TENANT

INFORMATION KIT

Updated February 2017

Options Youth Housing – A Project of Caretakers Cottage

Options Youth Housing

CARETAKERS COTTAGE

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PROGRAM INFORMATION

The service was established in 1982 and was incorporated as Options Youth Housing in 1987. In 2007, Options was integrated with Caretakers Cottage Incorporated, now known as Caretakers Youth Support Services. Options now functions as an important program within Caretakers' various services for homeless young people.

Options Youth Housing is a Specialist Homelessness Service. On a basic level this means that SHS provides the framework for practice for Options as an accommodation and support service as well as providing funding for Options core work from the Federal and State Government funding body and administered by Community Services (formerly DoCS).

This funding covers the overall running of the program; in order to run extra programs outside of daily operations, funding is sought through grants and donations.

Options currently has over 30 properties, in a mixture of single bed units, bed sits and share houses. Options covers the South-East and Eastern suburbs of Sydney from Bondi to Mascot. Options has placements for up to 55 young people at any one time, as well as providing outreach support for clients after exiting the Program if required. Options works in partnership with Bridge Housing and St George Community Housing in providing tenancy management to young people in need.

What Does Options Do?

Options Youth Housing is a semi-independent, transitional housing program for young people facing homelessness and aged 16 to 25. At Options we regard a young person to be facing homelessness if they have (or are at risk of having) no place to live, or if they are living in circumstances that seriously impact on their wellbeing and development.

At Options, semi-independent housing means that young people live independently in a house/unit which they hold a lease on with outreach supervision and support provided by an Options case worker. This support includes affordable rent, individual casework support and property management.

Options casework approach is structured to assist young people to identify and plan for goals that address educational or vocational interests, life skills and issues that might be an obstacle to self-development. Casework also involves practical support for young people, such as advocacy and assistance with linking into other community resources. The overriding objective of casework planning is that clients develop the knowledge and life skills to enable a successful transition into, and the management of, more independent living circumstances.

How Do I Know If I Am Eligible for Options Youth Housing?

The program is suited to young people that are ready to live independent of adult supervision on a daily basis, without there being a potential for health and safety risks to themselves, housemates or neighbours.

To be eligible for Options Youth Housing a young person:

- is aged 16 – 25
- is homeless; this includes living in an accommodation situation that is inadequate to the developmental needs of a young person
- does not require 24-hour support
- does not have an alcohol or other drug issue that could interfere with shared living or that requires frequent monitoring
- does not have a mental health issue that could interfere with shared living or that requires frequent monitoring
- does not have any legal offences which could present a risk in the context of shared living
- does not have an anger management issue that could interfere with shared living
- has the goal to become more independent through educational and/or employment activities
- is open to participate in Options case management process
- has a regular source of income, which does not exceed $595 (gross) per week
- can pay $100 bond plus two weeks rent prior to moving in
- is able to organise basic bedroom furniture prior to moving in

How Do I Apply for Options Youth Housing?

Options intake process involves initial phone contact from the interested young person, or community organisation acting on the young person's behalf or a completed referral form. If Options does not have a vacancy at the time, then the young person is registered as needing housing and an indication of the possibility of future housing will be given and alternative accommodation options will be provided.

If Options does have a vacancy, then a face-to-face interview is offered to determine the suitability of Options for the young person and vice-versa.

Options Policies

Options is primarily a case management support organisation, NOT an affordable accommodation program however as Options also provides accommodation, we operate under the NSW Residential Tenancies Act 2010, therefore all clients who are provided with Options housing sign a formal lease and tenancy agreement with one of our supporting community housing providers. If the young person breaches any of the residential tenancy agreement guidelines, usual procedures for rental properties will take place.

Options clients are also required to sign a Support Agreement which covers the case management side of the program as well as the program guidelines.

You will be given a copy of both of these documents upon acceptance into the program.

Rent is determined as per the Housing NSW Community Housing Division policies. More details on how rent is calculated can be found at:

http://www.housing.nsw.gov.au/NR/rdonlyres/619B3405-E1AF-47F5-8B8A-9198127449B7/0/CommunityHousingRentPolicy.pdf

CONTACT/OFFICE HOURS

Options main office is located at:

Office: 77 Newland Street
Bondi Junction, NSW 2022

Phone: (02) 9388 9341

Email: optionsyouth@caretakers.org.au

Website: www.caretakers.org.au

Office Hours: Mon-Fri, 9am – 5pm

We have an answering machine to take calls when staff are out of the office, alternatively you can call the mobile phone or send an email.

Options is open year-round and closes on only on weekends and public holidays.

