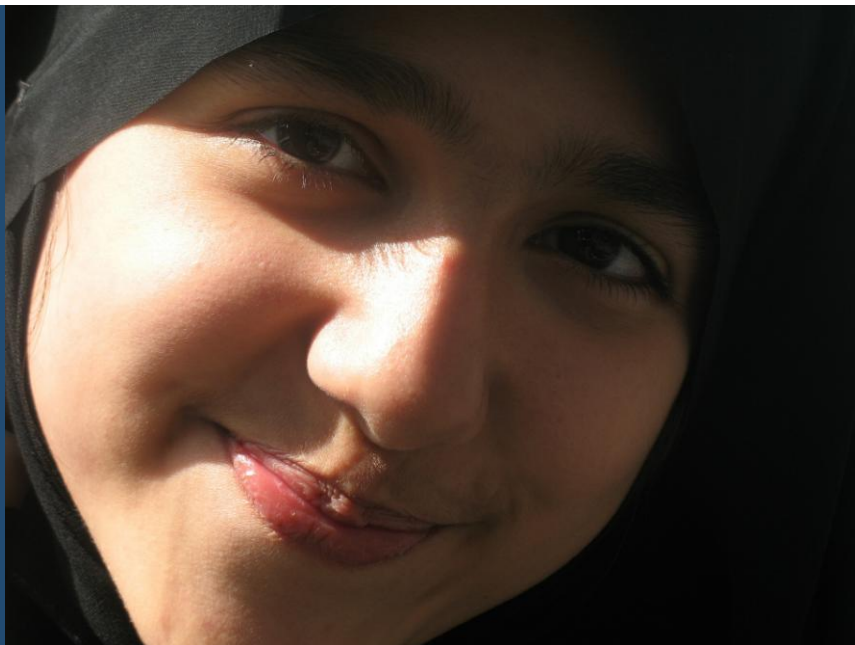
You must also observe the "rules" enforced in each rooming house. Some common rules include no alcohol in common areas, no pets and no visitors after a certain time. These can seem like

restrictions however it is helpful to view them as group guidelines that ensure a safe, quiet and enjoyable environment for everyone.

There are minimum rooming house standards enforced by Consumer Affairs Victoria that ensure adequate facilities are provided. This includes sufficient access to cooking, laundry or bathroom facilities that accommodate the number of residents in the property. All facilities must be safe, in working order and clean. There must also be a lock on your door and window coverings to ensure privacy. You can obtain more information from Consumer Affairs Victoria (CAV) by calling 1300 55 81 81. Minimum standards ensure your safety, privacy and living needs are met.

If the rooming house accommodation is a short term arrangement it is important you seek assistance from your local Access Point to discuss your options.

All homelessness accommodation and support services are inclusive of culture, religion and race.



Transitional Housing

Transitional housing is short to medium term accommodation and is provided by Transitional Housing Managers (THM). THMs are usually Access Point providers. It is a program designed to help people who are homeless and whom require support. During your tenancy you will work on a long term housing plan and meet regularly with your support worker to address the factors that impacted on your stability.

To access transitional housing you will need to be assessed by an IAP worker at an Access Point. Be mindful that vacancies are limited so it is important you remain engaged with your IAP worker and be open to other options.

Transitional housing properties are furnished with essential items. Essential items generally include a fridge, washing machine, beds, sofa, dining table and chairs. These items remain the property of the housing agency. The housing agency is also responsible for gardening and

maintenance services. You will be responsible for utilities costs and may be eligible for a rebated (reduced) rent.

It is important to remember that just like any other rental you will have obligations as a tenant under the Residential Tenancies Act (RTA). In turn, the landlord will also have obligations under this Act. This means it is important to pay your rent, be a good neighbour and take care of the property to avoid problems, which could result in eviction. This also means your landlord must ensure they follow proper processes, provide a safe home, and observe your rights and privacy as a tenant.

If you are offered a transitional property, you will need to agree to being supported by a support worker for the entire duration of your tenancy. The support worker will help you explore suitable long term housing options and ways for you to access them. This may mean helping you plan for employment or return to work, enrolling in study, skills training and financial planning. Your support worker will also assist you to access specialist services including counselling, other mental health services, family support, domestic violence or drug and alcohol services.

You will also be expected to participate in regular tenancy reviews every 3 months. These reviews are organised to ensure your tenancy is going well. It is an opportunity to ensure you are receiving the support you need, and that you are meeting all obligations under the RTA and transitional housing program. Tenancy reviews also ensure that your landlord is providing quality services and that they too are meeting their obligations under the RTA.

Remember your landlord manages your tenancy. If at any time you feel unsafe you must contact the police. You should also discuss your safety concerns with both your support worker and housing worker as soon as you feel unsafe. They may be able to take steps to help you.

If you are unsure of your rights or feel that your rights have been breached by the community organisation you can contact the Homelessness Advocacy Service (HAS) on 1800 066 256 for advice, information or to lodge a complaint.

You can also contact Consumer Affairs Victoria on 1300 558 181 or Justice Connect on 1800 606 313 for information and advice on tenancy related matters. Justice Connect may also be able to represent you if you are required to attend the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT).

