



# Toora Women housing programs

## About Toora

Toora is a feminist, secular, not-for-profit organisation that has been delivering some of the largest gender-specific services to women, non-binary and feminine-identifying people and their children in the ACT and surrounds since 1982.

Our purpose is to support, connect and advocate for women in the ACT and surrounding regions who are impacted by domestic violence, homelessness, institutions, and substance dependency to create better life outcomes and community change.

We support women, with or without accompanying children, with complex issues who have experienced past or present traumas, such as:

- the impact of their own or another's drug and alcohol use
- domestic, family and sexual violence
- homelessness or needing support to stay out of the homelessness system
- mental health issues
- contact with the corrections system.

Our current programs range across a variety of settings, such as crisis and transitional accommodation, alcohol and other drugs (AOD) day programs, counselling and outreach support, allowing Toora to provide wrap-around support based on each client's needs.

Toora is a Crisis Accommodation Provider (as declared by the ACT Attorney-General) and a registered Community Housing Provider recognised by [Housing ACT](#).

All contacts with Toora are confidential and are in line with the [Privacy Act 1988](#) and [Toora's Privacy Policy](#).

Find out more about Toora at [www.toora.org.au](http://www.toora.org.au).

## Crisis and transitional accommodation offered by Toora

Toora offers supported accommodation across a range of settings, including rooms in a group-share environment and standalone units and houses for women, non-binary and feminine-identifying people and their accompanying children.

Clients in an independent living situation are expected to meet the conditions associated with sustaining their occupancy agreement, such as keeping the gardens, yard and house in good order, connecting the utilities in their own name and paying their fortnightly rent.

Clients living in shared accommodation each have their own bedroom. All other facilities (such as kitchen, bathroom, laundry and living areas) are shared with other residents.



Service	Description	Accommodation style	Children accepted?	Referral pathways	Contact details
<b>Women's Program</b>	Crisis and transitional accommodation to women and their accompanying children who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness.	Share house or standalone house or unit	Yes, 16 years and under	Through <a href="#">OneLink</a> or self-referral	<b>OneLink:</b> 1800 176 468 <b>Toora:</b> (02) 6122 7000 or <a href="mailto:intake@toora.org.au">intake@toora.org.au</a>
<b>Coming Home</b>	Safe accommodation for women exiting the ACT corrections system or in connection with the criminal justice system. Also provides outreach support.	Share house or standalone house	Yes, 16 years and under	Through the Justice and Community Services Directorate or self-referral	<b>Toora:</b> (02) 6122 7000 or <a href="mailto:intake@toora.org.au">intake@toora.org.au</a>
<b>Lesley's Place</b>	Residential alcohol and other drug (AOD) treatment and recovery support for women, non-binary and other feminine-identifying people aged 18 or older, with or without accompanying children, who are impacted by alcohol and other drug dependencies.  Residents must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• have undergone withdrawal or a period of abstinence from substances before entering our accommodation</li> <li>• provide a negative result on a drug screen on entry</li> <li>• attend our AOD Counselling and Day Program.</li> </ul>	Share house	Yes: up to three years old	Self-referral	<b>Toora:</b> (02) 6122 7000 or <a href="mailto:intake@toora.org.au">intake@toora.org.au</a>



## Rental costs

Rents are set based on each client's assessable income and are reviewed twice a year, in line with the increase in Centrelink payments in April and October.

When starting an occupancy agreement with Toora, clients must pay two weeks rent in advance. If this is not feasible, Toora will work with the client to develop an individualised repayment plan.

## Toora share houses

For clients living in share houses other than Lesley's Place, the fortnightly rental payment is the sum of the following items:

Item	Amount
Fortnightly utilities fee	\$70
Portion of Commonwealth Rent Assistance the client and any permitted co-occupants receive	100%
Portion of the client's income*	For clients aged above 21 years: 25% For clients aged 21 years or less: 15%
Portion of any Family Tax Benefit A payments the client and any permitted co-occupants are eligible to receive	15%

## Toora standalone properties

For clients living in standalone houses and units, the fortnightly rental payment is the sum of the following items:

Item	Amount
Portion of Commonwealth Rent Assistance the household receives	100%
Portion of all income* received by members of the household aged above 21 years	25%
Portion of all income* received by members of the household aged 21 years or less	15%
Portion of any Family Tax Benefit A or B payments the household is eligible to receive	15%
Portion of all Child Support Payments received for any members of the household	25%