BEING A CLIENT WITH OPTIONS YOUTH HOUSING

Options is primarily a case management support organisation and therefore view all our young people as 'clients' rather than tenants. A **client** is a person who engages the professional advice or services of another.

As a **client** of Options you have rights and responsibilities; which are further outlined in the Options Support Agreement.

As a client you have the right to:

- Respect and privacy of information you provide to Options Youth Housing
- Access to all records and files kept concerning you
- Be treated with dignity and respect at all times
- A non-judgmental service
- Lodge a complaint/grievance with the Program Manager, Executive Officer or Management Committee if you are unhappy with the service or treatment you are receiving from Options
- Be actively involved and informed in all levels of your case management care plan
- Feel safe in your own home

As a client you have a responsibility to:

- Adhere to the Options Support Agreement
- Be actively involved in all areas of your case management care plan
- Attend all case meetings, house meetings, dispute resolution meetings and all other meetings as required
- Be actively working on achieving goals e.g./ employment, education, personal development
- Be pro-active in your involvement and engagement to case work through the entirety of your placement

BEING A TENANT WITH BRIDGE HOUSING UNDER OPTIONS

Options has two external community housing agencies who manage the properties for Options to Options, therefore Options does not provide or manage the properties and/or the individual tenancies. These agencies are:

- Bridge Housing Limited
- St George Community Housing

A **tenant** is someone who holds a lease in their name on a property for a period of time.

As a **tenant** at Options you have rights and responsibilities. When signing a tenancy agreement, you will be given a copy of the *Tenant Checklist* which details the rights and responsibilities of tenancy. Briefly:

The tenant agrees to:

- Follow conditions as outlined in the NSW Residential Tenancy Agreement 2010 or Occupancy Agreement
- Pay the appropriate bond, this will be lodged with the Rental Bond Board
- Pay rent in advance and on time through the term of the tenancy
- Keep the premises clean and in good condition throughout the term of the tenancy
- Repair damage caused by the tenant or any visitor
- Not to cause noise or nuisance to other tenants or occupants-the tenant is also responsible for visitors to the property
- Provide appropriate notice when vacating the property, usually two weeks
- When vacating the premises, leave the property in the same condition as set out in the condition report-fair wear and tear expected

Things I Am Responsible for:

- Putting the rubbish bins out weekly
- Keeping flyscreens on the windows and intact, any removals/damage to existing flyscreens will be paid for by the tenant
- Cleaning the house, including shared areas, weekly
- Keeping the front and back yards clean and tidy, free of rubbish build up
- Removing any unwanted belongings upon exit from Options, if any rubbish is left behind tenant will cover cost of removal
- Cleaning and leaving an empty room upon exit from Options, anything left behind and cleaning need to be done will be paid for by tenant
- Paying for and replacing any blown light globes immediately
- Paying and replacing battery in smoke alarms when they start beeping
- Maintaining the garden
- Checking the mailbox daily (otherwise snails will eat through your mail!)
- Keeping the house free of mould

Things Options Is NOT Responsible for:

- Providing flyscreens on windows
- Providing front/back screen doors
- Cleaning up rubbish/putting bins out
- Checking mail
- Cleaning up and vacating your room/property after your exit from Options
- Buying/providing new batteries and light globes
- Cleaning mould off walls/ceilings etc.
- Any tenancy issues e.g./ rents, leases – however, we can support you with this
- Any building maintenance/repairs – however, we can support you with this

THE CASE MANAGEMENT PROCESS

Options Youth Housing is a Specialist Housing Service (SHS) funded program, and is therefore required to undertake case management with all clients who reside with us.

At Options, case management takes a client focussed approach, meaning your case manager is there for you. Your case managers' role is to support and empower you to achieve goals that will assist you in achieving the ultimate goal of moving into your own place as easily and successfully as possible with a maximum 24-month timeframe.

Overall, case management is a process where your case manager works with you to identify your goals and needs. This is primarily driven by you, however your case manager may have observed other areas where you may need some extra assistance and may suggest other goals or needs to work on from time to time. Once your goals and needs have been identified, you and your case manager come up with strategies together to achieve your goals/address your needs. You will generally meet with your case manager on a fortnightly or monthly basis for case management planning.

It is your case manager's role to assist and support you as much as you feel you need it and is common that the amount of support required will change over time. Things your case manager could support you with may include;

- legal support and referrals
- mental health support and referrals
- educational and employment goals
- development of basic living skills such as diet, nutrition, cooking and cleaning
- liaison with other services such as Centrelink or Housing NSW.

It is also the case manager's role to address any goals that aren't being achieved or issues they may be concerned about that may be having a negative impact on achieving your goals or your placement with Options. The more you tell us, the more we can help you achieve your goals and the better we can work with you to achieve the best outcomes.

