

A Place to call home

Finding somewhere to live and make home is important for your wellbeing. Having your own private space where you feel safe, comfortable, relaxed, and where you know you can stay for a length of time is fundamental for good mental health.

Before you begin searching for a new home, consider the following:

- Am I looking for short term or long term accommodation? Do I need somewhere to live for a few weeks, a semester, or longer?
- How much can I afford to pay in rent? Can I also afford food, electricity, internet, phone, transport costs and the things I like to do?
- Do I want to live on-campus or off-campus?
- How close do I want to be to University, to shops, to public transport?
- How secure do I want my home to be?
- Do I want to share a home with other people? How many other people?
- What living arrangements are important to me? Do I like my own space, my own bathroom, cooking for myself? Do I like quiet time or time alone? Do I like to socialise with the people I live with? Do I like to have people over? Will my boyfriend/girlfriend want to stay? How often? Do I need room for my pet?
- How quickly do I need to find a place to live?

Once you have answered the above questions keep your answers handy, as a check list to help you in your search.

Finding your new home

JCU Accommodation Service

JCU Accommodation Service is a resource available to all JCU students seeking accommodation, on or off campus, short or long term. Contact JCU Accommodation Service by:

Phone: (07) 4781 4148

International: +61 7 4781 4148

E-mail: accommodation@jcu.edu.au

Location: Building 134, Room 111
Townsville Campus

Visit the website for more information regarding accommodation options while you are a student at JCU www.jcu.edu.au/accommodation

On campus accommodation

Both Cairns and Townsville have on campus accommodation options, for short term stay (e.g. a few days, or up to about 10 weeks) and long term stay (e.g. a semester or more).

JCU Townsville offers five on-campus accommodation options with three of the residences owned and operated by the University and two owned and operated by JCU affiliated private colleges. JCU Cairns has one on campus accommodation option owned and operated by the University.

All residences offer different services. For instance, some offer self-catering, some have food provided in a dining hall, some have shared bathrooms, others have private bathrooms, some have multiple rooms on floors, and others offer shared units.

If you want to find out more about the best on campus accommodation option for you, contact JCU Accommodation Services or go to the website. For a short term stay of less than 10 weeks go to www.jcu.edu.au/accommodation/short-term-stay. For a long term stay in Townsville go to www.jcu.edu.au/accommodation/townsville/on-campus and for a long term stay in Cairns go to www.jcu.edu.au/accommodation/living-in-cairns/on-campus-cairns

Off campus accommodation

There are a number of off campus options. You may want to find a room to rent or you may want to find a place on your own. Perhaps you and your friends want to find a place together.

JCU Cairns has an off campus lodge option – for more information go to cairnsstudentlodge.com.au/. If you are an international student you may want to live with a local family for the first few weeks of your stay. The Australian Homestay Network is a great

option for this - for more information go to www.jcu.edu.au/accommodation/homestay.

There are local accommodation providers that may be able to assist with **temporary accommodation**, until you find somewhere more permanent to live. Go to - www.jcu.edu.au/international-students/coming-to-australia/accommodation

There are a number of places to look to find off campus accommodation. However, there are a number of things you should know before you start your search.

Important things you should know

Whether you are looking for a room or house to rent it's important to know what your rights are as a tenant/renter/lodger. Even if you've decided to stay on campus there are important things you should know.

The **Queensland Residential Tenancies Authority (RTA)** has a range of information available including information specifically for students www.rta.qld.gov.au/Renting/Before-you-rent/Students. Go to www.rta.qld.gov.au/ or call 1300 366 311. The **Qld State Wide Tenant Advice and Referral Service (QSTARS)** is a free independent advice and referral service for all Queensland renters. Go to <https://qstars.org.au/> or call 1300 744 263.

Some key things to be aware of are:

- Property owners/landlords may rent rooms or house **privately** or they may have a **real estate agent** assisting them. You have the same rights regardless of whether you are renting privately or through a real estate agent.
- It is important to have a **tenancy agreement**. If you are renting a room where there are four or more rooms being rented out, or a house, for longer than 42 days then a tenancy agreement is a legal requirement. The tenancy agreement will also say how long you are required to stay.
- Sometimes a person who owns or rents a property is living there and looking for someone to **rent a room with them**. In this situation a tenancy agreement is not a legal requirement, however a written agreement may be useful.

- The tenancy agreement is a **contract** between you and the owner of the property. It is important that you follow the requirements of the agreement, and that the owner does too. If either of you **breach** the agreement then legal requirements apply.
- You may be asked to pay a **bond**. This can be an amount of up to four weeks rent. If a bond is paid you must be **provided with a receipt** and the bond must be **lodged with the RTA**. The RTA will send you a bond lodgment number. At the end of the tenancy you apply to the RTA to have your bond returned.
- In most accommodation/housing situations you will be required to pay up to two weeks rent in advance.

If you are ever unsure about any aspect of your accommodation or housing situation call the RTA or QSTARS.

