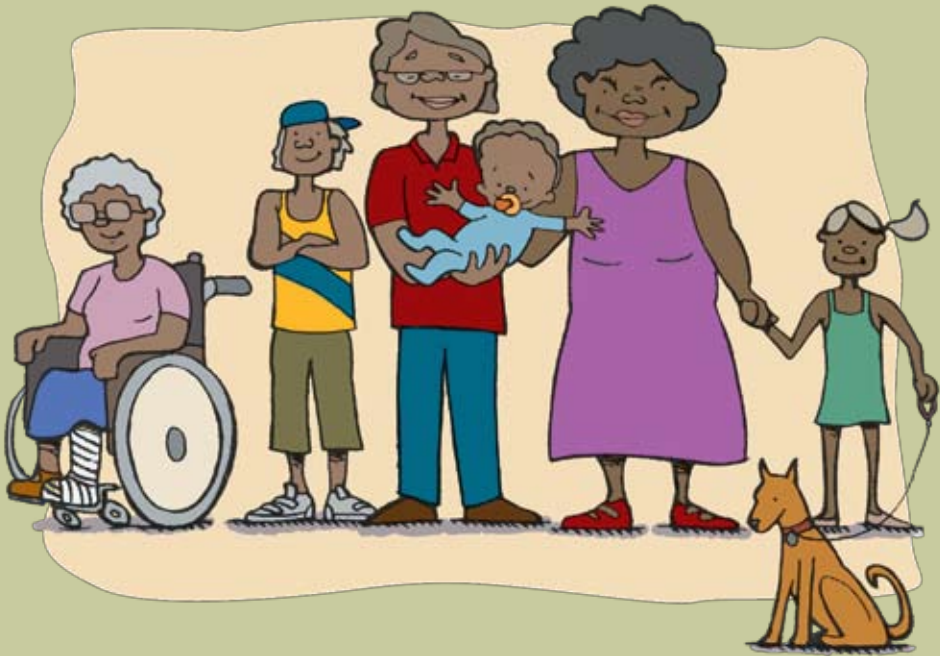




# Right Way Mob



## The Right Way Mob

The Right Way Mob have Mum and Dad, a teenage boy, a little girl, a baby and Aunty. They also have a family dog.

Aunty is diabetic. She is in a wheelchair because of renal disease and trouble with her feet. She needs to be able to get to a local renal unit for dialysis. This is why the family is moving.

The family has been living in private rental accommodation in a regional town.

The Right Way Mob is on the **green** pages.



# Other Way Mob



## The Other Way Mob

The Other Way Mob have Mum and Dad, a teenage boy, a little girl, a baby and Auntie. They also have a family dog.

Auntie is diabetic. She is in a wheelchair because of renal disease and trouble with her feet. She needs to be able to get to a local renal unit for dialysis. This is why the family is moving.

The family has been living in private rental accommodation in a regional town.

The Other Way Mob is on the **orange** pages.

You can follow both families to find out the best way to go about getting a place to live. These stories will tell you what to do and what not to do.



# Right Way Mob



## Packing up and leaving

The Right Way Mob prepare their move carefully.

Mum rings around for somewhere to stay. They know they might have to live somewhere temporarily, until they find what they want.

A caravan park that allows dogs has a place for them. The accommodation can handle a wheelchair and there is a renal unit not too far away.

After giving the owner proper notice, Dad asks the owner if he will provide a reference when they find the home they want. The owner says he's happy to do this because they have been good tenants.

The family then pack their belongings and let the phone, gas and electricity companies know they are leaving.



# Other Way Mob



## Packing up and leaving

The Other Way Mob have packed their things into the car and just taken off.

They made no arrangements about leaving their house and didn't let Sis know they were coming to stay with her.

The phone, gas and electricity have been left on and are still in their names.

Nobody knows they are leaving the regional town and they haven't let anyone know where they are going or found out if there's room for them where they are heading.



