ACCOMMODATION TIPS AND TRAPS

When arriving in Canberra, we believe it is very important to live in accommodation that allows you to easily settle into your new environment. Therefore ANU College recommends Homestay through the ANU College preferred provider, the Australian Homestay Network. Students signing up for Homestay need to stay a minimum of 4 weeks but may to choose to stay longer.

After 4 weeks of Homestay, many students decide to move out with friends into group houses within the Canberra region. Before doing this it is extremely important for students to understand their rights and obligations of being in a group house or in another private arrangement. Unfortunately some students have encountered some trouble and been taken advantage of by private rental arrangements.

Therefore before agreeing to rent a property, become part of a group house or become a boarder, you should take a look at the Share Housing Booklet – ‘Crowded House’ which can also be found through the ACT Tenants’ Union website (http://www.tenantsact.org.au/)

Two very important points to remember are:

BONDS
Most people who you rent from will require a deposit or bond – usually 4 weeks rent – to be paid to them before you move in.

The law in the ACT says that rental bonds must be lodged with the Office of Rental Bonds (ORB) (http://www.canberraconnect.act.gov.au/Services/r/rental-bonds). Everyone who contributes to a bond should sign a bond lodgement form. This form records the fact that you are entitled to the bond when the tenancy/lease/agreement ends. The money and the form then go to the ORB, and the money is held in trust until the tenancy finishes and a bond claim is made. You can check with the ORB to ensure the bond is lodged if you don’t receive a receipt from them.

If you enter into a boarding arrangement you should sign an occupancy agreement and request that your bond be paid to the Office of Rental Bonds. For more information please consult the ACT Tenants’ Union website. (http://www.tenantsact.org.au/rentingAdvice/occupancy-factsheets/Occupancy-Agreements)

SUB-LETTING
A sub-tenancy is created when an existing tenant decides to create a ‘third party interest’ in the premises by renting out part, or all of their rental property. For example Mr Smith rents out a property and signs a lease with the owner of the property. Then, Mr Smith rents out the property to you.

It is very important to remember that Mr Smith can only do this if he has permission from the owner of the property. If he does not have permission, you are not entitled to any protection against excessive rent increases, or wrongful eviction. It also means that, if the landlord/property owner later discovered the unauthorised sub-letting and objected to it, you could be immediately evicted. Ask to see written evidence of the landlord’s approval before you move in.

Also note that by failing to seek written permission to sub-let, Mr Smith is also in breach of his tenancy agreement.

IF YOU ARE IN DOUBT OR CONCERNED ABOUT ANY MATTER TO DO WITH ACCOMMODATION YOU SHOULD ASK A STUDENT SUPPORT OFFICER AT ANU COLLEGE
Email: studentsupport@anucollege.edu.au