In return, your role in case work is to be actively engaged, contribute and be pro-active to achieving your goals, keeping appointments with your case worker and other support agencies and maintaining contact with your case worker. It is not up to your case worker to constantly be chasing you to engage.

Case managers are like stepping stones. Use them as much as you can to achieve your goals whilst you are at Options.

SHS CLIENT CHARTER

We will work with you to make sure you receive the best possible assistance to avoid becoming homeless or, if you are homeless, to access safe, affordable and secure housing.

We are committed to working with you in a respectful way that protects your dignity, is fair, and does not discriminate.

- You will be treated in a professional, courteous and caring manner that respects and appreciates differences related to race, ethnicity, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, religion, personal values, age, disability, and economic status.
- Your personal privacy will be respected and confidentiality protected, except where we have a legal obligation, and we will explain to you what this means when you use our service.
- You have the right to use our service if it matches your needs and what we are funded to provide.
- We will work in partnership with you to identify your needs and develop a plan with you and other agencies to meet your needs.
- You have the right to put forward a complaint and we will respond in a confidential, respectful and timely way.
- We will inform you of your rights and responsibilities when you receive a service from us.
- You will be provided with opportunities to take an active role in the decision-making processes of our service.
- We will provide you with a range of suitable referral and support options so you can make a decision on which service you prefer to work with.
- We aim for you to feel safe and we will have systems in place to ensure protection from harm.
- You can expect our service to meet health and safety requirements.
- You will receive the same quality and level of service regardless of your gender, religious, cultural or linguistic background, sexual orientation, age, disability, or family status.

- We will regularly ask for your opinions, and seek suggestions on the services we offer.
- If you have a child under 16 years, you have the right to have their needs considered and linked to suitable responses.

As a client of a Specialist Homelessness Service you have a responsibility to:

- be respectful of others, including staff, volunteers and other clients
- be respectful of the organisation's property
- be an active participant in your service
- participate in the service in a fit state (not under the influence of drugs or alcohol)
- maintain confidentiality regarding information about other clients or participants in groups or programs
- provide accurate information about yourself in order to receive the best service.

WARNING/TERMINATION PROCESS

Options is a voluntary program; you are here because you chose to be here.

A result of not complying with either tenancy (household management) or program (case management) guidelines is the possibility that you may be asked to leave the Program, and therefore your accommodation with Options. Many steps are put in place to avoid this happening and this is not a decision that is made lightly, however, in cases where young people are not engaging in the case management aspect of the program, or using the program as an affordable accommodation placement, it is essential we provide the opportunity for young people who are in need of accommodation and are wanting to make positive changes to their lives.

We aim to work with you as much as possible in order to avoid you being asked to leave the program. The process, should you breach any program guidelines, is as follows:

- **1st Warning:** You will receive a verbal warning about the concerning behaviour, either by your case worker or the program manager. This is your chance to rectify the situation and ask for additional support from your case worker in certain areas if needed. If the primary concern is you being in-contactable by your case worker, you will receive a letter in the mail as your verbal warning.
- **2nd Warning:** If you continue to breach program guidelines despite being given a verbal warning and discussing the concerns with your case manager you will receive a formal written warning in the mail and asked to contact the office by a specified date to address the concerns raised.
- **3rd and Final Warning:** If you fail to make any attempt to address any breaches of the program guidelines you will receive a 2nd written warning in the mail.
- **Notice to Vacate:** Should you not respond or rectify any breaches of your program guidelines you will receive a notice to vacate the premises by a specified date. A Termination Notice will be issued and managed by the tenancy management agency. Support will be given by Options to assist you in finding alternate accommodation, should you wish to accept it.
- **Failure to vacate:** Failure to vacate the program and premises by the due date could result in the matter being taken to the Tenancy Tribunal for a court hearing.

THE LIFE SKILLS PROGRAM

The primary goal of being a client with Options Youth Housing is for young people to become fully independent and move into un-supported accommodation within an 18 to 24-month period.

In order to achieve this successfully, Options works with you to 'fine tune' your existing living and independence skills. This is achieved through a 'Life Skills Program'.

The aim of the life skills program is to ensure you will be as ready as you possibly can be for independent living upon exiting Options. You can also add anything to the Life Skills Program that you feel you would like to develop or learn. The idea of the Life Skills Program is that it is tailored to suit your individual needs and level of independence so you will not be required to do a lot of work on things you already know about!

