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The value of regular routine inspections for Landlords

When thinking of routine inspections, the general assumption is that the only reason they are carried out is to check up on tenants. But in reality, making sure a tenant is properly looking after a property is only one of the reasons inspections are conducted.

One key purpose is ensuring maintenance and repairs are being undertaken appropriately. A property manager needs to verify that the tenant is reporting required repairs in a timely manner - some of these can be carried out under warranty, in the case of a brand new or refurbished property, costing you little or nothing at all - as well as be able to recommend any seasonal maintenance issues or capital works. In reality, the inspections are only truly valuable if they're used to make sure the property is not falling into disrepair, whether through fair wear and tear or deliberate. The regularity with which periodic inspections are allowed varies around the country - for example, in Victoria, only two inspections are permitted within every 12 month period while in South Australia, inspections are permitted on a monthly basis and here in Queensland they are permitted on a quarterly basis.

An inspection a few months out from a lease expiry date is always a good idea which by doing quarterly as we do at TNQ Rentals gives you a good opportunity for the property manager to review the rent

being charged and consider a rent increase should the market conditions allow this. Generally, a routine inspection will allow you to consider, "is my property achieving maximum possible rent, based on its condition and the market value for the area?"

Any regular maintenance included in the rental, such as pool and garden maintenance or pest inspections, means that there are scheduled visits to your property by maintenance crews. These tradespeople are usually in regular contact with us as your property manager and will provide another dimension to the reporting of issues affecting your property and the way that your tenants care for it.

The rules on water consumption Charges

Increasingly, landlords want tenants to pay for their own water consumption.

This can only be done in full if the property is water efficient.

Under the legislation, landlords can pass on full water consumption charges to tenants if the rental property is individually metered, water efficient and the tenancy agreement states that the tenant must pay for water.

There are a number of water efficiency considerations to take into account. Arrangements for water charging need to be negotiated at the start of the tenancy and included in the tenancy agreement.

Checks should be made at the start of the tenancy to ensure compliance. The Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal (QCAT) recently refused a landlord's application for reimbursement of excess water usage. The landlord took the matter to appeal and was refused as a leaking toilet was found to have been responsible for excess water usage at the property.

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