# Right Way Mob



## Temporary accommodation

The Right Way Mob arrive at Shady Rest Caravan Park, where they will be staying until they find the right house. The kids are excited about moving to a new place. They can't wait to unpack their things and have a look around the park.

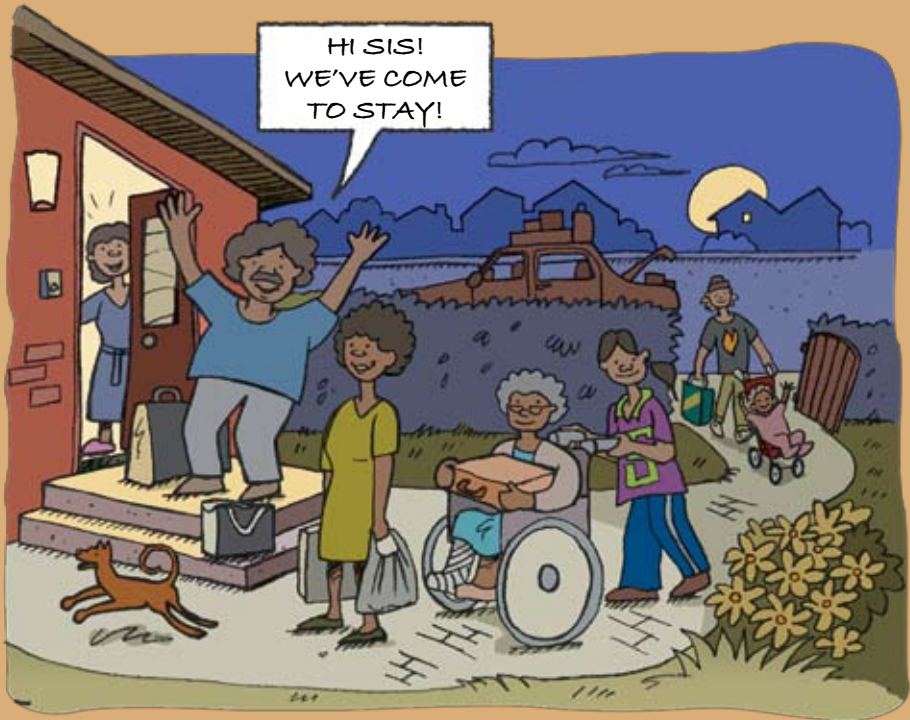
Dad rings Sis to let her know they have arrived OK and will catch up with her once they're settled. They all have a lot of news to catch up on.

Sis invites them over for a BBQ the next evening.

Mum then rings to make arrangements for Aunty's treatment at the nearby renal unit.



# Other Way Mob



## Temporary accommodation

The Other Way Mob have driven all day to reach Dad's sister's house.

Sis is very happy to see the family, but is worried that having so many people staying might upset the neighbours and the Department of Housing and Works (DHW). It took ages for her to find the right house.

She decides to let them stay. She has to look out for them coz they're family.



# Right Way Mob



## Family time

The Right Way Mob arrive at Sis's house. They are all really happy to see each other.

Sis tells them that one of her close friends is in a wheelchair and is going to the same renal unit as Aunty. They could arrange to travel together for treatment.

Sis also gives them information about DHW housing, because she has been through it all with her friend. She says victims of domestic violence, people with severe disabilities, health and child welfare issues may qualify for a priority list, instead of the normal wait-turn list with DHW.

They need to request Priority Assistance. However Sis says demand is so high that even if they get on the priority list they may have to find other accommodation for some months.



# Other Way Mob



## Family time

The Other Way Mob have settled in with Sis.

They are happy, but Sis is really concerned about the noise they are making. The neighbours have noticed as well and are looking over the fence to see what all the noise is about.

Sis is concerned that her DHW tenancy may be threatened if the neighbours complain and that she may be breaching the Tenancy Agreement she signed when she moved into the DHW house.



# Right Way Mob



## Making contact with DHW

Mum phones the local DHW office to find out what she needs to do to apply for a house. That afternoon, Mum goes into the DHW office and fills out an application form. After she fills out the form, DHW give the family an appointment to see if they can get priority assistance.

