

Nalderun Aboriginal Services

Pay The Rent scheme

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Phone: 5472 4842 9am – 3pm Mon-Fri (leave your details and we will get back to you!)

Email: nalderun@cch.org.au

Location of office: 30 Templeton St, Castlemaine VIC 3450

Practical FAQs'

Question: Who should Pay the Rent?

Answer: Anyone who is not of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent, or any other non Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander group or organisation, who are using or benefiting from Aboriginal peoples' land, should Pay the Rent. Events such as conferences or festivals should also consider paying Rent.

Question: How much rent money should I pay?

Answer: There is no upper or lower limit in terms of how much rent to pay. Of course, the amount depends on one's ability to pay. A suggested minimum rental payment is 1% of your income. Rent can also be paid in kind; e.g., undertaking pro bono work (contact Nalderun to confirm their requirements).

Question: How do I Pay the Rent?

Answer: Rent payments can be paid to Nalderun via a Bank transfer arrangement. Paying the rent is an act of restorative justice, of recompense and is not a donation in the traditional sense.

Regular consistent amounts (e.g. monthly) will make it easier to predict the expected amount of rent money to assist Nalderun management with forward planning.

1. Complete the PTR Supporter Application that can be found at: <https://nalderun.net.au/pay-the-rent/>, and return to Nalderun as per the instructions on the form. Once received, Nalderun will send you their Bank Account details.
2. Arrange for regular Transfer of funds directly into Nalderun's Bank Account.

Note, when making a payment or setting up a bank transfer please identify your payment in the following manner:

- PTR, space, your first name initial and surname; e.g. if your name is Billy Blogs, the payment identifier is 'PTR BBlogs'.

Question: How do I know how my contribution is spent?

Answer: Paying the Rent acknowledges that Nalderun is led by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who have a birthright to self-determination. This gives them the authority to allocate the PTR funds as they see fit, and not have to account for their actions to other Australians. However, Nalderun has decided that, from time to time, it will update the community on the fund and how the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community is benefiting.

Paying the rent may lead to a relationship with those you pay, but it is not required. Do not expect anything in return for your payment.

General FAQs

Question: Why should other Australians undertake to Pay the Rent?

Answer: If you live in Australia, you are living on land that was taken unlawfully from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who have lived here for over 100,000 years. Their land was unlawfully taken without treaty or consent, and their peoples and cultures deliberately decimated. Nothing has been done to rectify this injustice; to this day there has been no Treaty or compensation for this illegal action.

Today, we as other Australians continue to benefit from living on this stolen land. Our daily lives are underpinned by the use of the land: to live on, to build family and community, as a traded commodity, for agricultural business and, of course, our country's major income earner – resource extraction. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have been largely sidelined during the last 230+ years, due to ongoing colonial government policies and actions.

Paying the Rent is an act of restorative justice, of recompense, of taking responsibility and acknowledging benefits accrued through occupying stolen land. It is not about blame or guilt; it is about facing up to the truth of our history and taking steps to live on this land in a fairer way until the government negotiates a morally just and equitable Treaty, truth telling process and compensation.

Question: Don't our taxes already provide ample compensation and support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people?

Answer: State and Federal distribution of tax monies to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is controlled by other Australian politicians and bureaucrats. Funds are often passed to other Australian led organisations and very little actually reaches Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-05-05/majority-of-indigenous-grants-go-to-non-aboriginal-organisations/6444534> . There has also been a lack of evaluation around the effectiveness of government programs: <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-06-19/indigenous-advancement-strategy-ias-audit-measure-government/11222554>

While governments have been very slow to act, individuals can decide to 'pay the rent' directly to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples until such time as governments fulfil their obligations and negotiates a sincere and just Treaty with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Question: What is the history of the Pay the Rent concept?

Answer: The concept is not new. In the 1970s the Pay the Rent concept was recognised by the National Aboriginal and Islander Health Organisation (NAIHO - since 1992 this organisation is known as National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation NACCHO). Since that time there have been other schemes established; e.g. in the 1990s the Fitzroy Pay the Rent group set up a fund to collect money from other Australians and pass it on to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led services. In more recent times groups such as Balaangala Community Group in Brisbane (<http://www.balaangala.org.au/>) and the Pay The Rent Grassroots Collective in Melbourne (<https://paytherent.net.au/>) have launched schemes.

Question: What other actions can I take?

Answer: Ideally a learning process would accompany anyone committing to a PTR scheme. It is important for other Australians to learn who the local Traditional Owners are, and how colonisation has played out locally; to learn about our shared history and consider current issues that impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples; to reflect on the prickly question, of how I benefit from living on land that was forcibly and unlawfully taken from its original owners, and how other Australians might continue to live on that land in a fairer way.

It is up to other Australians to educate themselves and not expect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to do the work for them. Follow the news reports about current events that impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples; e.g. <https://www.abc.net.au/indigenous/news/> or subscribe to the <https://koorimail.com/> .

Check out the ABC education material on the colonisation of the central Victorian goldfields <https://education.abc.net.au/home#!/digibook/2873696/the-colonisation-of-the-central-victorian-goldfields>.

Read and reflect on books such as Bruce Pascoe's book, *Dark Emu*, Claire Land's book, *Decolonizing Solidarity*, the book *Djuwima Djarra, Dja Dja Wurrung: Kiakiki Wangedak*, produced by the Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation (see Castlemaine Library), and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous peoples <https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/un-declaration-rights-indigenous-peoples-1>.

Join or form a group to read and discuss relevant books and topics. Check Nalderun's website <https://nalderun.net.au/> occasionally for any updates and follow their Facebook page (Nalderun Aboriginal Services in the Mt Alexander Shire). Subscribe to Reconciliation Victoria <http://www.reconciliationvic.org.au/>. Actively support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social justice initiatives to bring about change.