Public Housing

Public Housing is long term social housing provided by the government for low income earners. Eligibility criteria include income and asset limits. It is also referred to as ministry housing or Office of Housing (OOH). You may be eligible for a rebated rent and will be responsible for the utilities costs or service fees. Public housing can be high rise accommodation, low rise apartments, bedsits, adjoining units, townhouses or detached houses. When choosing your areas you can only choose broadband areas (areas that are grouped by suburbs).

If you do not have long term accommodation you can complete a general housing application, also called a Segment 4 application. Your application will be placed on a waiting list for public housing and, if you choose in your application, it will also be placed on the waiting list for long term community housing (housing for low to middle income earners provided by community organisations).

Be aware, waiting lists are long and you will not be offered a property for some time. It is important to keep your application active and up to date until you receive an offer. Make sure the OOH has your current contact details. If they contact you by phone or mail and cannot locate you, your application will automatically be removed. It is also important you inform the OOH of any changes to your application such as number of household members, changed broadband areas or specific property requirements due to physical health or safety issues.

Alternatively, you may be eligible for 'early housing' depending on your circumstances. You will need to speak with an IAP worker to determine if you meet the eligibility criteria for a Homeless with Support application. Alternatively you can contact OOH in your local area to discuss your eligibility.

Early housing categories include:

Homeless with Support (Segment One)

The Homeless with Support application is eligible to people who are homeless and who are receiving support through a designated support service. People who are escaping domestic violence will also be placed in the Segment 1 category. If you are eligible you will be assisted as first priority however this will still involve waiting times. Homeless with Support applicants receive only one property offer. If you refuse the offer without justifiable grounds your early housing status will be removed and your application will be placed on the general housing waiting list. Or, your application can be removed completely.

Supported Housing (Segment Two)

The Supported Housing application is eligible to people living in unsuitable housing that are receiving support through a Department of Health and Human Services program in the Disability, Children, Youth and Families, Mental Health or Aged Care divisions. People who require major or full modifications to their home are also eligible.

Special Housing Needs (Segment Three)

The Special Housing Needs application is eligible to people whose current housing situation is unsuitable for a variety of personal, health, family and safety reasons. For example, the property may be overcrowded or minor modifications are required due to health or disability needs. People who are homeless in the community but are awaiting allocation of a support placement are also eligible for the Segment 3 application. Once you have been allocated a support worker the application will be upgraded to a Homeless with Support application.

Community Housing

Community housing is an affordable and quality alternative to Public Housing. Eligibility criteria include income and asset limits. It is a type of social housing offering secure and affordable accommodation to people on low to moderate incomes. They are owned or managed by community organisations.

If you are offered a property designated to low income earners, you may be eligible for a rebated rent and the Commonwealth Rent Assistance. This makes the rent comparable to public housing. You will be responsible for utilities costs. Some community housing requires bond which you can apply for from the Office of Housing Bond Loan Scheme.

Community housing dwellings include detached houses, units, apartments and rooming houses.

You can also express your interest in being placed on a community housing wait list when completing your public housing application. Providers of community housing are required to allocate a certain percentage of properties to public housing applicants.

Housing Cooperatives

Housing Cooperatives are another type of social housing. Eligibility criteria include income and asset limits. The rent is affordable and you will be responsible for the utilities costs.

Living in a housing cooperative is slightly different to other housing programs. Tenants are members of the cooperative and are expected to assist with the management of the program. This may include attending monthly meetings, bookkeeping, assisting with other administration tasks or maintenance.

For more information you can contact the Housing Cooperative directly. They often hold information sessions. Some Housing Cooperatives are:

- Common Equity Housing Ltd (CEHL) (various areas) – 1800 353 669 or (03) 9208 0800
- Eastern Suburbs Rental Housing Cooperative – (03) 9888 8964
- Northern Geelong Rental Housing Cooperative Ltd – (03) 5277 9993
- South East Housing Cooperative – (03) 9706 8005
- United Housing Cooperative (inner North West) – (03) 9689 8157



43% of people experiencing homelessness in Victoria are women. The most common reason for homelessness is domestic violence and relationship issues.¹

¹Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Census of Population and Housing: Estimating Homelessness 2011*, (2012)

Private Rental

Private Rental is a property you rent in the private rental market. This can include rental of a house, bungalow, caravan, unit, flat or shared accommodation. You will sign a lease with the Real Estate Agent or Landlord and enter into an agreement that will include the rent payable each month and your obligations as a tenant. Leases are generally signed for periods of 12 months. Rent is not rebated or reduced and will be set according to the private rental market for the area you reside in. You will need to pay 4 weeks rent in advance plus bond. You may be eligible for the Office of Housing Bond Loan Scheme.

Rent increases may occur annually however in accordance with the Residential Tenancies Act you must be notified in writing. If you believe the increase is excessive you should contact Consumer Affairs Victoria immediately on 1800 558 181 for advice.

Securing a private rental property can be tricky if you have not rented before or if you have a history of eviction or unemployment. It is still possible!

Where to Search for Private Rental Properties

- Your local paper has a good listing of current properties for rent. Look under the 'Share' or 'To Let' columns.
- The Age newspaper (Wednesday and Saturday editions)
- You can drop into your local real estate agency and pick up a current rental list.
- Popular websites include www.domain.com.au, www.realestate.com.au, www.gumtree.com.au and www.flatmates.com.au.