Where to look

JCU Accommodation Service can help you find off campus accommodation. You can also use the following websites:

- JCU Off Campus Accommodation - secure.jcu.edu.au/app/offcampus/index.cfm?event=home.index
- JCU Townsville Accommodation Facebook - www.facebook.com/groups/JCUTownsvilleAccommodation/
- Flatmates.com - flatmates.com.au/townsville
- Easyroommate.com - au.easyroommate.com/queensland/townsville/townsville-share-accommodation
- Sharehouses.com - sharehouses.com.au/townsville
- Gumtree.com - www.gumtree.com.au/s-flatshare-houses/townsville/c1829413006693
- Realestate.com - www.realestate.com.au/rent
- Domain.com - www.domain.com.au/?mode=rent&gclid=EA1aIQobChMIIPmipI_i3qIVSYyPCh1TzwUBEAYASABEgIpEvD_BwE

Help is available

Financial and other support

The Queensland Government provides information, resources and support for people that are seeking housing. Go to www.qld.gov.au/housing or call **13 74 68**.

You may be eligible for a **bond loan** if you meet the eligibility criteria, including low income limits. A bond loan is an interest-free loan provided by the Queensland Government to cover the rental bond when moving into private rental accommodation. To check your eligibility and to find out more go to www.qld.gov.au/housing/renting/rent-assistance/bond-loan.

If you receive a payment from Centrelink you may be eligible for **rent assistance**. Your eligibility for rent assistance is assessed by Centrelink when you apply for a payment so make sure you let them know if your rental situation changes. Go to www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/rent-assistance or if you are on Austudy or Youth Allowance call **13 24 90**.

If you get **behind with your rent**, or you are struggling to find or keep a safe and permanent place to live, seek help early through one of the services below.

Emergency accommodation

If you don't have somewhere safe and permanent to live (e.g. you are sleeping rough on campus, "couch surfing" at people's places, sleeping outdoors, sleeping in your car, there is violence where you are) or you are at risk of not having somewhere safe and permanent to live, there are options available.

The services below can support you to find emergency accommodation and a safe permanent place to live. They can also assist you with other relevant issues on a case by case basis, such as **difficulties with paying your rent**, access to Centrelink, food and travel vouchers. They can also assist you if you are experiencing domestic violence.

Don't be intimidated by the word "homelessness", it is simply a government word for circumstances where a person doesn't have somewhere safe and permanent to live. You will find that all of these services are friendly and supportive and will work with you to ensure that your living situation improves.

Townsville Homelessness Service Hub

Phone: 4795 2980

Location: Housing Connections, 296 Ross River Road, Aitkenvale, QLD 4814

8.30 am – 5.00 pm Mon – Fri (drop in)

Cairns Homelessness Service Hub:

Phone: 4046 8050

Location:

149 – 153 Bunda Street, Cairns

9.00 am – 5.00 pm Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri (drop in)

9.00 am – 1.00 pm Wed (drop in)

The Women's Centre Townsville (women only)

Phone: 4775 7555

Location: 50 Patrick Street, Aitkenvale, QLD 4814

9.00am – 4.45 pm Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri (drop in)

9.00 am – 2.00 pm Wed (drop in)

4.45 pm – 8.00 pm Tues, Thurs (by appointment)

The Women's Centre Cairns (women only)

Phone: 4051 9366

Location: 182 Gatton Street, Cairns

9.00 am – 2.00 pm Mon – Fri (drop in)

2.00 pm – 5.00 pm Mon – Fri (by appointment)

If you are not located in Townsville or Cairns, or require emergency accommodation outside of the above business hours, go to

www.qld.gov.au/housing/emergency-temporary-accommodation or call the following numbers, **24 hours a day, 7 days a week:**

Homeless Hotline 1800 474 753

DV Connect 1800 811 811 (domestic violence related emergency accommodation)

On a case by case basis and subject to availability on **campus accommodation providers** may be able to help you with temporary or emergency accommodation for a few days. Contact them directly via the website.

For further advice and support, please contact JCU Student Equity and Wellbeing.

Further information and support

- JCU Accommodation Services www.jcu.edu.au/accommodation
- Queensland Residential Tenancies Authority (RTA) www.rta.qld.gov.au/
- Queensland State Wide Tenant Advice and Referral Service (QSTARS) qstars.org.au/
- Queensland Government www.qld.gov.au/housing
- Townsville Homelessness Service Hub Phone 4795 2980
- Cairns Homelessness Service Hub Phone 4046 8050 www.anglicarenq.org.au/families-and-children/homelessness-services/cairns-homelessness-services-hub/
- The Women's Centre Townsville www.thewomenscentre.org.au
- The Women's Centre Cairns www.wirc.org.au/

Student Equity and Wellbeing

James Cook University

Web <https://www.jcu.edu.au/student-equity-and-wellbeing>

Email studentwellbeing@jcu.edu.au

Phone Townsville (07) 478 14711 or Cairns (07) 423 21150

In person Level 1 of the Library in Townsville and Cairns, Mon – Fri 9.00 am to 4.00 pm

CRICOS Provider No. 00117J

- Wellbeing
- Counselling
- Accessibility
- Student Equity
- Multifaith Chaplaincy