

Podcast 112 - Renting a Place to Live in Melbourne

by Rob McCormack - Tuesday, June 25, 2019

<https://slowenglish.info/?p=2923>

Learn English while learning about daily life in Australia, with Rob McCormack

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Hi,

Many Australians want to own their own home or apartment. This desire is so common amongst Australians that it has been called the Great Australian Dream. Many people see it as a way of being more secure, especially as they grow older and closer to retirement. But for those who are not able to buy their own home or apartment, or perhaps those who are still saving for a deposit so that they can get a loan to buy one, the only option is to rent privately. In this podcast I would like to tell you a little about private renting of a house or apartment in Australia. My podcast does not cover all aspects, so you should do your own research for a full understanding of privately renting a property. Public housing rental is a different area and not covered in my podcast, although many of the same rules apply.

<https://liveinmelbourne.vic.gov.au/live/housing-and-property/renting-a-house-or-apartment>

My wife and I have rented apartments and houses at different times in our married life. When we were first married we rented an apartment in Perth, in Western Australia. However we were always talking about getting our own home and soon we were out looking for a house to buy. Years later, when we moved three times to new cities for my work, we also rented a house when we first arrived in each new city, before buying our own home later on.

Getting your own rental accommodation is usually not too difficult if you have a steady income. First you need to decide where you want to live. Obviously this will depend on where your place of work is, or where you plan to get a job. I think it's a good idea to make sure you understand how travel times might affect you. When we lived in Sydney, my travel time to work on a bus and then a train, was 90 minutes each way. Luckily, I was studying for my master's degree part-time at university back then, so I used the travel time to do my weekly reading. Your choice of area will also depend on how much you can spend on rent. You need to choose an area where you can find rental accommodation in your price range.



Real Estate Agents have listings of rental properties available in their surrounding area.

Once you have decided on an area or suburb or town, you then need to visit local real estate agents, or their websites. There you will usually find houses and apartments which have been listed by their owners for private rent. Owners of properties which are rented are called landlords. People who rent these properties are called tenants. In most cases, the real estate agent will manage the rental property for the landlord. There are some properties which are rented directly by their owners, without a real estate agent's help, but this is less common.

Nowadays, the websites of the major real estate agents have their rental properties listed online. Rental properties normally have certain things included, such as curtains or blinds, carpets, hot water system, stove and oven, ceiling lights and kitchen cupboards. Some properties will also have built in wardrobes in the bedrooms and perhaps built in air conditioning and heating. As a general rule, most properties won't be furnished with tables, chairs, lounge suites, beds, refrigerators or washing machines. You will need to provide your own. However there are some properties which are advertised as 'furnished' or 'fully furnished'. This means they will have the basic furniture included and this will be included in the rent.

<https://www.domain.com.au/rent/melbourne-vic-3000/?ssubs=0&excludedeposittaken=1>

The thing I like about the online rental listings these days, is the fact that you can see photos of the inside of the property. The listings usually also provide information about what sort of facilities are available near the property, such as schools, shops and public transport. All this information is useful in making a shortlist of suitable properties. However, you or your representative need to personally inspect each property in order to decide if it is suitable. Sometimes the online pictures can be deceiving. An inspection also allows the real estate agent to meet you and assess you as a suitable tenant. As you can imagine, bad tenants are a landlord's nightmare. So, make sure you are on time, or punctual, for any appointment. Inspections can be done either by appointment with the real estate agent, by borrowing the key from the real estate agent, or sometimes in an open inspection which will be advertised on their website.

<https://www.tuv.org.au/advice/applying-for-private-rental/>

If you decide a particular property is what you need, and you can afford the rent, you must fill in an application form. On the application, you will be required to provide your current and two previous addresses, including contact details for the landlord or real estate agent if you have previously rented. In addition, you will need to provide details of your current and previous employment. For your current employment, you will be required to provide salary details and contact details of your employer so these salary details can be checked. Lastly, you will need to give details of at least 2 referees who can speak on your behalf, to show that you will be good tenants who will take good care of the property and always pay your rent on time. Once you have submitted your application to the real estate agency, it's time to sit back and wait for the result. Hopefully you will be accepted. Once accepted, then it's time to celebrate. But it's not quite finished yet. Next you have to sign a lease agreement.