Application for Private Rental

The private rental market can be competitive but there are things you can do to increase your chances of successfully securing a property. Some helpful tips include:

- Be on time for property inspections and appointments.
- Dress neatly and smartly when approaching the real estate agency.
- Be polite and honest when you speak to the real estate agent.
- Make sure your application is neat and answers all questions.
- Obtain a reference letter from a previous landlord (including community agencies) to demonstrate you maintained the property well and had a good rental history.
- Obtain a character reference letter from a family or friend.
- Prepare copies of your documents in advance e.g. ID, payslips, 2 references, pet reference if applicable, previous rent ledgers, and proof of employment.
- Organise your first month's rent and know the eligibility criteria and steps to take to apply for the OOH bond loan. Once you secure a property you can lodge your application immediately.
- Access the Private Rental Brokerage Programs for financial assistance and advocacy.
- Follow up if you haven't heard from the agent after 48 hours of lodging your private rental application.

Remember you also have rights. It is unlawful for a landlord or real estate agent to discriminate against an applicant for reasons such as race, religion, children, relationship status and sexual orientation. You can contact the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission on 1300 292 153 for more information. Or, if you feel you have been discriminated against you can lodge a complaint with the Victorian Ombudsman by calling 1800 806 314.

Affordability

It is important to search for private rental properties that are affordable. The Office of Housing deems a property affordable if the weekly rent is less than 55% of your income. A successful tenancy involves budgeting for expenses. Remember to prioritise your rental payments as the RTA allows for landlords to take steps to reclaim the property if you are 14 days in arrears (7 days if residing in rooming house). You may prefer to setup automatic rental payments but be mindful some real estate agents charge fees for this service.

You can obtain a list of affordable private rental properties by suburb at the Department of Health and Human Services website at www.dhs.vic.gov.au. Search for 'current rental reports'. There will be a table at the end of the report that lists the median rents by suburb.

Below is a table with suggested affordable weekly rental amounts if you are in receipt of Newstart Allowance (NSA) or Parenting Payment (PP):

	Single NSA	Single parent NSA 1 Child	Single parent NSA 2 Children	Single parent PP 1 Child	Single parent PP 2 Child
Weekly income¹	\$330	\$509	\$601	\$593	\$685
Affordable weekly rent²	\$181.50	\$279.95	\$330.55	\$326.15	\$376.75

¹This is an estimate only. Income is based on maximum rate of NSA/PP, energy supplement, FTB A and B and rent assistance. It is assumed parent has 100% care of child/ren and has no assessable assets or income. It does not take into account individual circumstances and does not include other payments.

²Affordable weekly rent is calculated at 55% of weekly income. This is in accordance with OOH Bond Loan Scheme.

What Help is Available?

Private Rental Brokerage Program (PRBP) – some agencies provide Private Rental Brokerage Programs. The PRBP worker can help you with rental applications, provide advice and information about how to successfully secure a property, and inform you of your rights as a renter. The PRB program can also assist you financially to help establish the tenancy. Funds can be used for part of the rent in advance or bond (if you are not eligible for the Office of Housing Bond Loan Scheme). It is important to contact the PRB program prior to signing or applying for a lease to check your eligibility and availability of the program.

Bond Loan – when you secure a rental property you can apply to Office of Housing for a bond loan. Office of Housing will assess your eligibility for all or part of the bond. The bond will be paid directly to the Residential Tenancies Bond Authority on your behalf. To be successful, you must be a lease holder and the weekly rent must be less than 55% of your total household income. You must also meet the income and asset criteria.

When you leave the property, the bond money will be returned directly to OOH, only if the landlord makes no claim to the bond. The landlord can make claim to all or part of the bond for things such as rental arrears, cleaning or property damage. If you disagree with the bond claim made by the landlord you can contact Consumer Affairs Victoria for advice. You must do this

immediately and attend VCAT to dispute the claims. If VCAT awards the bond claim to the landlord this means you will be liable to repay the Office of Housing bond loan debt.

Housing Establishment Funds – Access Points may also assist with rent in advance. This is dependent on the same eligibility criteria as the OOH Bond Loan Scheme. Assistance is also dependent on the availability of funds and assistance is often limited to only 1 to 2 weeks rent in advance.

COMMUNITY HOUSING STANDARDS

Community housing organisations that own or manage long term community housing, rooming house accommodation, cooperative housing or transitional housing, are experienced in responding to diverse community needs. Some agencies provide community development activities and offer referral services. They are governed by legal acts and legislation including the Residential Tenancies Act, the Privacy Act and Department of Health and Human Service standards.

All community housing organisations provide a high standard of tenancy management particularly for tenants with high support needs.

Community housing providers are closely monitored by a regulatory body, the Housing Registrar, to ensure standards are maintained. A list of registered housing associations and providers can be obtained on the Housing Registrar website at www.housingregistrar.vic.gov.au. There are currently 8 registered housing associations in Victoria and 34 registered housing providers.

If you have an issue that cannot be resolved between you and your community agency, you can contact the Homelessness Advocacy Service on 1800 066 256 for information and advice, or to lodge a complaint.

FAMILY VIOLENCE

Family or domestic violence is abusive behaviour that is controlling and intimidating. It includes:

- Physical assault
- Sexual assault
- Emotional abuse
- Psychological abuse
- Financial abuse
- Stalking and monitoring your behaviour
- Isolating you from family and friends
- Harming or threatening to harm children, other family members or pets

It is also known as intimate partner violence however family violence can occur in different types of relationships. It can occur between a child and parent, child and grandparent, aunt and niece, husband and wife, or girlfriend and boyfriend.

