

Legal Aid ACT

STUDENT LEGAL “SURVIVAL” GUIDE

Do you have concerns about your housing? Work? Drink driving charges? Debt? Visas? Your personal safety?

Housing issues

- Do you have a housing issue?
- Has your housemate left without paying the bills?
- Have you damaged your rental property?

Legal Aid can assist you with your housing and rental legal concerns, call 1300 654 314.

Another useful service is the Tenants' Union. They have helpful factsheets on their website which may answer your question(s). See <http://www.tenantsact.org.au/>. If you can't find the information you need call 6247 2011.

Debt

1. If you are having difficulties paying your debts or managing your budget, Care Inc. is a free financial counselling service that may be able to help you. Phone 6257 1788 for assistance and/or to make an appointment.
2. Make sure you owe the debt. Do not make any admissions unless you have been provided proof (documents, account statements) of the debt.
3. Contact the creditor (person or business you owe money to) to discuss a repayment plan.
4. Keep copies of any letters you send or receive, as well as notes of any conversations you have. Writing letters can be complex. Legal Aid may be able to assist you with this at an appointment.
5. Make a formal complaint if a creditor or debt collector misleads, threatens or abuses you.

Visa concerns

If after contacting the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (Ph: 131 881) you are unable to resolve your visa concerns, contact the Night Time Legal Service at Welfare Rights on 6247 2177 to make an appointment with a Migration Agent.

Drink driving offences

You should be aware that:

- the blood alcohol limit for special drivers ('P' plate drivers) is now 0.00.
- the blood alcohol limit is 0.05 for all other drivers.
- the police are required to suspend a person's licence on the spot if the person is caught exceeding their blood alcohol limit by 0.05 (i.e. 0.05 for special drivers and 0.10 for all others).
- If you are charged with a drink driving offence you may be eligible for a restricted licence. Contact Legal Aid to verify your eligibility.

Legal Aid runs **free fortnightly sessions** for people charged with drink driving offences. We may also be able to assist you with other driving charges.

Contact Legal Aid on 1300 654 314 for assistance and/or to make an appointment.

Buying a used car

1. Verify the person selling the car is the registered operator and has a registration certificate. Always get a receipt if you are buying privately.
2. Do a REVS check to ensure the car is unencumbered (i.e. a finance company does not have a security interest over the car)
3. Confirm whether there are any warranties. Private sellers do not generally give warranties, because it is 'buyer beware'. However if they do, get them to write it down. If something happens to the car it may be possible to cancel the contract or seek damages.
4. If you are unsure about the condition of the car get it checked by a mechanic before you buy it.
5. If you purchase a used car from a dealer, the dealer must: attach a written notice of particulars about the vehicle, provide for a three-business-day cooling off period, and repair any defects so as to place the vehicle in a reasonable condition having regard to its age.
6. Any defects brought to your attention by a defect notice are excluded from the dealer's warranty

Employment

- Have you been underpaid?
- Are you being bullied or discriminated against?
- Were you unfairly dismissed from work? Act quickly because you only have 14 days to make an unfair dismissal claim to Fair Work Australia.



Call Legal Aid on 1300 654 314 for advice about your employment concerns.

Another useful service is Fair Work Australia which can be contacted at 1300 799 675.

Personal safety

You can apply for a domestic violence order or a personal protection order if someone has engaged in any of the following acts against you:

- physical or personal injury
- sexual assault
- stalking or acts of indecency
- trespass or damage to your property
- negligent, reckless or culpable driving
- harassment or offensive conduct
- violence directed at your pet
- threats of any of the above

Contact the Legal Aid Domestic Violence and Personal Protection Orders Unit on 6207 1874.

How can Legal Aid help you?

Helpline

Contact the Legal Aid Helpline on 1300 654 314 (8.30am-5pm weekdays) to speak to us about your legal concerns over the telephone.

Face-to-face appointment

To make an appointment with one of our lawyers at our Civic office call 1300 654 314. Please bring any documents relevant to your matter.

Alternatively, contact the Youth Law Centre on 6173 5410 to make an appointment (9am to 5pm weekdays).

Grants of legal assistance

We also provide ongoing legal assistance and representation to people who cannot afford a private lawyer. Eligibility criteria applies, see our brochure 'Applying for a grant of legal assistance'.