The lease agreement is a legal contract between you and the landlord. It sets out all of the conditions which apply, including the length or term of the lease (usually 12 months), the amount of rent, what you can and can't do, what the responsibilities of the landlord are, as well as any special conditions which might apply. For example, pets might not be allowed, or it may be a requirement that you provide a guarantor. A guarantor is someone who will not be living in the property, who promises to pay the rent if it is overdue, or pay for any damage to the property. This is often something which other family members, such as parents, are happy to do. Not all lease agreements require a guarantor. Once the lease agreement is signed, you must pay the rent in advance (usually 1 month) as well as a bond.

A bond is an extra amount in addition to the rent, usually equal to one month's rent, which is put aside in case you damage the property or in case it requires cleaning when the lease is ended. If either of these things happen, then the landlord can keep some or all of the bond to pay for the cleaning or damage. It is therefore in your interests to look after the property well and to keep it clean, especially at the end of the lease. If there is no damage, and the property is clean at the end of the lease, then you will get all of your bond back. To help in this process, it is important that you make a list of any problems that are with the property before you move in. This is called the Condition Report. That way, you can't be blamed for something being damaged, if it was already damaged before you moved in.

Lastly, you need to organize the utilities services. This means selecting a provider for the electricity, the gas, the water, telephone and internet, and organizing for them to be connected. In Victoria, there are some great websites which can help you choose the cheapest and best providers for these services. It is important to note that these services are not covered by the rent, so you will have to pay for these

yourself.

https://compare.energy.vic.gov.au/?gclid=CjwKCAjwxrzoBRBBEiwAbtX1nzscpJuGHbC2Ly2SJ6TouBm20LKc1E7HhkY7JzRoIGxMBfQ61QIEihoCXMIQAvD_BwE

Now you can move in to your new rental property. It is always exciting to start living in a new place, as there is almost always new people to meet and a new neighbourhood to explore. I can remember each rental property we have lived in, because each has its own charm and memories of our time there.

<https://www.consumer.vic.gov.au/housing/renting>

If you have a question or a comment to make, please leave it in the comments box at the bottom of this page. Or, you can send me an email at rob@slowenglish.info. I would love to hear from you. Tell me where you live, a little bit about yourself and what you think of my Slow English podcast. I will write back to you, in English of course. If you would like to take a short quiz to see if you have understood this podcast, you will also find it on my website. Goodbye until next time.

Rob

[WpProQuiz 114]

Vocabulary

accepted = when someone receives something

advertised = when there is a message telling you that something is available

affect = when something causes a change in something else

afford = when you have enough money to buy something

air conditioning = a machine which keeps the air cool inside your house or apartment

application = when you ask for something to be done or given to you, usually by filling a form in

apply = (here) must be followed

appointment = a meeting time

aspects = parts of an idea or concept

assess = to decide if a person or some object is good or bad

basic = (here) the minimum things which are essential

blamed = when something is your fault, when you caused it

borrowing = when you take something to use but you must give it back

ceiling = the roof (inside)

celebrate = to join with others and be happy about something

conditions = (here) the things that you must do as part of an agreement

connected = (here) joined up, turned on

cover = (here) to include

current = now

damage = when something is broken

deceiving = when something is different to how it is shown or described

deposit = the amount you must save before you can get a loan from a bank

desire = something that you want

directly = (here) when you have no-one in between, such as a real estate agent.

equal = the same as

explore = to find out new things

facilities = things which help you, make your life easier or more comfortable

furnished = when you have chairs, tables, sofas, refrigerators, etc inside your house

in addition = as well as

in your interests = is good for you

inspect = look at

legal contract = a set of rules about an agreement you have with a person or company, which you must follow

listed = put on a list which others can see

loan = the money you borrow money from a bank (for example, to buy a house)

manage = to look after

master's degree = a high level university course

nightmare = a very bad dream

on your behalf = when someone does something in place of you, for you

particular = when talking about one thing

part-time = not full time

previous = before, earlier

price range = all the prices between a lower price and a higher price

privately = it has nothing to do with the government

property = a building such as a house, apartment, factory, hall, shed, etc

provide = give

Public = (here) owned by the government

public transport = trains, buses, trams which carry people from one place to another

real estate agents = people who help others find a place to live

referees = people who know you who can say that you are a good person

rental accommodation = a house or apartment which is rented (not owned by you)

representative = someone who can speak for you

responsibilities = the things you are responsible for, which you must do

retirement = when you are no longer working (when you are old)

salary = the amount of money you earn in your job

secure = safe

shortlist = a list of the things which are good

sort = (here) type

steady income = when you have a job which pays you regularly (e.g. fortnightly or monthly)

submitted = when you have given something to somebody else who will make a decision about it

suburb = an area of a city where people live

suitable = when something meets your needs

wardrobes = a place where you keep your clothes, usually in the bedroom

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