Family violence can occur regardless of age, religion, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, economic status, parental status, or whether you are living together or separately.

Statistics however do show that the majority of victims of family violence are women:

- 1 in 3 women have experienced physical violence
- 1 in 4 women have experienced emotional abuse
- 1 in 5 women have experienced sexual violence.²

It has also been shown that family violence is perpetrated mostly by current or former male partners in the home.³

If you are experiencing family violence and need accommodation and support, contact SafeSteps on 1800 015 188. SafeSteps can assist with access to high security refuge, and referrals to housing and support agencies. You can also contact 1800 RESPECT (1800 737 732) for advice, counselling, information and referrals. Both services are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Tenancy Rights and Family Violence

The RTA has been modified to provide people affected by family violence an alternative to leaving the home. If you are in need of protection the police can apply for a 'family violence safety notice' and include an *exclusion condition*. The exclusion condition means the perpetrator must leave the home immediately. The police can charge the perpetrator if he or she breaks any conditions on the notice.

The family violence safety notice and any interim orders are temporary. They are valid until the first mention (hearing) date where you may seek a formal order to be put in place.

If there is an exclusion condition on any type of order, you have legal rights to change the locks, take over the lease or end the lease. Contact Tenants Union of Victoria on (03) 9416 2577 or Consumer Affairs Victoria (CAV) on 1300 558 181 for more information.

Every woman and child has the right to Freedom and Safety

² Australian Bureau of Statistics, 4906.0 – *Personal Safety, Australia, 2012*, (2013)

³ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 4906.0.

HOMELESSNESS ASSISTANCE CONTACTS

For homeless and support assistance call the 24 hour number (free call from landline or public phone):

1800 825 955

You will be directed to the Access Point closest to you. If your call is outside of business hours you will be directed to the Salvation Army Crisis Service.

After Hours Assistance

Salvation Army Crisis Centre 1800 627 727
(free call from landline or public phone, 24 hours, 7 days a week)

Family Violence Assistance

If you are experiencing family violence you can contact SafeSteps (family violence response centre). SafeSteps provides access to high security refuge, crisis telephone counselling, information, support and referrals. They are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. You can also visit their website for more information. All services are confidential.

1800 015 188
(free call from landline or public phone, 24 hours, 7 days a week)
www.safesteps.org.au

SPECIALIST SERVICES

Name	Address	Phone	Hours of operation
Women's Housing Ltd	Suite 1, Level 1, 21 Cremorne St, Cremorne	(03) 9412 6868	Mon-Fri 9am-5pm
Melbourne Youth Support Services	19 King St, Melbourne	(03) 9614 3688	Mon-Fri 9am-8pm Weekends & Public Holidays 10am-6pm

HOMELESSNESS SUPPORT SERVICES (Access Points are highlighted in bold)

Town/ suburb	Name	Address	Phone	Hours of operation
Bacchus Marsh	CAFS Moorabool	52 Grant St, Bacchus Marsh	(03) 5367 9900	Mon-Fri 9am-5pm
Bairnsdale	Community Housing Ltd	4 Riviera Plaza, Bairnsdale	(03) 5152 8933	Mon-Fri 9am-5pm

Bairnsdale	Gippsland & East Gippsland Aboriginal Co-op, Bairnsdale - Meerindoo Youth Accommodation Service - young people only	104 Day St, Bairnsdale	(03) 5152 2188	Mon-Fri 9am-5pm
Ballarat	Uniting Care	105 Dana St, Ballarat	(03) 5332 1286	Mon-Fri 9am-5pm
Belmont	SalvoConnect	2A Settlement Rd, Belmont	(03) 5244 9500	Mon-Fri 9am-5pm
Bendigo	Bendigo & District Aboriginal Co-operative - Indigenous people only	13-15 Forest St, Bendigo	(03) 5442 4947	Mon-Fri 9am-5pm
Bendigo	Centre for Non Violence, Family Violence - women & children experiencing family violence only	18 Forest St, Bendigo	(03) 5430 3000	Mon-Fri 9am-5pm
Bendigo	Haven	10-16 Forest St, Bendigo	(03) 5444 9000	Mon-Fri 9am-5pm
Bendigo	St Lukes Anglicare Youth - young people only	175-187 Hargreaves St, Bendigo	(03) 5440 1100	Mon-Fri 9am-5pm
Bendigo	St Lukes Whirrakee - people experiencing mental health issues only	32 Forest St, Bendigo	(03) 5448 1100	Mon-Fri 9am-5pm
Box Hill	Community Housing (Vic) Ltd	26-28 Prospect St, Box Hill	(03) 9856 0050	Mon-Fri 9am-5pm
Broadford	Mitchell Community Health Service - women & children experiencing family violence only	72 Ferguson St, Broadford	(03) 5784 5555 or 1300 773 352	Mon-Fri 9am-5pm
Castlemaine	Castlemaine & District Accommodation Resource Group	12 Lyttleton St, Castlemaine	(03) 5472 4299	Mon-Fri 9am-5pm
Cheltenham	Launch Housing Cheltenham	11 Chesterville Rd, Cheltenham	(03) 9556 5777	Mon-Fri 9am-5pm
Colac	SalvoConnect	100 Broomfield St, Colac	(03) 5231 4200	Mon-Fri 9am-5pm
Collingwood	Launch Housing Collingwood	68 Oxford St, Collingwood	(03) 9288 9611 or 1800 048 325	Mon-Fri 9am-5pm

