

NORTHERN TERRITORY

CONSUMER

AFFAIRS

# Share House

**You'll want good advice**



**Consumer Affairs: 1800 019 319**

# THINKING OF SHARING A HOUSE?

## Established share houses

It may be cheaper to move into an already established share house.

Hopefully the other tenants will have already furnished the common areas like the kitchen, laundry and lounge room.

If you decide on moving into an established share house you will need to find out if you will be a co-tenant or a sub-tenant.

Make sure you fully understand what you're getting yourself into.

Ask as many questions as you need to, before you move in.

## Head-Tenant

If there is only one person's name on the lease they become the head-tenant and are responsible to the landlord for the place that you're living in.

## Co-Tenant

If you are going to sign the lease with the other tenants then you will become a co-tenant and share all the rights and responsibilities of the tenancy.

Make sure you receive written receipts for any payments you make.

## Sub-Tenant

If you are going to live in the house and you have your own room but your name will not be put on the lease then you are a sub-tenant.

The head-tenant must get permission from the landlord for you to live in the house.

As a sub-tenant you will generally share all the same rights as the others whose names appear on the lease.

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## Establishing your own share house

If you decide to set up a house with a few friends, get together to decide the sort of place you want to live in.

You may want to consider:

- the rent that you can afford;
- how much money you will need to cover up front costs;
- what furniture you will need (fridge, bed, cooking utensils);
- if there is car parking space or a garden;
- how many people you want to live with.

When sharing a house or unit with others, and sharing the bond, it is important to ensure that all of the people's names who are contributing to the security deposit (bond) appear on the receipt.

### **CASE STUDY: A bad shared house experience:**

Tanya was 19 years old and decided to share a house with two of her best friends Cassie and Lana.

The bond was \$920 (4 weeks rent) so they all put in \$307, and Tanya paid the money to the landlord's agent, and received a receipt in her name.

This worked well for just over a year, when Tanya left Darwin for England.

The other girls decided to continue with the tenancy for another 2 years.

When the girls wanted to leave at the end of the tenancy agreement they were unable to get their bond back as it was receipted in Tanya's name only.

Unfortunately they had lost touch with Tanya over the years, and had no proof that part of the bond money belonged to them.

**They should have made sure that all their names were on the lease and the receipt.**