## Lesley's Place

For clients living at Lesley's Place, the fortnightly payment includes rent, food and therapeutic services. It is the sum of the following items:

Item	Amount
Portion of Commonwealth Rent Assistance the household receives	100%
Portion of the client's income*	50%
Portion of any Family Tax Benefit A or B payments the client is eligible to receive for children in residence with them	15%

**\* Income calculation notes:**

- In the case of a client engaged in casual employment, Toora will use up to the last six pay periods to calculate the fortnightly rent payment.
- Supplementary payments made by Centrelink for specific purposes are not deemed to be income for the purposes of calculating income-based rent.
- To avoid doubt, the calculation of income applies to the tenant and each permitted co-occupant, regardless of whether they are residing at the premises during the relevant period.

## Frequently asked questions

### Before you begin living at a Toora property

#### Q. How do I register for assistance with housing?

You can register by calling OneLink on 1800 176 468 or calling us directly on (02) 6122 7000. We will organise an Intake Assessment for you with our Intake Team.

After this assessment, if a place is available, you will be allocated a property or room and assigned a Case Coordinator to assist you.

#### Q. Will I need to provide references?

No. As part of our confidentiality agreement with you, we will not contact current or previous employers or real estate agents for a reference.

#### Q. What can I bring with me?

If you are staying in one of our shared properties or at Lesley's Place, you can bring two suitcases/bags. Our stand-alone properties are furnished, so it will not be possible for your furniture to be moved into the property; however, we can assist you with finding an appropriate storage facility if needed.

#### Q. How much will my rent be?

We consider all assessable income types when determining your rent calculation. Please see the rental costs table in this document. Should your income change during your tenancy, you must let our Property Team know within seven days.

Your rent amount may change if you move between programs.



### **Q. Do I need to pay two weeks' rent in advance?**

Yes, but not the moment you move in. We will calculate a pro-rata amount from the date you commence to the date of your first CentrePay payment, and this amount can be paid back in instalments. Regular rent payments will be taken at the same time as your regular Centrelink payments are made, as we generally use CentrePay.

## **Bond**

### **Q. How do I pay my bond?**

Your bond must be paid within the first week of your tenancy. We will provide you with a rental bond help application form and submit it to ACT Housing for you.

If you are eligible, ACT Housing will provide you with an interest-free loan and pay the Bond Office on your behalf. They will contact you to make a repayment arrangement for this loan.

### **Q. Does it matter if I haven't started receiving Centrelink payments yet or don't have a job?**

No. We can make interim arrangements for you until your payments commence or you start work.

### **Q. How do I apply for Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA)?**

If you receive eligible Centrelink payments, we will provide you with a rent certificate to take to Centrelink. They will then organise payment of CRA with your regular Centrelink payments. Clients are expected to organise this payment themselves; however, your Case Coordinator can help if required.

If you are not eligible for CRA, please let our Property Team know.

## **Agreement signing**

### **Q. How do I sign my agreement?**

We will meet you at the property on the day you move in to go through the agreement with you and bring your Welcome Pack.

### **Q. What is included in my Welcome Pack?**

The pack will include a copy of all the documents you sign on the day, a rent certificate to take to Centrelink, a cleaning guide for routine inspections, grocery vouchers and a MyWay card (if needed), as well as some non-perishable food and toiletries to get you started.

## **Moving In**

### **Q. Do I need to connect utilities?**

If you are moving into a shared property, you won't need to do this. The cost of utilities is covered by a \$70 a fortnight fee noted in the rental costs tables in this document.

If you are moving into a standalone property, you need to organise this before the move-in date if possible. If you are not able to do this before moving in, please arrange it as soon as possible.



## **Q. How do I organise utility connections?**

To help choose the best electricity plan for your circumstances, we recommend using the following government website: [www.energymadeeasy.gov.au](http://www.energymadeeasy.gov.au).

For internet connections, you can choose any provider you prefer, and we will be able to confirm whether your property is NBN ready.

## **Paying rent**

### **Q. How do I pay my rent?**

Most of our clients use CentrePay (or CPay). However, we can also provide bank account details for you to transfer rent into.

### **Q. What do I do if I think I won't be paid on time or enough to pay rent?**

If you are experiencing any issues with your Centrelink payments or salary, please contact your Case Coordinator or our Property Team to discuss your options before your next rent payment is due.

