



rentwell
BY YWCA CANBERRA

5 YEARS
ON 

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

YWCA Canberra proudly recognises the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to own and control their cultures and pays our respects to these rights. YWCA Canberra acknowledges the need to respect and encourage the diversity of Indigenous cultures and to respect Indigenous worldviews, lifestyles and customary laws.

We extend our respect to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women who for thousands of years have preserved their culture and practices of their communities on Country.

This land was never surrendered, and we acknowledge that it always was and will continue to always be Aboriginal Land.

STATEMENT FROM THE CEO

I am pleased to be here today to share insights into an initiative that is not only close to my heart but is also vital for the well-being of our community—Rentwell. In the face of the ongoing housing crisis in Canberra, Rentwell has become a source of hope for individuals and families facing challenges in finding safe and affordable housing.

At YWCA Canberra, we believe that everyone deserves a place to call home. Unfortunately, the reality is that many are facing insurmountable challenges in finding suitable rental options that fit their financial circumstances. This pressing need for innovative solutions is what inspired the creation of Rentwell—a service designed to bridge the gap between property owners and tenants in search of affordable housing.

As we move forward, our vision for Rentwell is clear: we aim to create a sustainable rental ecosystem that prioritises the needs of both property owners and tenants. We are committed to not only expanding our reach within Canberra but also to exploring opportunities to share our model with other regions facing similar challenges.

However, our journey is not without its challenges. We recognise the housing shortages, funding needs, and barriers that persist in our efforts to provide effective solutions. Yet, I firmly believe that by working together—engaging with community partners, advocating for meaningful policy changes, and fostering open dialogue—we can overcome these obstacles and make a significant impact.

Our long-term vision is to establish Rentwell as a national model for property owners to provide affordable rentals in their community, innovating new ways to empower tenants and enhance the rental experience.

Thank you for your ongoing support and commitment to this vital program. Together, we can work towards a future where every individual in Canberra has access to safe, affordable housing, ensuring that our community thrives.

Frances Crimmins
Chief Executive Officer
YWCA Canberra



INTRODUCTION

Rentwell is a property management service operated by YWCA Canberra, dedicated to providing affordable rental solutions to the local community. Founded to address the pressing need for secure and stable homes, Rentwell aims to assist vulnerable populations, including older women, single parents, and families, who often struggle to afford market rent due to various circumstances.

The service connects private investors with tenants who require more affordable housing options, fostering a mutually beneficial relationship. Property owners can achieve a social return on their investment while ensuring their properties are well-managed and maintained. Rentwell not only prioritises the financial aspect of property management but also emphasises community impact, aiming to reduce housing stress and improve living conditions for those in need.

Rentwell is part of a broader initiative by YWCA Canberra, which has been providing housing support since 1942. YWCA Canberra is committed to creating opportunities for individuals to secure a place they can truly call home, thereby promoting overall wellbeing and belonging within the community.

The vision and funding for Rentwell have received backing from various individuals and organisations committed to enhancing Canberra as a great place to live for everyone.

YWCA Canberra would like to extend special gratitude to the ACT Government for implementing the essential legislative changes that have made Rentwell a feasible option for investment property owners.

We have also benefited from both financial and in-kind support from numerous organisations that align with our vision.



we deliver



MISSION AND VISION

Vision Statement

To create a thriving and inclusive community in Canberra where every individual has access to safe, affordable housing, fostering stability and empowerment for all.

Mission Statement

Rentwell is dedicated to transforming the rental landscape in Canberra by connecting property owners with responsible tenants while ensuring equitable housing solutions. Through innovative partnerships, legislative advocacy, and community engagement, we aim to support sustainable living conditions that promote well-being and foster a sense of belonging for all residents



THE NEED FOR RENTWELL

The housing crisis in Canberra has reached critical levels, driven by rising property prices, and an increasing demand for affordable rental options.

Many individuals and families are struggling to secure safe and affordable housing, which has resulted in significant social and economic challenges within our community. Consequently, the need for innovative solutions to address these affordability issues has never been more urgent.

Among those most affected are single, older women, who are now the fastest-growing demographic facing housing stress and homelessness in Australia. Unfortunately, their unique needs are often overlooked in discussions about housing solutions.

