

Submission Regarding Changes to Rental Laws

As former renters and now long-term landlords, my wife and I have experience in the rental market.

Our concerns in recent years revolve around the treatment of landlords as social pariahs who take advantage of tenants. This is an easy sell to the media and the general public and helps hide the facts.

It is very important to provide justice for tenants to ensure that they are not victimized or rorted. It is also important to provide the same for landlords. The Fair Trading agency has a long history of ignoring bad behaviour by tenants or taking excessively long time periods to hold tenants to account for their actions. Were it not for the pattern of behaviour shown by a significant minority of tenants, there would be little need for electronic rental application software to try to minimize the risk to landlords. The risk is significant and the hassles of dealing with building maintenance and weather events is causing us to think twice about having our rental properties.

Fairness to all parties is needed. If the NSW government squeezes landlords with onerous regulations, there will be an exodus of landlords from long term rental into the likes of AirBnB. This is already happening in many places. This means that the number of available rental properties will decrease further.

One example relates to leases. In our experience most tenants do not want more than an initial 6-month lease, even though longer options are offered. They want the flexibility to change their plans if required. Most of our tenants have been very good, but a few have not. Their poor behaviour was deliberate and calculated, yet they are often portrayed as victims.

The NSW government should be working with landlords and agents to make the system work better for all parties, otherwise it is likely that large amounts of money will have to be spent building public housing and the subsequent maintenance of that.