### **Q. What is arrears?**

If you miss a payment or pay less than your correct rent amount, this is known as being in arrears. This can affect your rental record and any applications you have with Housing ACT and can result in the termination of your tenancy. For this reason, it's important that, if you do go into arrears, you make arrangements to repay the overdue amount as soon as possible.

The Tenancy Team and your Case Coordinator will assist you in understanding how to manage your rent payments. If you need help with budgeting, your Case Coordinator can help you find resources or training. We will do everything we can to ensure you stay on top of your rent payments.

## **Routine inspections**

### **Q. How often will I have inspections?**

We conduct routine inspections at the property on a quarterly basis. Case Coordinators will also routinely review the standard of cleanliness and maintenance at your property during case management meetings and House Meetings.

On some occasions, the owner of the property may attend with us. This is usually a representative from Housing ACT or CHC Australia. Should this occur, we will advise you ahead of time, as per your Occupancy Agreement, so that you can be absent at the time and maintain your privacy.

### **Q. How do I get ready for my inspections?**

We will include a copy of the cleaning checklist for routine inspections in your Welcome Pack, and you can ask your Case Coordinator for a copy at any time.

### **Q. Do I need to be home when the inspection is conducted?**

You are welcome to be there if you like, but you do not have to be.



## Rent reviews and renewals

### Q. What are rent reviews, and how do they work?

Twice a year (in line with the increase in Centrelink payments in April and October), we will re-calculate your rent. Your new rent amount will be calculated in the same way we initially set the rent, as outlined in the rental costs tables in this document. We will let you know in writing before any rent increase starts.

### Q. What if I disagree with the new rental amount?

Should you disagree with the new rent calculation, please contact the Property Team on (02) 6122 7000 or email [property@toora.org.au](mailto:property@toora.org.au). If you are still unsatisfied after this discussion, you can appeal to the Toora Director Homelessness, Property and Intake on (02) 6122 7000.

### Q. How do I renew my agreement?

As we provide crisis and transitional accommodation, we will generally plan for you to move out of a Toora property within 6 to 12 months. Before the end of your agreement period, your Case Coordinator will be in touch to discuss your plans and confirm whether you would like to sign on for an extension. If an extension is needed, we will make a time to sign this with you.

If you do not have any alternate accommodation at the end of the transitional period, the Director or CEO will need to approve the extension.

## Repairs and damage

### Q. What do I do when something stops working or is broken in the property?

Please contact our Property Team on (02) 6122 7000 or email [property@toora.org.au](mailto:property@toora.org.au) and we will organise a repair for you.

### Q. What happens if I accidentally break something?

While it can feel distressing when accidents occur, we're always here to talk through any issues in the property and help you find a solution. Please contact our Property Team to discuss. We can help you find the right tradesperson to hire to carry out repairs.

### Q. What happens if someone else damages the property?

Please reach out to our Property Team to discuss your options.

## Leaving the property

### Q. Can I leave before the end of the agreement term?

Absolutely! Unlike a tenancy agreement with an agency or private landlord, you are welcome to move at any time in the occupancy term and there is no fee to do so.

### Q. Do I need to give notice before I leave?

While we do appreciate having as much notice as we can if you're vacating, there is no minimum period. It is important that you let us know before you leave, rather than after, so that we can help you prepare.



### **Q. What do I need to do before I leave?**

Once you've let us know, we will make a time to visit and carry out a pre-vacate inspection. We can help you to identify what cleaning would be needed and talk about whether you might need to take any furniture with you for your new home.

After you have vacated, we'll visit again for the vacate inspection to confirm all the cleaning is complete.

### **Q. How do I get my bond back?**

Once the vacate inspection is over and cleaning is complete, we will check to see whether any rent is left owing. If rent is paid, and there is no damage to the property you need to repair, we will organise your bond refund for you.

### **Q. A What kind of outreach support is available once I vacate the property?**

Your Case Coordinator can continue to support you in an outreach capacity for three months after you exit the property. Please speak with your Case Coordinator to discuss accessing outreach as part of your Case Plan.

## **Feedback and complaints**

### **Q. How do I make a complaint?**

Our feedback and complaints process is on our website at [www.toora.org.au/contact-us/your-feedback/](http://www.toora.org.au/contact-us/your-feedback/)

## **Any further questions?**

Please call the Property Team between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday, on (02) 6122 7000 or email [property@toora.org.au](mailto:property@toora.org.au).