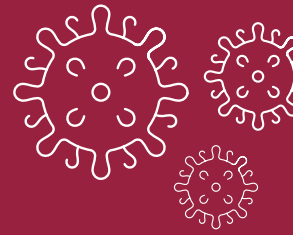




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COVID-19 – Managing Rent and Unpaid Rent



This information is for tenants who have had trouble paying their rent because of the impacts of COVID-19.

This Infosheet has some hard words. The first time we write a hard word it will be in **bold**, and we will write what this word means. You can also find a list of these words and what they mean in the ‘Glossary of Terms’.



Since April, tenants have felt lots of different impacts from COVID-19.



You may have made an agreement with your landlord or property manager to make changes to your lease before 29 September 2020. This is called a **tenancy or residency variation agreement**.

A tenancy or residency variation agreement is a form where you write down the temporary changes to your lease that you have agreed with your landlord or property manager.



Even as things start to change here now in Queensland, there are some tenants who may still have trouble with money and paying rent.

You may be having trouble with a range of things like:



Paying some or all of your rent





Paying the lower amount of rent that you agreed with your landlord or property manager



Paying back the money you owe to the landlord or property manager on top of your rent

This information is for tenants

Here are some examples and answers to questions you might have about managing rent and unpaid rent at this time.

I was impacted by COVID-19 in May 2020 and lost my job. I worked out with my landlord that I could pay a lower amount of rent until 31 December 2020. We have it in writing – what happens now?




You worked this out with your landlord in May 2020, before 29 September 2020. This continues until the date you have agreed.




In April 2020, 3 people in our house all lost their jobs and started getting JobKeeper. We worked out with the landlord that we would pay less rent until October 2020 and then pay it back when we got more work. Our agreement says we have until June 2021 to pay it back. Two of us have jobs again and we have started paying back the money each fortnight.




You have worked this out with your landlord in April 2020, before 29 September 2020 so what you have agreed continues.



I am still having trouble paying my rent now

...but I don't have a variation agreement

...but my variation agreement has finished



The rules that were in place before COVID-19 are now back. You are expected to pay the amount of rent you agreed to when you signed your lease.



You will have to start paying the rent you agreed to when you signed your lease. You may have agreed to pay a lower amount of rent for a period of time, and pay back the unpaid rent later. This will be extra on top of your agreed rent.



What can I do if I am having trouble paying rent after 30 September 2020?



Talk to your landlord or property manager and explain what is happening for you.

You may be able to work out a solution like a repayment plan.



The Residential Tenancies Authority (RTA) can also help with **conciliation** (See Factsheet 5).

Conciliation is a free service to help you and your landlord work together to find a way to agree about how to fix any problems you may have.



If you can't agree, the landlord or property manager may send you a **'Notice to remedy breach'** if you have not paid your rent. A Notice to remedy breach is a form that you may be sent if you don't follow the rules of your lease, for example, paying your rent on time.

You will be given time to repay the rent, for example 7 days.

You can ask your landlord or property manager if you can enter into a repayment plan to repay your rent over time.



If you still do not pay your rent, then you may be given a **'Notice to leave'** and asked to move out of the property.

A Notice to leave is a form that you may be sent when the landlord wants you to move out of the property by a certain date.



What are some other things I can do if I am having trouble paying rent because of COVID-19?



See if you are able to access income support.



Let your landlord or property manager know as soon as possible about your situation.

You can ask them if they are willing to lower your rent.



Get copies of documents that show that your situation has changed. These documents might be things like an **employment separation certificate**, information from Centrelink, medical certificate.

An employment separation certificate is a form your employer fills out when you lose your job, you are given less hours or you change from full time to casual work.



Record anything you and the landlord or property manager agree to in writing and keep a copy. If you can't agree, think about applying for free conciliation through the RTA.

For support with tenancy issues contact:



Queensland Statewide Tenancy Advice and Referral Service (QSTARS)
1300 744 263



Residential Tenancies Authority (RTA)
1300 366 311