

Preparing Your Canberra Property for Rent

Maximise your rental return from day one

A practical guide for ACT landlords on how to prepare a residential investment property for the rental market. Covers presentation, compliance, photography, pricing strategy, and how to attract quality long-term tenants in the Canberra market.

Why preparation matters

The condition and presentation of your property at the time it goes to market directly affects three things: the quality of tenants who apply, the weekly rent you can achieve, and how quickly the property lets. In a market like Canberra where tenants compare dozens of listings online, first impressions — particularly in photographs — determine whether someone books an inspection or scrolls past.

This guide walks you through every step of preparing your Canberra investment property for rent, from practical presentation tasks through to compliance requirements and pricing strategy.

1. Presentation checklist — exterior

The exterior is the first thing a prospective tenant sees — both online and in person. A well-maintained exterior signals that the property is well-managed and sets the tone for the inspection.

- ✓ Mow lawns and trim edges
- ✓ Clean windows inside and out
- ✓ Remove weeds from garden beds
- ✓ Check and repair any damaged rendering
- ✓ Clear gutters of leaves and debris
- ✓ Ensure outdoor lighting is working
- ✓ Pressure wash driveway and paths
- ✓ Remove any rubbish or stored items
- ✓ Repaint or touch up front fence and gate
- ✓ Check garage door operation
- ✓ Ensure letterbox is clean and functional
- ✓ Oil squeaking gates and hinges

2. Presentation checklist — interior

Interior presentation has the greatest impact on rental value and tenant quality. A clean, well-presented interior lets faster and attracts tenants who will look after the property.

Cleaning

- ✓ Professional carpet steam clean — this is non-negotiable and immediately visible in photos
- ✓ Clean all windows, sills, and fly screens
- ✓ Deep clean kitchen including oven, range hood filter, and inside cupboards
- ✓ Clean all bathrooms thoroughly including grout, shower screens, and exhaust fans
- ✓ Wipe all light fittings, power points, and switches
- ✓ Clean inside all wardrobes and storage spaces
- ✓ Remove all cobwebs inside and outside

Repairs and maintenance

Attend to all minor repairs before photography and inspections. Prospective tenants notice small defects — a dripping tap, a broken blind, a cracked tile — and factor them into their assessment of whether the property is well-managed.

- ✓ Fix all dripping taps
- ✓ Replace blown light globes
- ✓ Repair or replace broken blinds
- ✓ Fix sticking or squeaking doors
- ✓ Patch and paint any scuffed or damaged walls
- ✓ Repair cracked tiles or grout
- ✓ Ensure all locks function correctly
- ✓ Test all smoke alarms
- ✓ Check hot water system is working
- ✓ Test all appliances (oven, dishwasher)
- ✓ Check heating and cooling operation
- ✓ Replace worn door handles or hinges

3. Fresh paint — the highest-ROI improvement

Fresh paint is consistently the highest-return preparation investment for Canberra rental properties. A professionally painted interior achieves three things: it makes the property photograph significantly better, it removes odours, and it presents the property as well-maintained to prospective tenants.

In our experience managing Canberra properties, a fresh internal paint at an average cost of \$3,000 to \$5,000 typically adds \$30 to \$60 per week to the achievable rent — recovering the investment within 12 to 20 weeks.

Use a neutral colour palette — light grey or warm white walls with white ceilings and skirting boards. Avoid bold or feature colours that limit broad appeal. Canberra's light conditions favour warm whites (such as Dulux Natural White or Antique White USA) over stark brilliant white.

4. Compliance requirements before advertising

The following must be in place before your property is advertised for rent in the ACT:

- ✓ Valid Energy Efficiency Rating (EER) certificate — must be displayed in all rental advertisements
- ✓ Working smoke alarms installed per Building (General) Regulation 2008 (ACT)
- ✓ All safety switches (RCDs) tested and operational
- ✓ Gas appliances serviced and in safe working order
- ✓ Pool or spa barriers compliant with ACT safety standards (if applicable)
- ✓ Unit Title Rental Certificate obtained from owners corporation (units/apartments — required since January 2025)
- ✓ Compliant tenancy agreement prepared and ready

5. Professional photography

Professional photography is essential for any Canberra rental property. The majority of tenants shortlist properties online based on photographs before ever attending an inspection. Poor quality, dark, or cluttered photos reduce enquiry volume significantly.

Key tips for photography day:

- ✓ Book for a bright day — ideally mid-morning for north-facing properties
- ✓ Remove all personal items, clutter, and toiletries from every room
- ✓ Make all beds with clean, neutral bedding
- ✓ Remove bins, recycling, and cleaning products from kitchens and bathrooms
- ✓ Open all curtains and blinds to maximise natural light
- ✓ Turn on all lights — even in daylight, lit rooms photograph better
- ✓ Remove cars from the driveway for exterior shots
- ✓ Stage the dining table simply — a bowl of fruit or simple centrepiece

6. Setting the right rent

Pricing your Canberra rental correctly is one of the most important decisions you will make. Overpricing leads to extended vacancy — the most expensive outcome for any landlord. Underpricing leaves money on the table every single week.

A current market appraisal from a specialist Canberra property manager will give you a realistic rental range based on comparable properties that have actually leased in your suburb in the past 30 to 60 days — not just what is currently listed.

The vacancy cost: On a \$700 per week property, every additional week of vacancy costs \$700 in lost rent. Two weeks of vacancy at an overpriced rent costs more than two months of a 1% fee difference between agencies. Price correctly and let quickly.

7. The Jaira Properties preparation service

When you appoint Jaira Properties to manage your property, our preparation service includes:

- ✓ Free rental appraisal with current Canberra market data
- ✓ Detailed pre-letting property inspection with written report
- ✓ Recommendations and tradesperson referrals for any required work
- ✓ Coordination of all compliance requirements including EER and smoke alarms
- ✓ Professional photography coordination

- ✓ Listing on all major portals with optimised copywriting
- ✓ Tenant screening including reference and tenancy database checks
- ✓ Preparation of all tenancy documentation including condition report

Ready to get your Canberra property rent-ready? Contact Jaira Properties for a free rental appraisal and preparation consultation. jaira.com.au | Offices in Phillip and Gungahlin

Disclaimer: This guide is general information only. Compliance requirements are subject to change. Always verify current ACT requirements with Access Canberra or a licensed property manager. Jaira Properties — ACT Licence No. 18404216.