Dandenong	WAYSS Ltd	294 - 300 Thomas Street, Dandenong	(03) 9791 6111	Mon-Fri 9am-5pm
Daylesford	CAFS Daylesford	13 Hospital St, Daylesford	(03) 5348 8200	Mon-Fri 9am-5pm
Echuca	Njernda Aboriginal Cooperation - Indigenous people only	86 Hare St, Echuca	(03) 5480 6252	Mon-Fri 9am-5pm
Echuca	St Lukes Anglicare	51-55 Heygarth St, Echuca	(03) 5482 0900	Mon-Fri 9am-5pm
Footscray	Yarra Community Housing	112-122 Victoria St, Footscray	(03) 9689 2777	Mon-Fri 9am-5pm
Frankston	Peninsula Youth & Family Services	37 Ross Smith Ave, Frankston	(03) 9784 5000 or (03) 9784 5050	Mon-Fri 9am-5pm
Geelong West	Barwon Youth - Young people only	12 Halstead Place, Geelong West	(03) 5221 4466	Mon-Fri 9am-5pm
Glenroy	VincentCare Victoria, Glenroy Hub	175 Glenroy Rd, Glenroy	(03) 9304 0100	Mon-Fri 9am-5pm
Hamilton	SalvoConnect	246 Gray St, Hamilton	(03) 5572 5822	Mon-Fri 9am-5pm
Hawthorn	Salvation Army Eastcare	16 Church St, Hawthorn	(03) 9851 7888	Mon-Fri 9am-5pm
Horsham	Wimmera Uniting Care	185 Baillie St, Horsham	(03) 5362 4000	Mon-Fri 9am-5pm
Kerang	Northern District Community Health	24 Fitzroy St, Kerang	(03) 5451 0200	Mon-Fri 9am-5pm
Kyabram	Haven	21 Lake Rd, Kyabram	(03) 5852 0000	Mon-Fri 9am-5pm
Kyneton	Cobaw Community Health Centre	47 High St, Kyneton	(03) 5421 1666	Mon-Fri 9am-5pm
Lakes Entrance	Gippsland Lakes Community Health Service	18 Jemmeson St, Lakes Entrance	(03) 5155 8300	Mon-Fri 9am-5pm
Leongatha	GippsCare Social Housing Services	51A McCartin St, Leongatha	(03) 5662 4502	Mon-Fri 9am-5pm
Lilydale	Anchor Inc	7-9 John St, Lilydale	(03) 9760 6400	Mon-Fri 9am-5pm
Mallacoota	Mallacoota District Health Support Service	Corner Genoa Road and Mattsson Streets, Mallacoota	(03) 5158 0243	Mon-Fri 9am-5pm
Maryborough	Maryborough District Health Service	75 Clarendon St, Maryborough	(03) 5461 0400	Mon-Fri 9am-5pm

Melton	Salvation Army Social Housing and Support Service Network Melton outpost	Shire of Melton Civic Centre, 232 High Street, Melton	(03) 9747 7200	Wed 1-5pm; Tues, Thurs, Fri 9am-5pm
Mildura	Haven; Home, Safe	143 Lime St, Mildura	(03) 5018 4200	Mon-Fri 9am-5pm
Mildura	Mallee Family Care	1-3 Vidovic Ave, Mildura	(03) 5021 2885	Mon-Fri 9am-5pm
Mildura	Mallee Sexual Assault Unit & Domestic Violence Service - women & children experiencing family violence only	144-146 Lime St, Mildura	(03) 5021 2130	Mon-Fri 9am-5pm
Mildura	Mildura Aboriginal Cooperation - Indigenous people only	120 Madden Ave, Mildura	(03) 5022 1852	Mon-Fri 9am-5pm
Morwell	Community Housing Ltd Morwell	12-14 Church St, Morwell	(03) 5120 4800	Mon-Fri 9am-5pm
Morwell	Kurnai Youth Homelessness Service - Indigenous Youth only VACCA	25 Rintoull St, Morwell	(03) 5135 6055	Mon-Fri 9am-5pm
Orbost	Orbost Regional Health	107 Boundary Rd, Orbost	(03) 5154 6666	Mon-Fri 9am-5pm
Portland	Brophy Family & Youth Services/SalvoConnect	5 Gawler St, Portland	(03) 5523 2411	Mon-Fri 9am-5pm
Preston	Haven; Home, Safe	52-56 Mary St, Preston	(03) 9479 0700	Mon-Fri 9am-5pm
Ringwood	Wesley Mission Vic	291A Maroondah Highway, Ringwood	(03) 8870 4020	Mon-Fri 9am-5pm
Robinvale	Haven; Home, Safe	52 Herbert St, Robinvale	(03) 5026 4901	Mon-Fri 9am-5pm
Robinvale	Murray Valley Aboriginal Co-operative - Indigenous people only	87 Latje Rd, Robinvale	(03) 5026 3353	Mon-Fri 9am-5pm
Sale	Community Housing Ltd	111 Raymond St, Sale	(03) 5143 2379	Mon-Wed 10am-4pm
Sale	Uniting Care Gippsland	126 Raymond St, Sale	(03) 5143 2379	Thur-Fri 9am-5pm
Seymour	Rural Housing Network Ltd	12A Tallarook St, Seymour	(03) 5735 2000	Mon-Fri 9am-5pm

