

Improving NSW rental laws

I am a renter and I have been renting for the last 13 years in the [REDACTED] of Sydney. I am currently single and renting a one-bedroom apartment. I enjoy renting as it does not lock me in on a mortgage that I will have to pay out for the next 30 years of my life.

Renting comes with some pitfalls, which I have listed below.

Insulation in rental properties

In the last four properties that I have rented in the Inner-West, there has been minimal insulation installed. Doors and windows that still allow cold air to blow in through non-aligned fittings during the winter months. Especially, houses in NSW are built for the summer heat and less about insulating the heat in for winter. In my last property, the temperature inside the apartment dropped to 10 Degrees Celsius.

Insulation should be considered as an additional requirement in the 7 x requirements properties must be fit to live in.

Personal details to be withheld

In my most recent property, after signing my lease, about two weeks later, I had a neighbor who I did not know, calling out my name. I asked this neighbor about how she got my name, and it was shared to her by my landlord.

I think personal details should not be shared with any third-party unless disclosure has been submitted to either party of the contract.

Supplying photo ID considered obsolete

I think removing the requirements for applicants to submit photo I.D to landlords/agents at application stage as this will reduce the probability of the landlord discriminating one applicant from the other applicant.

Corporate body accountability

In my current apartment, I had the fire alarm go off in the communal area. So, I called the local fire brigade to disarm the fire alarm. The NSW Fire Brigade wanted contact information of the corporate body. I did not have this information on hand. So, I had to knock around at number of apartments and call the landlord. A neighbor had this information.

The 2nd point I would like to make about the corporate body, there have been an occasion where I have emailed the corporate body on multiple occasions supplied by the landlord, only to find out the email address was no longer in operation.

I think at the signing of a new lease, landlords/agents should be required to give contact details of the body corporate representative and update tenants if a new body corporate representative has been appointed to the property.

Application for a new lease

In my last 13 years of renting, I have submitted various applications. It is either by applying via email, submitting an online application, submitting a physical form, or downloading an app and submitting a form via the app.

My worry is there are various databases that are holding my information, for how long, I am unsure. I think there needs to be a centralised database that is managed by the NSW government, where applications for tenants are housed.

Annual fire inspections

From the last 2 years of fire inspections, I see the inspectors only inspect the main entrance door to the apartment and check whether the fire alarm is working inside the actual apartment.

The fire inspectors do not check the fire alarms in the common areas or check whether there are any objects lying in the common areas that could hinder a tenant trying to escape during a fire.

I think this annual inspection needs a revisit and to see whether it is still fit for purpose.