The Life Skills component of Options is a compulsory part of Options Program which you agreed to take part in once a week for the initial 3 months of your placement with Options. This period is to assist you in settling into your new home, support you with living skills and shared living that you may not be familiar with and to assess where you are at with your living skills. You will work with a separate living skills support worker (not your primary case worker) who will come into your house weekly to assist you practically with your living skills. This will mainly be focussed on house cleaning and skills.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION PROCESS

Options is a semi-independent accommodation program and as such it is expected that young people living in this style of accommodation are independent and of maturity to be able to address any conflict which may arise as a result of share-house living. Conflict is an inevitable part of share house living and conflict resolution and interpersonal skills are essential skills to develop in life.

Options role in situations of conflict is to support and encourage you to work through any differences for yourself; it is not the role of Options to act on your behalf or mediate in interpersonal disputes.

Should a conflict occur within the house hold, the circumstance and situation will be taken into consideration. If there is a clear breach of the Support Agreement whereby someone is not safe due to violence, the perpetrator will be evicted immediately.

Options will not transfer or swap anyone from one Options property to another. The reasoning for this is that we would be hindering your learning and development rather than strengthening it. If we did transfer people out of properties due to conflict we would be assisting you in avoiding your issues rather than learning to manage and confront them, we also do not have the resources to be able to do this.

In cases of interpersonal conflict, the following process will be followed by Options:

1. You will be encouraged to speak with your house mate about the issues. Your case worker can assist you in developing confidence and assertiveness skills in this area however staff will not involve themselves in the dispute. You will also be encouraged to bring up the issue/s of concern in house meeting where staff are present.
2. Should you choose not to discuss the issues with your house mate no further action will be taken, it will be evident that you have then chosen not to address the issue.
3. If you have spoken to your house mate and the issue continues, a meeting will be held with Options staff and tenants to discuss an outcome and agreement.

This may include setting up cleaning rosters, allocating shelves or introducing weekly house inspections. Interpersonal differences/arguments will not be entered into.

4. If your issue is one of interpersonal differences or you are not satisfied with the outcome a referral will be made by Options to the Community Justice Centre who will provide a formal mediation session between you and your house mate, Options staff will not be involved in this process. Any agreement/s made at this session will be enforced by Options and become part of your Support Agreement and case plan. Any breach to the Agreement may result in you being evict from the Program.
5. If all of the above does not rectify the situation, each tenant will be given the option to choose to Exit the Program. Should neither tenant choose to Exit the program, both tenants may be asked to leave. The basis for this would be that it is evident neither party are ready for independent living at this stage.

If at any point you are unsatisfied with how the situation is being dealt you are encouraged to make a complaint.

(See the following section on how to make a complaint.)

MAKING A COMPLAINT – CASE MANAGEMENT

If you are unhappy with the service and/or support you are receiving from Options Youth Housing in regards to case management, and/or your case worker, it is your right to make a complaint and to receive adequate service.

If you are unhappy with the service and/or support you are receiving there are a number of steps you can take:

1) Talk to your case worker about the concerns you have. This can be difficult, particularly if the person you are having issues with is your case worker. In this case you can talk to the Program Manager. This can be done either through a written letter, a phone call or a visit to the office. Your concerns will be noted and an action plan will be discussed with you to address your concerns. The contact details for the Program Manager are:

   Kate Witherdin
   (02) 9388 9341
   optionsyouth@caretakers.org.au
   77 Newland Street, Bondi Junction, NSW 2022

2) If you have concerns with the Program Manager, or the Program Manager is your case worker, or you are unhappy with the response you receive from the Program Manager, you can take your concerns to the Executive Officer. This can be done either through a written letter or a phone call. The contact details for the Executive Officer are:

