

Dear Members of the NSW Rental Law Review Committee,

I am writing to contribute to the ongoing review of rental laws in New South Wales and to address a concerning issue that has come to my attention: the invasion of privacy by rental agencies during periodic inspections. As a tenant and advocate for fair and respectful rental practices, I believe it is crucial to ensure the protection of tenants' privacy rights throughout the rental process.

During periodic inspections, tenants expect their homes to be evaluated for maintenance and compliance with tenancy agreements. However, it has become increasingly common for some rental agencies to overstep their boundaries and invade the privacy of tenants during these inspections. This invasion can include actions such as rummaging through personal belongings, scrutinizing private documents, and even taking photographs without proper consent. Why does a landlord need multiple pictures of my bed?

These intrusive practices not only violate tenants' privacy rights but also undermine the trust and respect that should exist between landlords, rental agencies, and tenants. It is essential to establish clear guidelines and regulations that safeguard tenants' privacy during periodic inspections, while still ensuring that properties are adequately maintained and meet safety standards.

To address this issue, I recommend the following:

1. **Clear Guidelines:** Introduce explicit guidelines that outline the scope of periodic inspections, emphasizing that they should focus solely on assessing the property's condition and compliance with tenancy agreements. This will prevent rental agencies from overstepping their authority and intruding into tenants' personal spaces.
2. **Informed Consent:** Require rental agencies to obtain informed consent from tenants prior to conducting periodic inspections. Tenants should be fully informed about the purpose, frequency, and procedures involved in these inspections. This will empower tenants to make informed decisions regarding their privacy and ensure that they are comfortable with the process.
3. **Privacy Training:** Implement mandatory privacy training for rental agency staff to educate them on tenants' privacy rights and the importance of respecting personal boundaries during periodic inspections. This training should emphasize the need for professionalism, sensitivity, and ethical conduct when entering tenants' homes.
4. **Complaint Mechanism:** Establish a streamlined and accessible complaint mechanism for tenants who feel their privacy has been violated during periodic inspections. This will provide tenants with a means to report instances of invasion of privacy and seek appropriate remedies.

By implementing these recommendations, we can strike a balance between ensuring property maintenance and respecting tenants' privacy. This will contribute to a fair and harmonious rental environment that benefits both landlords and tenants.

I appreciate the opportunity to contribute to the review process, and I trust that the NSW Rental Law Review Committee will consider the importance of addressing the issue of invasion of privacy during periodic inspections. I am available for any further discussions or clarifications you may require.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