Shepparton	Marian Community - women and children experiencing family violence only	PO Box 9500, Shepparton	(03) 5821 9458 or 1800 015 188 (after hours)	Mon-Fri 9am-5pm
Shepparton	Rural Housing Network Ltd	43b Wyndham St, Shepparton	(03) 5833 1000	Mon-Fri 9am-5pm
St Kilda	Launch Housing St Kilda	122 Chapel St, St Kilda	(03) 9537 7711	Mon-Fri 9am-5pm
St Kilda	Salvation Army Crisis Centre	29 Grey Street, St Kilda	1800 627 727 or (03) 9536 7730	9am to 11pm, 7 days a week
Stawell	Wimmera Uniting Care	8-22 Patrick St, Stawell	(03) 5358 7400	Mon-Fri 9am-5pm
Sunshine	Salvation Army Social Housing and Support Service Network	6/147 Harvester Rd, Sunshine	(03) 9312 5424	Mon-Fri 9am-5pm
Swan Hill	Mallee Sexual Assault Unit & Domestic Violence Service - women & children experiencing family violence only	14-18 McCallum St, Swan Hill	(03) 5033 1899	Mon-Fri 9am-5pm
Swan Hill	Swan Hill Aboriginal Services - Indigenous people only	70 Nyah Rd, Swan Hill	(03) 5032 5277	Mon-Fri 9am-5pm
Swan Hill	Malley Family Care	229 Beveridge St, Swan Hill	(03) 5032 4479	Mon-Fri 9am-5pm
Wangaratta	Centre Against Violence	Wangaratta	(03) 5722 2203 or 1800 806 292	Mon-Fri 9am-5pm (services Benalla)
Wangaratta	North East Support & Action & for Youth Inc - young people only	86-90 Rowan St, Wangaratta	(03) 5720 2201	Mon-Fri 9am-5pm
Wangaratta	Rural Housing Network Ltd	40-42 Rowan St, Wangaratta	(03) 5722 8000	Mon-Fri 9am-5pm
Wantirna South	Uniting Care Harrison	Knox Ozone, 1012 Little Burwood Highway, Wantirna South	(03) 9871 8700	Mon-Fri 9am-5pm
Warragul	GippsCare Social Housing Services & Quantum Support Services	36 Williams St, Warragul	(03) 5622 7000	Mon-Fri 9am-5pm

Warrnambool	Brophy Family & Youth Services - young people only	210 Timor St, Warrnambool	(03) 5561 8888	Mon-Fri 9am-5pm
Warrnambool	SalvoConnect	71 Kepler St, Warrnambool	(03) 5561 6844	Mon-Fri 9am-5pm
Werribee	Yarra Community Housing Werribee outpost	Level 1, 1-13 Watton St, Werribee	(03) 9742 6452	Mon-Fri 9am-5pm
Windsor	Ngwala - Indigenous people only	93 Wellington St, Windsor	(03) 9510 3233	Mon-Fri 9am-5pm
Wodonga	Centre Against Violence	Wodonga	(03) 5722 2203 or 1800 806 292	Mon-Thurs 9am-5pm (appointment only)
Wodonga	Junction Support Service – Young people	155 Melbourne Rd OR PO Box 1490, Wodonga	(02) 6043 7400	Mon-Fri 9am-5pm
Wodonga	Rural Housing Network Ltd	82 High St, Wodonga	(02) 6055 9000	Mon-Fri 9am-5pm
Yarram	Yarram & District Health Service Wellington	Baker's Community Centre, 121 Commercial Rd, Yarram	(03) 5182 0270	Mon-Fri

OFFICE OF HOUSING CONTACTS

Area	Address	Phone
Ararat	70 High Street, Ararat 3377	(03) 5352 0100
Bairnsdale	7 Service Street, Bairnsdale 3875	(03) 5150 4500
Ballarat	State Government Offices Corner of Mair and Doveton Street, Ballarat 3353	(03) 5333 6530
Ballarat	Armstrong Street Office 35 Armstrong Street, Ballarat South 3353	(03) 5333 6530
Benalla	26 Church Street, Benalla 3672	(03) 5761 1222
Bendigo	74-78 Queen Street, Bendigo 3550	(03) 5434 5555
Box Hill	883 Whitehorse Road, Box Hill 3128	1300 360 452
Broadmeadows	56-58 Coleraine Street, Broadmeadows 3047	(03) 9309 1255
Cheltenham	4-10 Jamieson Street, Cheltenham 3192	1300 555 526
Colac	54B Bromfield Street, Colac 3250	(03) 5231 4350
Collingwood	229 Hoddle Street, Collingwood 3066	(03) 9417 5144
Dandenong	165-169 Thomas Street, Dandenong 3175	1300 555 526
Echuca	128 Hare Street, Echuca, 3564	(03) 5482 1866
Fitzroy	145 Smith Street, Fitzroy 3065	1300 360 408

