

Submission on Rental Laws

The reason I am submitting this is because I believe the survey, which I did complete, was very much biased in ensuring the needs of the tenants were being met with little consideration for owners/landlords.

I am a self funded retiree who is not wealthy and receive no government assistance other than a Commonwealth Seniors Card. Throughout most of my life, I have owned modest investment properties at various times for the purposes of keeping financially independent, especially for my old age. I was a teacher for 42 years and instead of investing in the stock market or other kinds of investments, I chose property. I currently own a 1 bedroom apartment investment property, which still has a mortgage. I believe I am a fair landlord.

During the times in both SA and NSW when I have owned an investment property, I have seen many changes to the rental laws. I have found that they have moved away from being fair to both landlords and tenants to prominently skewed towards tenants. There is the assumption that landlords are wealthy, hold multiple properties, are greedy and have no thought whatsoever for their tenants. However, there are many of us who are not greedy and just want to ensure we make a modest income. If I am hit with considerable interest rate increases, increased levies etc, I can only increase the rent once a year. The laws regarding leases are in favour of the tenant. Recently I had a tenant, 5 months into their lease, who broke it and were only required 3 weeks' payment of rent. This did not provide sufficient time to find a new tenant – have any repairs made following the vacating of the tenants, advertising, open inspections etc. It would seem to me that a lease is not really worth the paper it is written on, unless you are a tenant. If I want to break a 12 month lease with a tenant, then I am virtually unable to do so. If the tenant is at the end of a fixed term agreement/periodic arrangement, I have to give 30/90 days notice whilst a tenant only has to give 14/21 days. This is hardly fair.

I understand that there is likely to be an even greater shortage of rental properties in the future, as the challenges (including the high costs involved) for an investor, particularly small investors, are becoming more and more difficult. Selling an investment property is fast becoming the better alternative.

To summarise, I believe there needs to be fair rental laws.

