



## Fact Sheet

### Managing your tenancy payments – Arrears Management

#### ***Paying your rent & other charges***

It is important your rent and other tenancy related charges are paid on time and by the due date so:

- You can keep your housing;
- You don't accrue a large tenancy debt that will be difficult to repay;
- You avoid legal action; and
- To allow MRAC to continually provide a service, house First Nation's peoples and keep up the standard of homes.

#### ***How do I pay my rent & other charges?***

If your main income is a Centrelink pension or benefit, your residential tenancies agreement condition is that you pay by Centrepay.

You can visit Centrelink or do this online and arrange for your rent to be paid by Centrepay using MRAC's CRN number:

**CRN 555 013 364H**

If you are working, you can pay by bank transfer as follows:

#### **Bendigo Bank**

<b>Account name</b>	<b>MRAC</b>
<b>BSB:</b>	<b>633 000</b>
<b>Account No:</b>	<b>160 141 305</b>

In rare circumstances, some tenants are unable to get to a Bendigo Bank. Please contact MRAC to obtain details for Commonwealth Bank deposits.

Please include your agent number.

#### ***How often do I have to pay rent?***

If you pay weekly, then your rent must be paid one week in advance. A further one week's rent will be charged before you pay again.

If you pay fortnightly, you pay two weeks in advance. Rents are charged weekly, and two rent charges are made before you pay again.

Some tenants are paid monthly and must pay monthly in advance. Reminder: a monthly payment is more than four weeks rent. Contact MRAC to calculate your monthly rent.

#### ***What are other tenancy charges?***

The most common other tenancy charge is for **water consumption**. Water Corporation bills MRAC directly for your water usage and MRAC then sends you an invoice.

All tenants have 21 days from the invoice date to pay their water consumption charges.

Some tenants prefer to pay an extra amount in their regular payment cycle to contribute towards their water charges. They then pay any difference when the bill falls due.

Other tenants, pay a fixed amount per their payment cycle. MRAC can work out an average payment amount based on annual usage for you. Contact the office if you would like us to do this for you.

Some tenants have water consumption built into their rent as they live in a complex where the unit is not separately metered but most tenants will receive a water bill.

If you receive large bills, check you have no leaks and your usage. See maintenance fact sheet on how to test for leaks.

A small number of tenants pay **electricity** through MRAC as they live in a complex that is not separately metered. MRAC works with those tenants to ensure they keep on top of their accounts.

**Tenant liability** accounts – where a tenant, resident or visitor to the property causes damage to the property that MRAC has to fix, a ‘tenant liability’ charge is raised once the contractor has completed and invoiced MRAC for the works.

Tenants have 21 days from the date of the invoice to pay this account. If it is a large account, contact the office to enter into a payment arrangement or ‘office agreement’ to pay this account off in manageable amounts.

### ***What happens if I get into arrears?***

MRAC understands things happen in people’s lives and we are committed to working with tenants to keep their housing.

It is so important you contact the office to discuss your situation so we can make a suitable repayment arrangement with you through an office agreement.

**Office agreements** support tenants to manage unexpected events and avoid legal action. An agreement is made with MRAC for the tenant to pay their rent with an additional amount per payment cycle to clear any outstanding tenancy charges known as ‘arrears’.

If a tenant breaks their office agreement, MRAC will commence the legal process.

**Breach notices** will be issued for water, damage or electricity arrears and the tenant has 14 days to clear the arrears before further legal action is taken.

Rent arrears breach notices will be issued where rent is not paid and the tenant has 14 days to bring their account up to date.

If a tenant still does not clear their arrears, when the breach expires, MRAC will issue a termination notice.

***MRAC cannot evict you when the termination notice expires without going to the Residential Tenancies Tribunal (Tribunal) and obtaining an Order of Possession.***

Where a tenant regularly misses paying their rent, and MRAC has already issued breach notices in the past, MRAC will issue a seven day termination notice. ***MRAC cannot evict you without an Order of Possession from the Tribunal.***

Once the termination notice expires and the tenant has not contacted and/or caught up with their arrears, MRAC will lodge for a hearing at the Tribunal.

MRAC strongly encourages tenants to attend the Tribunal hearing. MRAC cannot get an Order of Possession if you attend.

If you do attend, a suitable arrangement can be negotiated under what is called a Stay Order. This means that MRAC receives an Order of Possession, which is stayed (not able to be proceeded with) whilst the tenant pays their rent plus the agreed amount either weekly, fortnightly, or monthly whatever their payment arrangements are.

If a tenant does not meet their Stay Order agreement, MRAC can move to eviction without going back to court or Tribunal. This is at MRAC’s discretion but the policy is to evict people if tenants do not meet their Stay Order agreements.

MRAC does not like to evict people but will do so if arrears are not taken seriously, tenants do not contact and do not meet their agreements.

It is important you talk to MRAC early in the process to avoid attending Tribunal. Court costs, currently \$74.50 will be charged to your account.

### ***Don’t wait until it is too late!***

Tenants that would like to have an independent advocate represent them or to deal with MRAC on their behalf, can contact the Tenant Advocate at Regional Alliance West (**RAW**) on 9938 0600.

Tenants can also contact Melissa Bonney, at MRAC’s housing support program.