As privately leased rentals remain out of reach for many and our social housing system fails to offer viable alternatives for lower-income earners, it is crucial to explore new approaches to reduce and prevent more individuals and families at risk of homelessness.

YWCA Canberra has long been a strong advocate for best practices and gender-responsive housing solutions tailored to meet the needs of women in the ACT and surrounding regions. In response to these pressing challenges, we created Rentwell, a program designed to provide a sustainable pathway for both property owners and renters. By facilitating connections between responsible property owners and tenants, Rentwell aims to alleviate housing stress in a mostly unaffordable rental market while promoting stability and security for those in need of housing.





Support for Property Owners:

Rentwell offers property owners a viable way to participate in the rental market while ensuring their investments are protected. By providing resources and guidance on best practices, Rentwell empowers property owners to make informed decisions that benefit both them and their tenants.



Access to Affordable Housing:

Rentwell actively works to match tenants with suitable properties at no more than 30% of their income, helping to bridge the gap between those seeking housing and available rental options. This targeted approach promotes tenancy sustainability and encourages more equitable access to housing in the region.



Community Engagement and Support:

Rentwell prioritises building strong relationships within the community, fostering a sense of belonging and support among residents. Rentwell enhances its ability to address the unique needs of individuals and families facing housing insecurity.



Advocacy for Legislative Change:

Recognising that systemic change is necessary to resolve the housing crisis, Rentwell actively advocates for legislative reforms that support affordable housing initiatives. By working with the ACT Government and other stakeholders, Rentwell aims to influence policies that create a more supportive environment for renters and property owners alike.

Through these efforts, Rentwell is responding to the immediate housing crisis but is also paving the way for long-term solutions that promote sustainability, community resilience, and equitable access to housing for all Canberrans.



HOW IT WORKS

Our dedicated and experienced property management team will begin by assessing whether a property is a good fit for the Rentwell program.

To ensure transparency, Opteon, global leaders in property valuation, will conduct an independent market rent valuation. This report determines the 74.9% affordable rent, confirming a genuine rental discount for the ACT Revenue Office and the Australian Tax Office.

If the proposed property currently has a tenant, we will obtain their consent for Rentwell staff and Opteon to access the property.

The pre-rental process typically takes two to four weeks, after which the property will be listed on Allhomes under Rentwell. Finding a suitable tenant generally takes an additional one to two weeks.

At the end of the financial year, owners will receive a Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) receipt from YWCA Canberra for the rent foregone. Upon signing the lease with YWCA Canberra, we notify the ACT Revenue Office of owner participation, and the land tax exemption will be applied at the start of the next quarter.

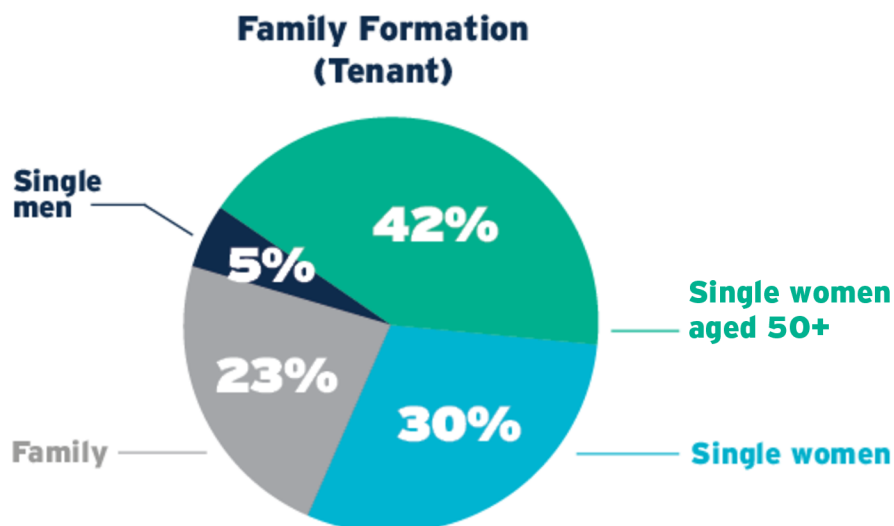


DATA & IMPACT

Since its inception, Rentwell has managed 130 properties and successfully supported 583 tenancies.