On the day the appointment is set, Mum and Dad drop Aunty and the kids off with Sis and turn up on time for their appointment. They have talked about their accommodation needs amongst themselves and are able to give DHW a very clear idea of what they need.

They are told that although they may fit into priority assistance, they will still have to wait a long time because of the numbers of people wanting DHW accommodation. They say they are prepared to wait. While they are living at the Shady Rest Caravan Park they will look for private rentals that suit their needs.

They found out during their talk that Centrelink provides rent assistance and DHW provides bond assistance for private rentals.



# Other Way Mob



## Making contact with DHW

Things have been a bit tense at Sis's house and the Other Way Mob want to move in a hurry.

They turn up at the local DHW office and Dad demands a house straight away. He gets angry because the DHW person says they don't have any vacant houses right now.

They are told they will be put on a wait-turn list and will be assessed to see if they qualify for priority housing due to Aunty's illness. They are also told that there are not enough houses for the priority listing and they may have to wait for some time.

Dad is really angry because he doesn't know where they are going to live.

Because Dad was angry and left the meeting, he didn't find out about rent and bond assistance or how to apply for these.



# Right Way Mob



## Sorting out needs

The Right Way Mob begin their house hunting by making a list of what they need and what they can afford.

They are going to need at least 3 bedrooms – they'd prefer 4. One bedroom and the bathroom need to have wheelchair access.

Being near the renal unit would be great and also close to Sis's.

They also need to be easy walking distance from the local schools.

The house needs a secure fence and gates, so the kids and the dog don't go wandering.

The Right Way Mob look at their combined incomes and how much they can afford.

They also know they will need some one-off costs for moving in.

You can see the costs in the 'Taking the Right Steps Checklist' and 'Sorting Your Needs Checklist' at the end of this story.



# Other Way Mob



## Not planning ahead

The Other Way Mob all hop in the car and drive to the nearest real estate office. They all pile out of the car and go into the office. While Mum and Dad are talking to the agent, the kids are running around the office and getting into everything.

The agent tells them he has no accommodation available straight away and that they need to keep looking.

They leave the office quite annoyed at not being able to get what they want.

The Other Way Mob didn't make a good first impression on the agent because of their rowdy behaviour and attitude when he told them there was nothing going.



# Right Way Mob



## Family discussion

After sorting their needs, the Right Way Mob had a good look in the paper and have found 2 private rental houses that suit them.

One house is being let through a real estate agent, the other is a private rental advertised by the owner.

They make a list of the things they need to ask when they ring to make appointments and Dad phones the numbers in the advertisements. He tells them he is interested in the home advertised in the paper. He makes sure that he knows about all the costs involved in moving into the houses.

They decide to make appointments to look at both houses so the family can make the right decision about where to live. They know it's important that they make a good impression at their appointments.



