

Submission to the Inquiry into Improving NSW rental laws

greetings NSW Renting inquiry team

I have completed your Rental Questionnaire.

There were 3 topics not included which are a concern for renters :

Maintenance and Security, Noise Levels

My suggestions for Maintenance are :

General Maintenance and Repairs should be completed within 6 months of being requested. It may be helpful for Consumer Affairs to design a simple downloadable form for the requests for these.

Repairs to services should be completed within one month of being requested. Services are such things as Electricity, Gas, Water, Sewerage, internal NBN connections, vehicle access if included, secure parking if included, etc.

Repairs needed for health and security should be completed ASAP. This would include water, sewerage, phone line for medical and security reasons, roof damage, broken windows and external doors, etc.

My suggestions for Security are :

Landlords or Agents should have Police checks done on all new renters and any others to be dwelling there, similarly to employers checks on new employees, and similarly to working with children checks. This is for the protection of close neighbours and their possessions and would be a duty of care.

Any renters with crimes or prison within the previous 5 years and any 'known to police' should be placed more carefully. They should not be placed close to vulnerable people : single women, frail people, people over 75, handicapped people, children including youths, who can be easily misled and manipulated, and exploited. They would best be placed near middle aged able men, who would be likely to contain any troublesome behaviours, and may be good influences / role models.

All blocks of flats and units should have clearly marked boundaries or fences. Without these it is difficult for troublesome people to be told to move on or prosecuted for crimes.

The current lack of marked boundaries exposes residents to much greater occurrences of interferences, hassling, petty crimes, burglaries, and assaults. Troublemakers and rough sleepers commonly exploit the lack of boundaries. Reducing access reduces interferences and crimes.

The lack of clearly marked boundaries creates the situations where residents stay indoors to avoid whatever hassles are common, rather than enjoying the fresh air and sunshine outside about their own homes. Not everyone wants or organises to put on cute active wear and visit a near park or gym daily. Many would prefer to sit peacefully outside their own homes and would find it easier to do so with

boundaries. How many blocks of flats, units, and retirement villages do you see with neat lawns surrounding them and absolutely no people on them ?

It should be possible to step outside ones door without any requirement or expectation that it be a social occasion with anyone who happens to be there. To sit and read a book or whatever other non disruptive pursuit. Good people are usually likely to be respectful and those who cause troubles often ignore the comforts of others. Residents should be able to use their outdoor space without interference.

The noise levels within flats and units is often a problem. The noise transfer between neighbouring apartments due to normal daily activities requires more containment and attention from the planning authorities.

For existing units, owners should be encouraged to retrofit the bedrooms at least when redecorating. Some of the materials available for home theatre rooms should be suitable.

Please do include these points as recommendations for actions by the relevant departments, and for inclusion in existing and new laws.

Yours sincerely