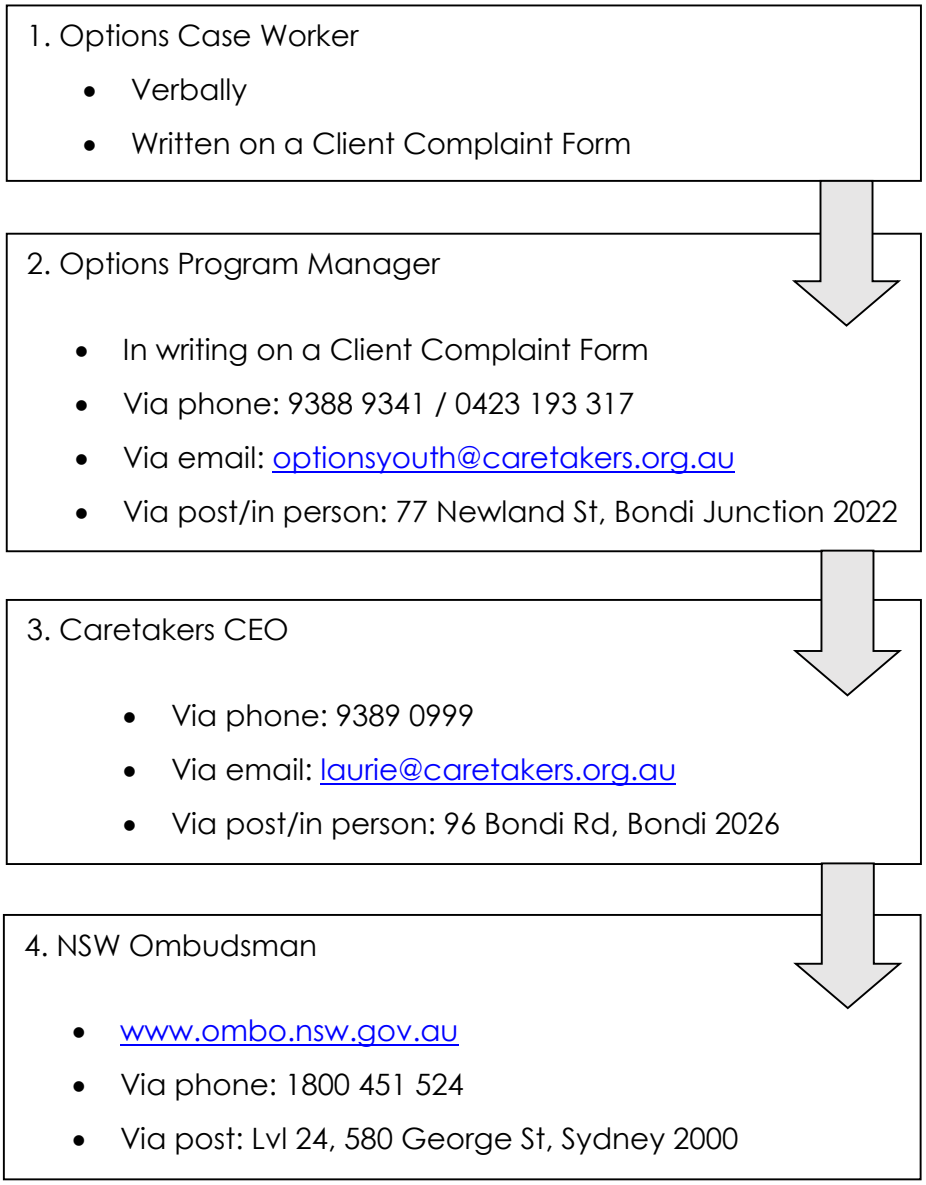
   Laurie Matthews
   (02) 9389 0999
   laurie@caretakers.org.au
   96 Bondi Rd, Bondi NSW 2022

3) If you are still unsatisfied with how your complaint or concerns have been addressed, you can take your concerns to an independent body. The independent body in NSW that you can take your complaint or concerns to is the Ombudsman Office. You can either write a letter or phone the

Ombudsman office. For more information on the Ombudsman you can visit their website at: www.ombo.nsw.gov.au or speak to your case worker, or another youth service, about how to lodge a complaint to the Ombudsman's Office. The contact details for the Ombudsman are:

NSW Ombudsman
(02) 9286 1000
Level 24, 580 George Street, Sydney NSW 2000

FLOW CHART: MAKING A COMPLAINT (CASE WORK)



FEEDBACK, COMPLAINTS AND DISPUTES

If you are not happy with how you have been treated at or by Options Youth Housing, or are concerned about the service we are delivering, you have the right to discuss the problem and we will try and work it out with you. If you feel the situation does not improve, you can make a complaint. All complaints will be kept confidential and will be taken seriously. If it is a criminal matter, by law we have to involve other people.

We will keep written records of complaints. You will be treated fairly when making a complaint and we will try and find a resolution quickly.

Identify what the issue is and how you think the situation could be improved

Speak with the relevant staff member about it.

If you are not comfortable doing this, or are not able to resolve it with the staff member, write the complaint down. If you are a young person, you may wish to ask for support from a worker in doing this. A feedback form is available on the website; you are also given a Complaint Form in your Options sign up package.

Submit your written complaint to the program manager, either in person, by post or email. They will then speak with you to help find a resolution.

If it is a serious problem, or you are not happy with the resolution, the complaint can be handed to the CEO or Management Committee.

If you are still not satisfied with the resolution, you can contact the NSW Ombudsman 1800 451 524

MAKING A COMPLAINT – TENANCY

If you have a complaint regarding your tenancy (e.g./rent disputes, breaches to the Residential Tenancy Agreement, unmet maintenance requests) it is your right to make a complaint and receive adequate service. Options has forms to help you make a complaint, please ask for one if needed.

