

1st April 2020

Update Re Government Announcement / COVID-19

Dear Tenants,

The Accommodation Centre Team are following all guidelines as presented by the NZ government and will continue to do so as this situation evolves. We will endeavour to keep you as informed as possible throughout this time.

Rent

The economic impact of coronavirus has been far reaching and has affected not only tenants but landlords as well. The Government has announced that businesses can apply for wage subsidies to help affected businesses and there are also other support packages available. There is more information about this here:

<https://www.employment.govt.nz/leave-and-holidays/other-types-of-leave/coronavirus-workplace/wage-subsidy/>

Requests for rent reductions

This is a tough time for many New Zealanders, and we urge you to communicate with us as soon as possible if your income will be affected because of the COVID-19 pandemic. *Please let us know if you are experiencing difficulties financially before going into rent arrears and we will work with both you and the owner to come up with the best possible solution for both parties under the circumstances.*

We may be able to come to an agreement with the landlord if you can't meet your full rent obligations, but we can't offer any guarantees.

Just to reiterate - If you fall into rent arrears or think you will fall into arrears, please contact us so we can discuss options.

Key changes to the law that you need to be aware of

- There is now a freeze on *rent increases*. **This does not mean you don't have to pay rent.** It means that there will be no rent increases for the next six months.
- Your tenancy will not be terminated during the lockdown period, unless both of us agree it should be terminated.
- If your fixed-term tenancy ends during the lockdown period and you wish to stay, it will automatically become a periodic tenancy.
- If you have COVID-19 symptoms or test positive, you can self-isolate at the rental property. This will ensure that you can recover without contact with outsiders.

Time frames

- The new laws took effect on Thursday March 26, 2020

- The rent freeze on increases applies for an initial six-month period
 - The protections against terminations will last for an initial three-months
 - At the end of both initial periods, the Government will evaluate whether they need to be extended.
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For more information about the new laws introduced click here:

<https://www.hud.govt.nz/residential-housing/covid-19-rent-freeze-and-tenancy-terminations/>

<https://tacc.nz/?/content/covid - 19>

Routine Inspections

Until the self- isolation period ends, we cannot complete any three-monthly inspections scheduled over coming weeks in person. Therefore, we will be liaising with tenants, asking you to send photos and/or conduct a video walk through of the property to help meet the owners insurance requirements.

The Insurance Council of New Zealand has advised that:

“Periodic inspections should remain a business as usual response for any property owner, but if a tenant at a property is self-isolating or sick with COVID-19, the inspection should take place as soon as is practical after health clearances. If in any doubt ICNZ recommends that landlords check with their own insurer about their specific requirements and how they are treating it.”

Contracting work

All non-urgent maintenance is on hold.

Our plumbers, electricians and small appliance technicians are available for emergency work only and will take all necessary precautions to protect themselves, their team & you the tenants during the work. We will still be logging other maintenance requests that will be deal with in order of priority after the self-isolation period ends.

Communicating with your property manager

As you can imagine we are receiving a lot of calls and emails from both tenants and owners. Please **email** in the first instance and note, we are working on a 24-hour turnaround time and wherever possible we will call you to discuss the situation and follow up with a brief email if required.

We will continue to update you with new developments as they come to hand.

This is a difficult time for everyone but if we all take precautionary measures, we can all do our bit in limiting the spread of Covid-19 and protecting this region from further impacts.

Be kind and look out for each other, we are in this together.

The TACC Team