# Right Way Mob



## Finances and support

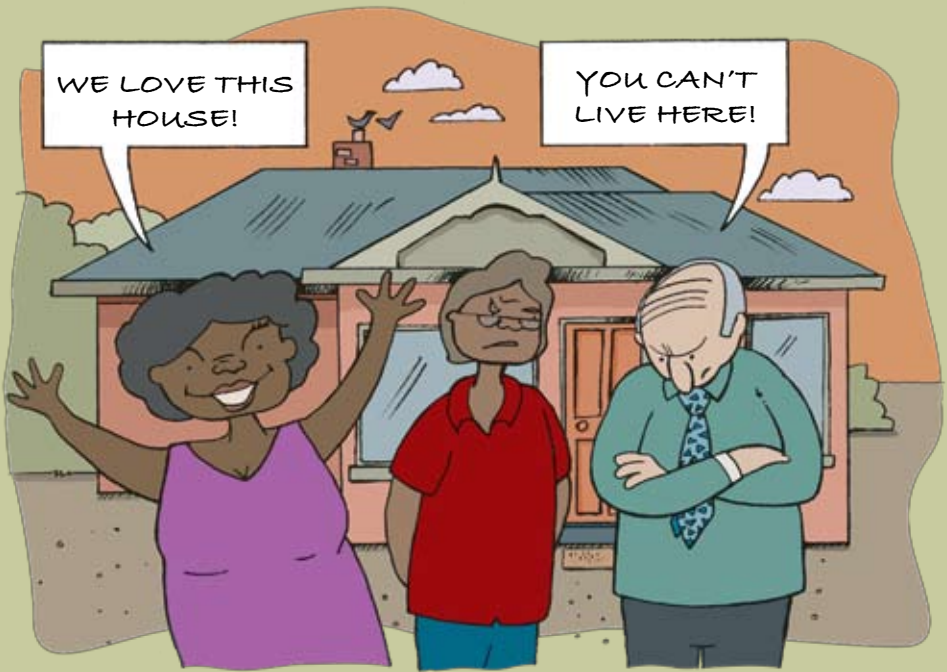
Sis tells the Right Way Mob about support agencies and what they can do to help. She talks about her friend who used a support agency and said they were great. To be on the safe side, they make an appointment to see the same support agency that Sis told them about.

Sis reminds them that they will have to pay the up-front costs listed in the 'Sorting Your Needs Checklist'. However, they may be able to get rent assistance from Centrelink and bond assistance from DHW.

The Right Way Mob know they will need the references they got from owners and agents they have rented from before.

At the appointment they are given help with their application to go on the DHW priority assistance list. They also talk about the money they will need to have ready for their move and make sure they have included everything in their planning.





## Discrimination

The Right Way Mob phone the real estate agent to see if the house is still available and make a time to meet him at the house. Sis looks after the kids and Auntie while Mum and Dad go to look at the two places.

The house was very nice, but the agent wasn't happy with having them as tenants. He said straight out "You can't live here", but didn't say why.

When they got home Mum, Dad and Auntie talked about this. They weren't sure if the agent said this because they were Aboriginal or some other reason.

Sis rang the agent to see if the house was still for rent. It was.

This may be discrimination. Because of their bad experience, they decide they'd like to find out about making a complaint. They find out they can call the Equal Opportunity Commission on 9216 3900 or country callers can call for free on 1800 198 149.



# Other Way Mob



## Turning up to look at a house

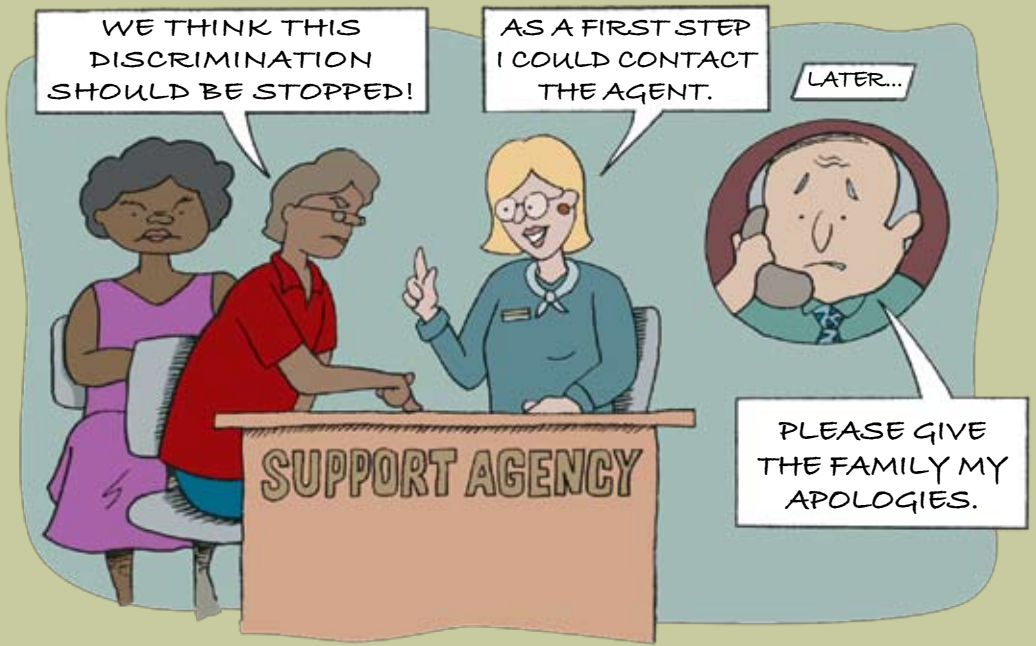
Sis saw an ad for a house in the local paper and rang the real estate agent on behalf of her brother. She arranged a time for the family to look at the house.