If you have complaints or concerns about your tenancy and how your property is being managed there are a number of steps you can take. You will need to know who the managing agent is for your tenancy, if you are unsure ask your case worker/Options program manager. Options can also assist you in making a complaint regarding your tenancy and talk you through your options if you are having issues in your tenancy.

1. Contact your tenancy manager (Options has these details for your individual circumstance) and discuss your concerns with them. Options may also act on your behalf, or support you with this step if you feel you need it.
2. If you are unhappy with the response you receive from your tenancy manager put your concerns in writing and submit them to the management of the housing provider. Options has these details, and can also support you in doing this.
3. If you are still unhappy with the response you have received from the managing agent, you can seek assistance from an independent body. Suggested contact details for more information and assistance with these disputes are:
    - Tenants Hotline 1800 251 101
    - Eastern Area Tenancy Service 9386 9147
    - Housing Appeals Committee 1800 629 794

You can also take your complaints to the Residential Tenancy Tribunal where your concerns may be heard in Court. The contact details for the Residential Tenancy Tribunal are:

- Level 12, 125 Castlereagh St, Sydney NSW 2000 (Phone: 1300 135 399)

RENT

Rent is due fortnightly and is required to be paid in advance and kept up to date.

You pay your rent directly to your managing agency. You will be informed of who this is at sign up. Rent can be paid in a number of ways:

- Through Centrepay, if you are on Centrelink payments
- Through direct deposit into the Agent's bank account

Rent is charged at 25% of your gross income, and 100% of your Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA) paid by Centrelink if you are eligible. All managing agents are Registered Community Housing Providers and therefore rents are required to be charged as per the Housing NSW Community Housing Rent Policy, more detailed information on this policy can be found at:

http://www.housing.nsw.gov.au/NR/rdonlyres/619B3405-E1AF-47F5-8B8A-9198127449B7/0/CommunityHousingRentPolicy.pdf

How/When Is My Rent Calculated?

Rent is calculated at 25% of your income, regardless of whether it is a Centrelink payment or from wages. If you are on Centrelink, and you are entitled to Rent Assistance, 100% of this rate will be paid to Options as part of your rent.

Community Housing providers are obligated to conduct a rent review every 6 months, generally this is March and September each year. You will be sent a letter reminding you to provide your current proof of income, a recent Centrelink Income Statement and/or 3 months of work payslips, your rent will then be calculated based on the information you provide.

Should your income change, for example you go off Centrelink and get a job; you have 21 days in which to inform your tenancy manager of your new income rate in order to have your rent adjusted.

Should you not provide your income details when required, you will be charged the market rent of the property you live at. This is recalculated every 3 months using the Housing NSW Rent and Sales Report. You can view this at:

http://www.housing.nsw.gov.au/About+Us/Reports+Plans+and+Papers/Rent+and+Sales+Reports/Latest+Issue/

Difficulties in Paying Rent

If you are having difficulties in making rental payments, contact your case manager/tenancy manager as soon as possible. In this instance we can assist you in making a payment plan which will prevent action being taken against you for rental arrears; this can lead to termination of tenancy. Legally, if your rent falls in arrears, by 14 days a letter of eviction must be posted.

ELECTRICITY EXPENSES

If you reside in a share house, Options will manage the electricity bills for the household. Options works out a 'user-pays' system which is calculated for the time each individual was in the household. As a general guide, electricity is charged at $25 per week to cover the quarterly electricity and/or gas bills. At the time of your exit, if you have paid significantly more than the bills you will be reimbursed this amount.

If you are living in a single unit you are required to manage your own electricity account and bills. Your case worker can assist you in transferring the electricity into your name.

How to Save Money on Electricity:

- ✓ Never leave lights on when you are not in a room; this could easily be the most efficient means of saving money on electricity.
- ✓ Turn your heating off while you sleep. Doing this minimises your electricity bill as you can snuggle up to keep yourself warm.
- ✓ Turn off all your idle appliances-turn off power points or items plugged into them that are still switched on - which in turn is charging us for sitting on idle, wasted money as such.
- ✓ Don't leave the outside lights on unnecessarily.
- ✓ Close your curtains at dusk to stop heat escaping through the windows and check for draughts around windows and doors
- ✓ Don't leave appliances on standby and remember not to leave laptops and mobile phones on charge unnecessarily.
- ✓ If possible, fill up the washing machine, tumble dryer or dishwasher: one full load uses less energy than two half loads.
- ✓ Only boil as much water as you need (but remember to cover the elements if you're using an electric kettle).
- ✓ Use energy saving light bulbs. They last up to 10 times longer and using one can save you around $90 over the lifetime of the bulb. This saving could be around

$140 over its lifetime if you're replacing a high wattage incandescent bulb, or one used for more than a few hours a day.

