

KEY POINTS

Melbourne has a huge variety of housing with a wide range of architectural styles and so there is generally a style available to satisfy most personal tastes. Location, style and size do of course have a major influence on the costs.

Not all property pictures on the internet in Australia reflect the actual presentation of the home or its surroundings. Photography can enhance the image or the photos shown could well be several years old.

Useful facts:

- Floor plans are not usually available for rental properties.
- Rental costs are listed at a price per week but a tenant can offer to pay the rent monthly. The calculation used is the weekly rental amount ÷ by 7 x 365 ÷ 12 this provides 12 equal monthly payments.
- Lease term – normally a minimum of 12 months, however 6 months or other periods are sometimes available. In the current market negotiated changes are not common.
- Bond (refundable security deposit if property is left undamaged) is equivalent to 4 weeks rent.
- Rental properties rarely come furnished or equipped with white goods. An oven and hot plates are provided plus a clothes dryer may be included if an apartment has no clothesline. Some properties might have a dishwasher.
- Properties are leased as advertised, landlords will typically resist making changes such as painting, changing curtains, blinds etc.
- Agents/landlords are obliged to fix any maintenance issues throughout the term of the lease.
- Utilities are not included in the rent. Utility charges such as gas and electricity are paid by the tenant, charges are based on usage. Water rates ('standing charges') are paid by the landlord but water usage is paid by the tenant if the property has its own water meter. Council rates are paid by the landlord.
- Telephone and internet, electricity and gas connection. All charges associated with these services are the responsibility of the tenant. Due to Australian privacy laws, only the person named on the account can discuss or change details with the utility company.

LEASES/BONDS

In Victoria, the Bond (security deposit) must be in a person's name, not a company name. Bonds need to be in the same name as the lease.

Bond money is held by The Residential Tenancies Bond Authority, a Victorian government department, not by the landlord or the real estate agent.

RENTING

To be eligible to rent a property in Melbourne it is necessary to submit the following documents for a tenancy application. The '100-point' identification check requirements must be met:

- ✓ Australian bank account
- ✓ Rental history
- ✓ Proof of income
- ✓ Identification document (passport, birth certificate, driver's license)
- ✓ Reference letters from employees/friends
- ✓ Possibly additional documents and/or information may be requested by the landlord or property agent.

The real estate search sites listed below are the most frequently used to find a property to rent and they provide a good indication of what asking rents can be expected.

- [RealEstate.com](https://www.realestate.com.au)
- [Domain](https://www.domain.com.au)

CURRENT MARKET CHALLENGES AND TRENDS WITH BEST PRACTICE SUGGESTIONS

Rents in Melbourne have surged over the past year and it can be extremely challenging to find a dream home given the strong demand and very low vacancy rates. This is where the Nuss Relocation consultant can be of great assistance given their local knowledge and contacts.

It is not unusual to have crowds of people attend an open home in some suburbs and for the real estate agent to receive multiple applications. Many property agents are now capping applications at 20.

While it is illegal for agents to suggest paying more than the advertised price, some successful applicant renters are currently making offers over the asking price just to secure a property. Rental budgets when based on 'old' data (even just a few months old) can create inaccurate expectations.

We suggest transferees provide the agent with a 'Personal Bio' when applying for a property, to include a brief on themselves, and their family and to even include photos of their current home showing the inside condition and if a house include photos of the garden and lawn, to illustrate what a good tenant they are.

Being new to the country expats do not have a local rental history reference, a bio could help to strengthen their application and a reference from their last landlord might also help the application.

If there is to be a pet, we also suggest a 'Pet Reference' with photos, and a short introduction about the pet either from a current neighbor, friend or their vet.