

Tenancy Area	What do the changes in the new Residential Tenancy and Rooming Accommodation Act mean?
Tenancy agreements	A lessor or agent may not commit a tenant to a tenancy agreement unless they have given a copy of it to the prospective tenant prior.
	If money is taken from a prospective tenant before a tenancy agreement is entered into, it must be treated as a holding deposit. The property must not be offered to another person until the option period (48 hours unless otherwise indicated on the receipt) passes. If the prospective tenant does not inform the lessor/agent of their intention to accept the tenancy or otherwise during the option time the holding deposit is forfeited.
Rent	Properties must be advertised at a fixed price. A rental bond may not be taken by the agent/lessor if this was not the case.
	Rent cannot be increased less than 6 months after a tenant commenced a previous increase.
	If a method of paying rent other than one of the Act's 'approved methods' is requested (e.g. rent cards where there is a contract with a third party), the lessor must show the tenant has been made aware of any charges in paying rent that way and offered two other approved methods.
Change of agreement terms	If a tenant receives an offer of a new agreement in a current tenancy and there are significant changes to the terms of that agreement (including a significant rent increase) they may make an application to the Tribunal disputing the terms. The downside of this is that the agreement must be signed before the application is made.
Entry	There are two new grounds for entry: a) for a lessor/agent to check on repairs carried out; b) to check on a significant breach by a tenant when a notice was issued. Both entries must be made within 2 weeks of either the repair or the end of the remedy period on breach notice.
	Times which are not reasonable to enter a property (unless the tenant agrees otherwise) are set out. Unreasonable times are: Sundays or public holidays or other days between 6pm and 8am.
	Open houses and auctions may not be held on site without the tenant's consent.
Privacy	Photos or images containing tenants' possessions are not allowed to be used for advertising without the tenant's consent.
Repairs	Tenants may make an urgent application to the Tribunal in regard to repairs the Act considers 'urgent'.
Termination of agreements	Tenants may go directly to the Tribunal to ask for a termination on grounds of the lessor's failure to remedy a breach.
	When a lessor/agent ends an agreement without grounds the tenant must get 2 months notice. Currently tenants on fixed term agreements only get 2 weeks.
New bonds coverage	Any bonds taken by on-campus housing providers must be lodged with the Residential Tenancies Authority (commences Jan 1, 2010)
New coverage on campus for-profit providers and off campus housing provided by the university	Room only or residential tenancies in these circumstances will be covered by the new Act but not until July 1, 2010.
<i>This table is information only and should not be used as tenancy advice</i>	