- ✓ Avoid opening the refrigerator door unnecessarily. By removing or replacing several items at a time you can protect the cold air inside the fridge and save energy.
- ✓ Make sure your refrigerator door seals are airtight. Test them by closing the door over a piece of paper so it is half in and half out of the refrigerator. If you can pull the paper out easily, the hinge may need adjustment or the seal may need replacing.
- ✓ Use cold water in the laundry whenever possible.

How to Save on Heating Costs

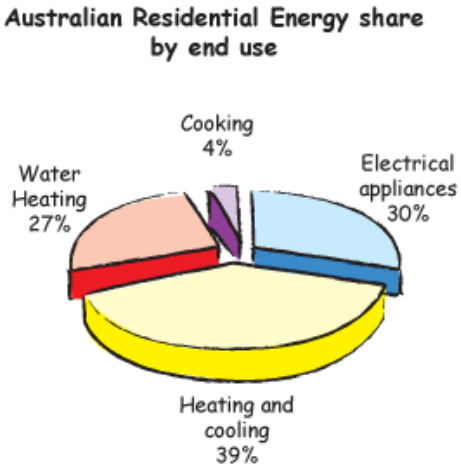


Chart by: East Coast Sustainability

- ✓ Don't keep heaters on all day and all night, turn them off when you are not in the room and when you go to bed at night
- ✓ If you are relaxing on the lounge use a blanket or layer up on extra clothes to keep you warm rather than using the heater
- ✓ Close all doors and windows and keep curtains and blind closed to trap the heat inside
- ✓ Put rolled up towels along the gap where the door meets the floor to stop hot air escaping and a cold draught coming in
- ✓ Close bathroom doors, especially if you have an exhaust fan as this is where cold air comes in
- ✓ Minimise the number of showers you have, and how long you have a shower for. The more hot water you use, the more it will cost you come bill time!
- ✓ If you MUST get a heater, try to get one with a thermostat where you can control the temperature, it can also be handy to have one with a timer. But remember: heaters are extremely costly so only use them when absolutely necessary or you it will cost you a small fortune.

Did You Know: For every degree above 21 degrees in your heating, this adds approximately 10% extra to your electricity costs! (Energy Australia)

HOW TO TREAT/PREVENT MOULD IN YOUR HOME

Mould is a fungal growth. It grows in homes under the right conditions of dampness, darkness and poor ventilation.

How to Remove Mould:

- ✓ Get some bleach from the laundry section of your supermarket, or you can buy a special 'mould treatment' product such as 'Exit Mould' (however these are MUCH more expensive than a bottle of bleach and do the same job!)
- ✓ Make sure you wear gloves and something around your mouth and nose-a bandana, tea towel, face mask… Make sure all the windows and doors are open for good ventilation as bleach is quite strong.
- ✓ If the mould is on the roof you will need to get a mop and bucket. If there IS mould on the roof, or higher places, be sure to do this first as any drips etc will fall to floor, sink or bath and you will need to re-clean them again if you do those before the roof! Fill the bucket with warm water and, add to that 1/3 the amount of bleach.
- ✓ Using the mop, wipe all the mould off the roof. You will need to rinse and re-dip your mop a few times in the water-generally after every wipe is best. Do this until all the mould is gone.
- ✓ Rinse the mop out well in running water, also empty the bucket of bleach.
- ✓ For mould on the walls, sink, bath etc get a cloth; you may also need to use a scourer and/or toothbrush for stubborn mould. (If the mould on the walls is too high to reach, you can use the mop again for this).
- ✓ Fill up the bucket again with water and bleach (3 parts water: 1 part bleach). Using a cloth/scourer/toothbrush wipe over the area to be cleaned.
- ✓ Mould will build up in the grout, this is the white lines between the tiles, if the mould is difficult to remove this is where a toothbrush can come in handy, as well as in hard to get to corners! If there is any pink stains anywhere, this is also mould so scrub it off!
- ✓ After you have wiped all the surfaces down, be sure to rinse your cloth out thoroughly and wipe over the area again with clean water to rinse of any excess bleach solution/loose mould.

COMMUNAL/SHARED RESPONSIBILITIES

When moving into Options properties you are required to share the premises with other people-some are other Options clients, others are neighbours. If you are residing in a unit block your immediate neighbours may not necessarily be other Options clients.

We ask that all young people are mindful and respectful of other people they are living with/near at all times. Ongoing discrepancies and issues with neighbours/house mates may result in termination of your placement.

As a tenant of Options we ask that tenants take responsibility for the communal areas in the property and treat them as part of your home. In particular:

Gardens:

Lawn mowing is done by a professional lawn mower fortnightly, however, general maintenance and care of the gardens is the responsibility of the tenants.

