Tips to Consider

• If you receive a pension or other income support make sure you contact Centrelink to discuss how your payments may be affected if you move house.

• It is wise to add up the total cost of rent, telephone, transport, clothes, medicine and other items before signing a contract for accommodation because some contracts bind you to ongoing fees that may be difficult to afford, especially if your circumstances change.

• It is wise to get advice from a solicitor or community legal service BEFORE you sign any contract to ensure you know your rights, obligations and the conditions of the contract.

• There may be a lengthy waiting period for a vacancy in the aged care facilities you prefer, so booking in ahead of time can help.

Useful Places to contact

The Tenant Advice and Advocacy Service provides information about your rights and responsibilities as a tenant. It can also advocate for you when dealing with a lessor or real estate agent, especially if you are being unfairly treated.

The Residential Tenants Authority provides information about your rights and responsibilities as a tenant.

Home and Community Care (HACC) provides services and care for frail older people and people with disabilities living independently. Depending on your needs, HACC may be able to help you with cooking, cleaning, banking, bathing, transport, home maintenance, and a range of other services.

Home Assist Secure provides information and advice on home security, maintenance, minor modifications, and details of trades people.

Carelink provides information and advice on home security, maintenance, minor modifications, and details of trades people.

Carer Respite provides information and advice on home security, maintenance, minor modifications, and details of trades people.

Department of Housing provides information about your rights and responsibilities as a tenant. It can also advocate for you when dealing with a lessor or real estate agent, especially if you are being unfairly treated.

Office of Fair Trading Advice Line provides information about your rights and responsibilities as a tenant. It can also advocate for you when dealing with a lessor or real estate agent, especially if you are being unfairly treated.

Accreditation Branch provides information about your rights and responsibilities as a tenant. It can also advocate for you when dealing with a lessor or real estate agent, especially if you are being unfairly treated.

Retirement Village Association provides information about your rights and responsibilities as a tenant. It can also advocate for you when dealing with a lessor or real estate agent, especially if you are being unfairly treated.

Seniors Enquiry Line provides information about your rights and responsibilities as a tenant. It can also advocate for you when dealing with a lessor or real estate agent, especially if you are being unfairly treated.

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The information contained in this publication is for information only and is not to be relied upon as legal advice. You are encouraged to consult a solicitor, or call Legal Aid Queensland or a community legal centre, if you are unsure of how laws apply to your situation.

The Queensland Department of Families and the Queensland Law Society have made every effort to ensure the information is accurate and up to date as at February 2003 and do not accept responsibility for any errors or omissions.
Mary’s Story

Since the death of her husband two years ago, Mary has been considering moving from her big house on the farm to something more manageable. She wants to stay in the same area so that she can still see her daughter and grandchildren regularly.

Mary wants to remain independent, but is unsure how she would manage if it gets harder for her to do her shopping, cleaning and maintaining her house. She is also not sure what type of housing or accommodation might suit her, or what her rights and obligations are if she leases or rents instead of buying a new house.

There are many types of accommodation available for seniors today. These range from independent living in a retirement village to hostels and nursing homes that provide meals, cleaning and personal care. Before making a long-term decision about where you will live, it could help to discuss your options with trusted family members, friends, your doctor or an Aged Care Assessment Team.

Rights and Obligations
There are many points you need to be aware of about the accommodation you choose. Some of these include:

- If you plan to live in a retirement or rental village it is important to plan for ongoing fees and charges.
- Whether you live in a retirement village or rent privately, it is important to know and understand the conditions in your contract or lease.
- There are specific conditions relating to selling or ceasing to live in retirement village units.
- It is important to be aware of the circumstances in which a landlord may evict you from rented premises, and to seek advice before vacating the premises.
- In many forms of accommodation, as a resident you can have direct input into the management through a residents’ committee.
- If you subsidise the construction of a granny flat or purchase of a property to live in with other family members, it is important to draw up a family agreement to protect your rights and assets.

Retirement Villages Act 1999
This Act sets out the rights and obligations of residents and operators. It also establishes the minimum requirements for residence contracts. For more information contact Office of Fair Trading Advice Line on 1300 658 030.

Residential Services (Accreditation) Act 2000
This Act sets out minimum standards for premises, meals and support services provided in private aged rental villages, supported accommodation, hostels and boarding houses. For more information or to check if a service is registered, contact the Office of Fair Trading’s Accreditation Branch on 3239 3363.

Nursing Homes and Hostels
Residential Aged Care Facilities are commonly referred to as nursing homes or hostels and are primarily funded by Government. To be able to move in you need to have been assessed as eligible by an Aged Care Assessment Team. The fees and accommodation bond or charge (if applicable) will depend on your individual financial situation. For further information contact Carelink on 1800 052 222.

The Home & Residence Choices for Older People brochure has information about a wide range of accommodation options. It can help you choose what sort of housing or accommodation will best suit you. This brochure is available free at Centrelink offices or by phoning 13 23 00.

If you are on a low income you may be eligible for a bond from the Department of Housing or rental assistance from Centrelink.

If you move into an aged care facility you should expect to be treated with dignity and respect. You should expect a high level of privacy, confidentiality, care and support. You will have the same legal rights and responsibilities as you did when you lived at home.