

www.rahu.org.au/join

Together we can

Educate and share information with each other
about our rights as renters

Support and defend each other from exploitation
and eviction

Build a long-term community of renters to self
represent our rights as renters for safe and secure
housing for all.

The Renters And Housing Union (VIC) is a member-run union of renters and people in precarious housing, formed through the Rentstrike as a response to COVID19.

We collectively organise for the right to safe and secure housing through self-advocacy, education, and frontline eviction defence.

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The RAHU Guide To **Self-Eviction** **(Don't Do It!)**

RAHU believes our members are stronger when we have access to useful and practical information about our rights. However, this is general information only, not legal advice. If you need legal advice, please contact a community legal centre.

What is a "Self-Eviction"?

Renters are often made to feel unwelcome in their own home by landlords and real estate agents who pressure us to leave our own homes by using fear tactics and harassment. This kind of pressure can take many forms and might look like:

- Daily emails and text messages about payment of rental debt;
- Unscheduled and repeated phone calls;
- Ignoring reasonable requests to repair the property;
- Property inspections without proper notice; and/or
- Threatening renters with eviction.
- Your landlord wanting you out so they can renovate the property;
- Housemates moving out unexpectedly, leaving you to pay the rent;
- Your rent costs more than 30% of your income;
- Your landlord refusing to give you a rent reduction; and/or
- You feel scared to ask for a rent reduction, even though you need one; and/or
- You feel worried about rental arrears, deferred rent, or not getting your bond back in full.

To escape this pressure and harassment, renters often choose to voluntarily leave their homes when they don't want to. This is called a "self-eviction" and is a massive problem we face as renters.

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, evictions are currently banned in Victoria until March 29 2021.

All 'notices to vacate' issued to renters before this date are invalid.

Why is it important that I don't Self-Evict?

Although it can feel like the easiest way out of a bad situation, self-eviction can cause other problems for renters.

Leaving your home because your landlord is putting pressure on you can put you at increased risk of:

- Experiencing homelessness, couch surfing and/or other forms of housing insecurity;
- Being left with unaddressed rent arrears;
- Being the subject of a negative VCAT ruling because VCAT determines that you "abandoned" the property;
- Not getting your bond back if you have rental arrears and/or if the landlord makes a claim against the bond for cleaning/ maintenance costs;
- Being added to the tenancy black list.

We know it can seem tough, but resolving the central issue that's pushing you to leave your home is usually the best outcome.

You shouldn't have to forfeit your right to housing to solve the issue you're experiencing.

That's where RAHU comes in!

What should I do if I'm feeling pressured to Self-Evict?

If you are feeling pressured to self-evict, it's important to reach out for help and consider other options before deciding to leave your home.

If you're able to, we recommend letting friends, family, housemates, neighbours, and trusted workmates know that you're feeling pressured to leave your home (but only if you feel safe doing so). Sometimes a friendly ear can help you realise that you are not in this alone and give you the strength to stand up for your right to stay in your home. If you'd like to explore ways to resolve the issue you're experiencing so you can stay in your home, contact us for advice about anything, no matter how small!

How can RAHU help me?

RAHU can help empower you to resolve the issue/s you are facing that are making you feel like you need to leave your home. We are a grassroots, member-run union: our power is in organised and collective action.

RAHU can help you to:

- Negotiate a rent reduction (on-going or until you find new housemates);
- Challenge rent deferrals and debt (you might not have to pay!);
- Put an end to landlord or agent harassment (together we can stand up to the bullies); and
- Get as much of your bond back as possible (without paying for unnecessary services like professional cleaners).

Don't self-evict.

If you don't want to move, but feel you have no other choice, RAHU is here to help!

Join RAHU today and help us help each other!

We are stronger together

Contact us for support: organise@rahu.org.au

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