They are late arriving and when they get there, the place is already taken. Meanwhile, the kids and the dog are running amuck while Mum and Dad are trying to talk to the agent.

The agent is not happy with the way things are going and the family is angry because once again they are turned down.



# Right Way Mob



## Discrimination

The Right Way Mob contact the support worker who has been assisting them and ask her about following up on a discrimination case.

The support worker asks them to come in and talk through what happened to them. She agrees that they have grounds for lodging a discrimination complaint and gives them some options.

They have one option of the support worker contacting the agent to let him know that they are not happy with the treatment they got from him and are considering lodging a complaint with the Equal Opportunity Commission.

The support worker tells them about going through the Commission. The Right Way Mob decide that having the support worker make contact with the agent is a good first step for them.



# Other Way Mob



## Discrimination

Because the Other Way Mob turned up to see the house late and it was gone, they decided that this was discrimination.

Dad finds out that he can talk to a support agency about this.

The support worker tells him that it is not always discrimination if you don't get the answer you want.

The support worker tells him there may have been other applicants who made a good impression. Discrimination is about being refused a house to rent because of things like being Aboriginal or having a disability.

If they said the house was already rented and you found it wasn't, that could be evidence of discrimination. If they wouldn't rent the house to you because you were Aboriginal or had a disability this would be discrimination.



# Right Way Mob



## Turning up to look at a house

When the Right Way Mob phoned, they find out that the second place is advertised by a private owner. They arrange an appointment with him to have a look at the house. Once again, Sis cares for the kids and Aunty while they keep their appointment with the owner.

They have phoned ahead to find out what time to turn up and make sure they are on time. They have the lists the family made with them, to make sure they ask all the questions that need to be answered.

The Right Way Mob like the look of the house when they arrive. After looking through it, they think this is the right one for them.

They think they've made a good impression on the owner.



# Right Way Mob



## Applying for the house

The Right Way Mob arrange with the owner to make a formal application. They know they may have to pay an option fee of 1 weeks rent when they fill out the application. They dress nicely to help make a good impression on the owner.

Because the family have talked over the decision, have references and know they can afford the place, filling out the documents is easy. Mum, Dad and Aunty fill out the application and give it to the owner, with copies of references.

The owner says there are other applicants and he has to decide who will get the house. He asks them to ring that afternoon.

When Mum rings she finds that their application was successful! They arrange to meet the owner to fill in a Tenancy Agreement and pay the bond and rent in advance.



# Right Way Mob



## Tenancy Agreements

The Right Way Mob meet with the owner to go through the Tenancy Agreement and arrange a time for moving in.

The owner says that this agreement is legally binding and that once they sign it, they must do everything they have agreed to. They ask if they can have time to go through it and make sure they can meet all the requirements.

They also need to check that they have covered everything in the 'Sorting Your Needs Checklist'.

The family are happy with most of the agreement, but notice that there is nothing about keeping pets. The owner says he forgot to include it when they mentioned it earlier. He makes the necessary changes including the \$100 pet bond.

The Right Way Mob are now happy with the agreement and arrange to sign it and pay all the agreed costs to the owner.



# Right Way Mob



## Moving in

These two stories show that by planning your move carefully, your house-hunting experience can be a happy one. There are many possible pitfalls along the way if you don't plan. The main thing is that you plan ahead.