Footscray	71 Moreland Street, Footscray 3011	1300 360 462
Frankston	431 Nepean Hwy, Frankston 3199	(03) 9784 3100
Geelong	Level 2, State Government Offices, Corner Little Malop and Fenwick Street, Geelong 3220	(03) 5226 4540
Hamilton	260 Gray Street, Hamilton 3300	(03) 5551 3299
Horsham	21 McLachlan Street, Horsham	(03) 5381 9777
Leongatha	9b Bruce Street, Leongatha 3853	(03) 5662 4311
Mildura	253 Eleventh Street, Mildura 3500	(03) 5022 3111
Morwell	9-11 Hazelwood Road, Morwell 3840	(03) 5136 2400
Portland	16 Julia Street, Portland 3305	(03) 5523 9999
Preston	679 High Street, Preston 3072	1300 664 977
Richmond	112 Elizabeth Street, Richmond 3121	(03) 9429 5174
Sale	150 York Street, Sale 3850	(03) 5144 9100
Seymour	Level 1, 8-10 Elizabeth Street, Seymour 3660	(03) 5771 1600
Shepparton	163-167 Welsford Street, Shepparton 3630	(03) 5832 1500
Stawell	54 Main Street, Stawell	(03) 5358 4374
Sunshine	16-18 Hertford Road, Sunshine 3020	(03) 9229 4100
Swan Hill	210 Beveridge Street, Swan Hill 3585	(03) 5032 0100
Traralgon	8-12 Seymour Street, Traralgon 3844	(03) 5177 2500
Wangaratta	43 - 47 Rowan Street, Wangaratta 3677	(03) 5722 0555
Warragul	70 Smith Street, Warragul, 3820	(03) 5624 0600
Warrnambool	Shop 2, 109 Lava Street, Warrnambool 3280	(03) 5561 9444
Wodonga	55 Hovell Street, Wodonga 3690	(02) 6055 7777

OTHER USEFUL CONTACTS

Service Name	Description	Website	Phone
1800 RESPECT	National counselling helpline, information and support. Website also offers online counselling. 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.	www.1800respect.org.au	1800 737 732
Aboriginal Family Violence Prevention and Legal Service Victoria	Legal services, advice and information to survivors of family violence and sexual assault.	www.fvpls.org	1800 105 303

Aboriginal Hostels Limited	Directory of hostels in WA, QLD, top end, SA, VIC and NSW for Aboriginal people. Western Australia office Top end office Queensland office South Eastern office Southern Central office	www.ahl.gov.au	 (08) 9479 5953 (08) 8947 0797 (07) 4051 4588 (02) 9310 2777 (08) 8952 6544
Aboriginal Housing Victoria	Not for profit provider of housing for aboriginal people	www.ahvic.org.au	(03) 9403 2100
Australian Red Cross	Provides support and programs for people experiencing homelessness, mental health, impact of imprisonment and vulnerable older persons. Also provides support to asylum seekers and immigrants.	www.redcross.org.au	1800 131 701 (Victoria)
Australian Vietnamese Women's Welfare Association	Prisoner support program, drug and alcohol counselling, gambling counselling, family programs. Richmond office Braybrook office	www.avwa.org.au	 (03) 9428 9078 (03) 9396 1922
Beyond Blue	Telephone and online counselling, advice and referrals for people with mental illness. 24 hours, 7 days a week. The website also contains a lot of useful information about mental health.	www.beyondblue.org.au	1300 224 636
Carers Australia	Counselling, advice, information and support programs for carers.	www.carersaustralia.com.au	1800 242 636
Centre Against Sexual Assault (CASA)	Victorian Sexual Assault Crisis Line. Provides information, advocacy and counselling to victims of past and recent sexual assault. 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.	www.casa.org.au	1800 806 292

Centrelink	For information about payments and to update your details.	www.humanservices.gov.au	
	Carers		13 27 17
	Disability		13 27 17
	Families		13 61 50
	Indigenous Australians		1800 057 111
	Job Seeker (inc. Newstart)		13 28 50
	Job Seeker Youth Allowance		13 24 90
	Jobs, Education & Training (JET)		13 61 50
	Migrants, Refugees & Visitors		13 28 50
	Older Australians		13 23 00
	Students, Trainees & Youth		13 24 90
Child Protection Crisis Line	After hours and weekend crisis line to report immediate safety concerns of a child. 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.		13 12 78
Child Support	Applying for child support and general enquiries.	www.humanservices.gov.au	13 12 72
Consumer Affairs Victoria (CAV)	For information, advice, dispute resolution and complaints lodgment. Issues include renting, consumer, fair trading, business, scams, trades people and motor vehicle. 9am–5pm Mon–Fri.	www.consumer.vic.gov.au	1300 558 181
Counselling Online (Direct Line)	Drug and alcohol counselling and referrals for people using drugs and alcohol. Also provides support to family and friends. 24 hours, 7 days a week.	www.counsellingonline.org.au	1800 888 236
Court Network Victoria	Court support, information and referrals.	www.courtnetwork.com.au	1800 571 239
Domestic Violence Resource Centre	Provider of information, knowledge centre and training programs of domestic violence. If you need counselling or support please call 1800 RESPECT.	www.dvrcv.org.au	(03) 9486 9866
E-Headspace	Telephone and online counselling, information and advice for young people aged 12–25 with mental health issues. Issues can include bullying, drugs and alcohol, isolation, relationships, friendships, work and study. 9am–1am, 7 days a week. There are also Headspace centres where you can receive face-to-face support.	www.eheadspace.org.au	1800 650 890