Garbage/Recycling:

Council provides a weekly garbage collection and fortnightly recycling service; tenants are required to put the bins out on the appropriate night. To clarify what night your bins are due to go out ask you case worker, house mate or a neighbour.

Tenants are also encouraged to recycle paper, plastics and glass, any non-recyclables that are placed in the recycling bins will not be collected. For assistance with recycling if needed, talk to your case worker.

Bathroom:

It is best to work out with your neighbours/house mates a cleaning system for the bathroom and use/re-stocking of the bathroom supplies.

Lounge Room/Kitchen: (in share houses only)

Options provides furniture for these areas, it is encouraged that you work out with your housemate a cleaning roster for these areas. In case of discrepancies Options may assist with a household roster. These areas are expected to be maintained at a hygienic and tidy level.

LOST KEYS

You will be given a set of house keys upon moving in, if you lose your house keys you will need to pay for them to be replaced.

If you have given permission for Options to keep a copy of your house keys, you will be charged **$5.00 per key**.

If Options does not have a set of your keys, you will need to call your tenancy manager to find out what you need to do for a replacement. This could be of significant cost to you as it may require locks being changed.

If you cause damage to the property in order to access the premises, you will also be charged for repairs.

MAINTENANCE REPAIRS

You can inform your case worker, or call the Options office, to inform them of any repairs which need to be done and we can arrange this for you.

Alternatively, you can contact your managing agent, you will need to know who this is before calling. Options can assist you with this information, alternatively this information will be on Page 2 of your Residential Tenancy Agreement.

- **Bridge Housing** (02) 8324 0886
- **St George Community Housing** (02) 9585 1499 (press Option 3)

Options can also organise for a repairer to come out to the property to fix the problem as soon as possible once reported. It is the tenants' responsibility to be home and available to let the repair person/s into the property.

In the event of an emergency/after-hours repairs (see below, Emergency Repairs) a tenant is authorised to arrange repairs with an Approved Contractor (see below, Approved Contractors) only as defined in clause 28 (2) of the Residential Tenancy Agreement (NSW).

N.B. If repairs are arranged by tenants outside of these conditions you may be liable to pay for the cost of the repairs.

** If you are not sure what to do in an emergency situation and it is the weekend/night time, call Caretakers Cottage on (02) 9389 0999, someone is there 24/7 however, ensure it is an emergency before calling as you will be waking the worker!*

What are emergency repairs?

These can be defined as any repair required to avoid a danger to health, risk to safety of residents or serious damage to buildings and cannot wait until the next available business day. It is advisable that if the repair is needed outside of office hours the client send a text message/leave a voice message to the Options mobile or office phone to inform us of the repair.

Examples of emergencies/

- No water or electricity supply for more than 2 hours
- Gas leak
- Severely blocked drains likely to cause flooding before the next business day
- Serious flooding
- Failure of essential services for hot water, cooking, heating or laundering
- Damage that causes the premise to be unsafe or not secure e.g./ broken front door, damaged locks

Emergencies repairs will be completed within 24 hours of reporting.

What are normal repairs?

Normal repairs are repairs which do not fall into the emergency category which have been requested by the tenant or from observation from Options staff, for example:

- Phone line issues
- Dripping taps
- Holes in the wall
- Broken windows that do not pose a major safety issue

Emergency & Useful Contact Numbers:

- Options Youth Housing Office: (02) 9388 9341
- Kate Witherdin (Program Manager): 0423 193 317
- Michael Brickwedde (Case Worker): 0434 009 526
- Dafna Dar (Case Worker): 0417 650 943
- Alexis Rabin (Case Worker): 0434 798 641

- Caretakers Cottage: (02) 9389 0999
- Bridge Housing: (02) 8324 0800
- St George Community Housing: (02) 9585 1499
- Mental Health Crisis Team (24 hrs): (02) 9366 8611
- Kids Help Line (up to 25 yrs of age): 1800 551 800
- Suicide Call Back Line: 1300 659 467

**provides counselling and over the phone support for 18+*

- State Emergency Service: 132 500

**for support during tropical storms, floods etc.*

- Police/Fire/Ambulance: 000
- Mascot Police Station: (02) 9316 6955
- Maroubra Police: (02) 9349 9299

**for Coogee or Daceyville*

- Eastern Suburbs Locksmith (24hrs): (02) 9313 4900
  0418 233 383
- Aus Grid: 13 13 88

**for electricity, gas emergencies*

- Sydney Water: 13 20 90

**for water emergencies*

Options Youth Housing
77 Newland Street
Bondi Junction, NSW 2022

2016 Winner
New South Wales
Youth Service of the Year

Options
Youth Housing