Because the Other Way Mob didn't plan, they still do not have a house.

The following pages have checklists for you to photocopy and use. These list all the things you should think about and discuss with your family when you are moving to new accommodation.

There is much more to these two stories. Once people move into a house, they need to check the state of the house and make a property condition report. This and other information is in the next booklet called "Keeping a Place".

## Happy house hunting!



# TAKING THE RIGHT STEPS CHECKLIST:

Photocopy this page to write on

- Organise references to be used when applying for properties.
- Complete Sorting Your Needs Checklist.
- Calculate all moving and renting costs.
- Check rent assistance with Centrelink.
- Check bond assistance with DHW.
- Talk to DHW about housing availability, Wait Turn List and Priority Assistance List.
- Talk to Support Agency if you need to.
- For private rental, look in newspapers, the internet and visit real estate agents.
- Be on time and well dressed when going to look at houses.



- Be ready to fill out application forms.
- Have references and option fee (= 1 week's rent) ready when applying.
- Carefully check the Tenancy Agreement before signing (a support worker might help).  
Make sure any items that need fixing before moving in are noted under special conditions on the agreement.
- Have the money for 2 weeks rent and bond (4 weeks rent) ready when signing the agreement.
- Contact your electricity and gas supplier (if needed) to reconnect electricity and gas.  
Advise them if you have a concession card.
- Contact your phone company if you want the phone reconnected – check the cost first.

**Remember to only apply for properties you can afford.**



# SORTING YOUR NEEDS CHECKLIST:

Amenities and services we need (e.g. schools, public transport, hospital)

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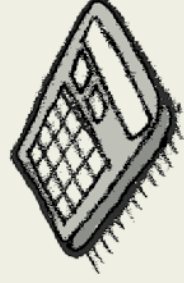
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Housing needs:

Number of bedrooms \_\_\_\_\_

Other: (eg. wheelchair access, fencing to keep dog in etc)



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COSTS: <b>EXAMPLE HOUSE</b>	COSTS: <b>YOUR HOUSE</b>
Weekly rental: <b>\$150</b>	Weekly rental: <b>\$1</b>
2 weeks rent in advance <b>\$300</b>	2 weeks rent in advance \$ _____
House Bond <b>\$600</b>	House Bond \$ _____
Pet Bond <b>\$100</b>	Pet Bond \$ _____
<b>TOTAL</b> <b>\$1,000</b>	<b>TOTAL</b> <b>\$</b> _____

**Note:**

Option fee is either returned (if application not accepted) or put against rent if application is accepted.

Reconnection for phone and electricity – these costs will come on your first bill.

Remember to keep enough money to live on for food, bills, public transport etc.



## IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT THE USE OF THIS GUIDE

The information and stories in this guide are only general information. The situation of you and your family may be different to the situation of the people in the stories. You should get advice about your own situation and not just use this guide.

This guide was written in August 2007 and the information in it comes from the law at that time. Sometimes the law changes, so you should check with your advisor before you rely on the information in this guide.

In these stories the families either deal with “owners”, “agents” or “Accommodation Managers”. An “owner” is a private owner, also called a “landlord”. An “agent” works for a real estate company and is sometimes called a “property manager” or “real estate agent”. An “Accommodation Manager” is the person from the Department of Housing and Works in charge of your property. Remember that tenancy laws apply to all of these people.

## CONTACT DETAILS

Consumer Protection	1300 30 40 54
Department of Housing and Works	(08) 9222 4666 1800 093 325 (country callers)
Tenants Advice Service	(08) 9221 0088 1800 621 888 (country callers)
Equal Opportunity Commission	(08) 9216 3900 1800 198 149 (country callers)



Department of  
Housing and Works  
Department of Consumer  
and Employment Protection

This booklet was developed by the Tenants Advice Service and funded by the Department of Consumer and Employment Protection and the Department of Housing and Works

Story by Jenna Zed Illustrations & Design Patrick Bayly

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