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## **WHEN CAN A TENANT BE ASKED TO PAY FOR WATER CHARGES?**



As water charges are forecast to jump considerably on the back of the cost of waterproofing South East Queensland, it is timely to revisit when a lessor/agent can pass on charges for water usage to the tenant.

Lessors are only allowed to pass on the full water consumption costs to tenants if:

- the rental premises are individually metered (or water is delivered by vehicle); and
- the rental premises are water efficient; and
- the tenancy agreement states the tenant must pay for water consumption.

Water efficient premises should meet the 3-star WELS rating, which is:

- a maximum flow rate of nine litres per minute for showerheads, internal cold water taps and single mixer taps (excluding taps for bathtubs and appliances); and
- dual flush toilets using less than 6.5 litres on full flush, 3.5 litres on half flush and 4 litres for the average flush volume (based on the average of one full flush and four half flushes).

If the premises are individually metered but not water efficient, and the agreement states the tenant must pay for water, the lessor must pay for a reasonable amount of water. The tenant is liable for any consumption above the agreed amount.

**However, if the property is not individually metered, then the water charges cannot be passed onto the tenants to pay.**

## **ARE YOU READY FOR DIGITAL TV?**

Between 2010 and 2013 analog free-to-air TV signals are being switched off and replaced with digital-only signals. To watch digital TV after the switch off, your tenants will need equipment that's capable of receiving digital TV—equipment like a set top box (for connecting to an analog TV) or a TV with a built-in digital tuner.

The right antenna and cabling system are also important factors in receiving good digital TV reception. The TV antenna system for your property may need to be upgraded and as a landlord you need to ensure this is done.

The switch off will be rolled out progressively around the country, region by region. If you would like to know more about the switch to digital TV visit [www.digitalready.gov.au](http://www.digitalready.gov.au)





**VS**



**Regular maintenance = Rental income flow**

Tim White, Senior Business Relationship Manager, Victoria  
Terri Scheer

Good Property Managers and landlords know the importance of keeping their rental properties well maintained, not only are tenants entitled by law to have a safe and habitable living environment, it is also in a landlord's financial interests to ensure the property is kept in good condition. After all, without rent coming in regularly each month, a property is worthless. Prospective tenants viewing a neglected property are also less likely to want to rent it. Meanwhile, tenants residing in a property that is suffering from neglect are more likely to treat the property poorly and not pay their rent on time.

If a property does not receive ongoing general maintenance, and if repairs are not acted upon straight away, in the long run the work is only going to cost more and take longer when maintenance or repairs are finally undertaken. Furthermore, the value of a property in disrepair is significantly lowered, decreasing both its investment and rental income potential. Many landlords insurance providers expect homeowners to maintain their property to the standards of the relevant Tenancies Act, and failure to do so could result in claims being denied.

The landlord may like to arrange routine maintenance on an annual basis such as checking drains and gutters, checking for signs of mould or damp, having air-conditioners serviced, mending any broken or leaking fixtures and generally inspecting and repairing any aspects of the property that could present problems. Examining fences and garden walls to ensure they remain in sound condition together with inspecting the roof and any chimneys for signs of damage are vital.

Other things that can affect the quality of tenant applying for a property is the cosmetic maintenance too, when necessary is essential. Touching up the paint job on interior walls when the property is between tenants is a simple enough task, and reasonably inexpensive. If landlords keep their rental properties in good condition, ultimately they will prevent unnecessary

**PROPERTIES RECENTLY RENTED**

- Regents Park \$350.00 per week  
4 bedroom, ensuite, single lock-up
- Boronia Heights \$320.00 per week  
4 bedroom, ensuite, single carport
- Heritage Park \$355.00 per week  
4 bedrooms, 1 bathroom, double garage

**LOGAN WEST LEADER BUSINESS  
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Thank you to all our valued clients who voted for us in this years business achiever awards.

1st October 2010 is the big night so we will keep you updated on the outcome!