Approximately
30%
of tenants are individual women with children

Nearly 55% of tenants were not born in Australia, amounting to
127
people



Philanthropic Support:

Thanks to philanthropic funding, Rentwell is uniquely positioned to waive all setup fees and marketing costs for property owners. This crucial financial support allows us to break down barriers that often deter potential property owners from participating in affordable housing initiatives. By eliminating these initial costs, we can encourage more property owners to engage with our service, thereby increasing the availability of affordable rental options for those in need.

The importance of this approach cannot be overstated. Many property owners may be hesitant to invest in charitable property management due to concerns about upfront costs and ongoing marketing expenses. By removing these financial hurdles, we not only make it easier for property owners to contribute to a social cause, we enhance our ability to connect them with individuals and families who require affordable housing. This fosters a collaborative environment where community members can come together to address pressing housing needs.

Furthermore, the waiver of setup fees and marketing costs demonstrates a commitment to inclusivity and social responsibility. It signals to property owners that their involvement in Rentwell is not just a financial transaction but a partnership aimed at creating positive change in the community. This can lead to greater engagement and support from property owners, ultimately resulting in more affordable housing options for those who might otherwise be locked out of the rental market.

In essence, philanthropic funding enables Rentwell to operate more effectively and expansively, ensuring that we can focus on our mission: providing quality, affordable, and secure housing options in Canberra. This initiative embodies the spirit of community collaboration, showing that together, we can take steps to provide affordable rental housing and foster a more equitable society.

TESTIMONIALS & QUOTES

“We are committed to continue to grow the number of properties under our management because we see first-hand the positive impact in our community this has.”

-Tanya

CASE STUDY

Krishna, de-identified.

It's hard to believe that in a place as prosperous as Canberra, a housing affordability crisis exists—but we cannot ignore this pressing issue. My personal journey has shaped my understanding of these challenges. I've faced hardship, including domestic violence and poverty, particularly during my time as a single parent. Fortunately, I'm now in a position to give back, which is why I chose to engage YWCA Canberra to manage my investment property through Rentwell.

YWCA Canberra is deeply committed to amplifying the voices of women and girls while enhancing their quality of life—causes I am truly passionate about. The reality is that women often find themselves in lower-paying jobs, may need to take time off to care for children, and consequently, have less retirement savings. These factors place them at a significant disadvantage in the rental market, making it even more challenging to secure safe and affordable housing.

By managing properties through Rentwell, we are creating a new model of investment that balances financial returns with social impact. This initiative is not just about profit; it's about making a tangible difference in the community and working collectively to end homelessness—a goal I firmly believe is achievable.

LONG-TERM VISION

Creating a National Model:

Rentwell aspires to establish itself as a national model for addressing housing affordability and security. By showcasing its successful practices and outcomes, Rentwell hopes to inspire similar initiatives in other cities and regions across Australia. This could involve collaborating with government bodies and other non-profits to share insights and strategies that have proven effective in Canberra.

Innovating New Ways to Support Tenants:

Rentwell aims to explore and implement innovative support mechanisms for tenants, such as financial literacy programs, rental assistance initiatives, and tenant advocacy services. By empowering tenants with knowledge and resources, Rentwell seeks to enhance their overall stability and quality of life, enabling them to thrive in their rental situations.

Through these strategic goals and long-term aspirations, Rentwell is committed to making a meaningful impact on the housing landscape, ensuring that safe and affordable housing is accessible to all Canberrans and beyond.

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

We are actively looking for property investors who are philanthropically inclined and share our commitment to making a positive impact in the community. Your investment can help us create sustainable solutions for housing and support services, benefiting those in need. Together, we can transform lives and build a brighter future for our community.

If you're interested in partnering with us or would like more information, please get in touch!





rentwell
BY YWCA CANBERRA

**YWCA House Level 2
71 Northbourne Ave
Canberra ACT 2601**

E | Rentwell@ywca-canberra.org.au

P | 02 6175 9900

ABN 48 008 389 151

www.rentwell.com.au