Elizabeth Morgan House Aboriginal Women's Services	Support to Aboriginal women and children experiencing family violence including outreach, case management, prisoner program, counselling.		(03) 9482 5744
Family Relationship Advice Line	Information, advice and referrals for people affected by family, relationship or separation issues including parents, grandparents, children, step-parents and friends. 8am–8pm Mon–Fri, 10am–4pm Sat.	www.familyrelationships.gov.au	1800 050 321
Financial Counselling	For information and support to help with budgeting, expenses and debt (financial counsellors are not financial advisors). Brimbank-Melton Port Phillip, Bayside, Glen Eira, Kingston, Frankston, Mornington Peninsula.	www.financialcounsellingaustralia.org.au	1800 007 007 1300 786 696 1300 765 595
Good Shepherd	No Interest Loans Scheme (NILS) and StepUp low interest loans.	www.goodshepvic.org.au	(03) 9495 9600
Health Services Commissioner	Receives and resolves complaints about health services.	www.health.vic.gov.au	1300 582 113
Homelessness Advocacy Service (HAS)	Advocacy and information about your rights accessing and receiving services from a homelessness accommodation support service. You can also lodge a complaint with HAS.	www.chp.org.au	1800 066 256
Interpreting Service (TIS)	Access phone interpreters National Relay Service: Speak and listen National Relay Service: TTY/voice calls		13 14 50 1300 555 727 133 677
Justice Connect	Legal assistance for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Also provides debt and tenancy legal help for prisoners and tenancy legal help for women. Pro bono legal assistance for some matters only.		1800 606 313 (03) 8636 4400
Kids Helpline	Telephone and online counselling for children aged 5–25 years. 24 hours, 7 days a week.	www.kidshelpline.com.au	1800 551 800

Legal Aid Victoria	Free legal advice. 8:45am–5:15pm Mon–Fri.	www.legalaid.vic.gov.au	1300 792 387
Life Line	Telephone and online crisis counselling. 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.	www.lifeline.org.au	13 11 14
Margaret Tucker Hostel	Supported shared accommodation for homeless Aboriginal women aged 15–18 years.	www.margarettucker.org	(03) 9482 1161
Maternal and Child Health Line	Information, support and guidance regarding child, mother and family health. Also includes help with nutrition, parenting and breast feeding. 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.		13 22 29
Medicare	General enquiries.	www.humanservices.gov.au	13 20 11
Mens Line Australia	Telephone and online counselling, support, advice and information for men. 24 hours, 7 days a week.	www.mensline.org.au	1300 789 978
Money Smart	Online resource with lots of information and tools to help manage money and debt.	www.moneysmart.gov.au	
Nurse On Call	Health advice from a registered nurse. 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.		1300 606 024
Ombudsman, Victoria	Lodge a complaint with the Ombudsman if you are unhappy about the way you have been treated by a state government department, statutory authority, local council or private agency that carries out government duties.	www.ombudsman.vic.gov.au	1800 806 314 or (03) 9613 6222
Ombudsman, Energy and Water	Lodge a complaint if you have a dispute with the water, electricity or gas company that has not been resolved.	www.ewov.com.au	1800 500 509
Parent Line Victoria	Telephone counselling for parents and carers of children 0–18 years. 8am–midnight, 7 days a week.		13 22 89
Poisons Information Centre	Information and advice if someone has taken a poison.	www.austin.org.au/poisons	13 11 26
SafeSteps	Family violence crisis response. Crisis telephone counselling, support and refuge placement. Referrals to support and housing providers. 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.	www.safesteps.org.au	1800 015 188

Seniors Rights Victoria	Telephone support, information, advice and free specialist legal service for people experiencing elder abuse.	www.seniorsrights.org.au	1300 368 821
Spectrum Migrant Resource Centre	Support programs for newly arrived or established migrants and refugees. Dallas Preston Sunshine	www.spectrumvic.org.au	(03) 9301 7400 (03) 9496 0200 (03) 9300 8600
Suicide Line	Telephone support and counselling if you are feeling suicidal. 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.	www.suicideline.org.au	1300 651 251
Tenants Union of Victoria	Tenancy advice and information. Can also represent you at VCAT if eligible.		(03) 9416 2577
Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service (VALS)	Free legal advice and representation for the Koori community.	www.vals.org.au	1800 064 865
Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission	Information on discrimination, victimisation, sexual harassment, racial or religious vilification, equal opportunity and Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities. For complaints about breaches of the Charter contact Victorian Ombudsman.	www.humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au	1300 292 153
Victims of Crime	Provides support and financial assistance to people who have been victims of crime. Also provides information about your rights, how courts work and advice about reporting a crime. 8am – 7pm, 7 days a week.	www.victimsofcrime.vic.gov.au	1800 819 817
Women's Information & Referral Exchange (WIRE)	Women's telephone support, information and referrals.	www.wire.org.au	1300 134 130
Women's Legal Service Victoria	Free legal advice and representation for women experiencing family violence.	www.womenslegal.org.au	1800 133 302