

Hello Real estate and Housing policy team

Thankyou very much for your work in improving residential tenancy laws in NSW

I worked as a Housing Manager in the social housing sector in NSW for both government and no government organizations between 1996 until 2015 so I have work experience in dealing with these laws at NCAT.

I wanted to contribute on a personal level as I had great difficulty obtaining a lease in NSW in 2022 due to owning a small dog(a Jack Russell)

I rented two units in Melbourne between 2016-2019 with my pet and I experienced less discrimination from landlords and real estate agents in Melbourne despite declaring that I owned a pet who is well trained and well behaved. I also rented again in Melbourne in 2021/2022. I had to move out from a 90 day no grounds notice from a landlord which left me homeless and no where to go...I was lucky enough to be able to housesit for 6 months in Melbourne and NSW to prevent me sleeping on the streets with my pet.

Ive also read stories about renters who lie about their pets when applying for a tenancy as pets are part of the family and no one wants to give up a much loved pet to an overstretched pound in order to keep a roof over your head...this has terrible consequences for ones mental health and as you would be aware the mental health system is under much strain as well, especially after the pandemic.

I was only fortunate to find a place to rent in blue mountains NSW in late 2022 through a private landlord who were friends with previous neighbours who lived in this area() If they hadn't rented to me then I would probably be sleeping in a car now as almost 99 per cent of the rental advertisements in the lower blue mountains specified no pets...this is a ridiculous way to judge a tenancy as I have previously rented in Melbourne with my current pet, a small dog and have no complaints or breaches of tenancy or noise complaints from my neighbours who Ive always tried to maintain a good relationship with.

No grounds evictions are devastating as I know as a tenant Ive always looked after the place that Ive rented and paid my rent on time and in advance. The rental market is in such crisis at the moment Im currently trying to pay 2 to 3 months rent in advance to keep in good terms with my current private landlord...I feel so grateful that I have a stable roof over my head...I have a 12 month lease but also think leases should be extended to much longer leases if you have rented for an initial 12 months and abided by the tenancy agreement...longer leases over 12 months would be an amazing reform measure to introduce as it gives tenants stability and landlords have the surety of knowing their investment mortgage is paid....no tenant wants to be moving every 6 to 12 months...it is so disruptive and has flow on effects for mental health.

So my main points are definitely....get rid of the 90 day no grounds notices and do not allow landlords/agents to discriminate against responsible pet owners with well trained animals....I live on my own and my pet, Charlie provides me with companionship and he is great at warning me that people are outside my front door and he gives me a greater sense of safety and security. Also introduce the options of longer leases maybe after an initial 6 or 12 month tenancy....these longer leases should be automatic if there are no breaches of tenancy.

I am more than happy to discuss the above further with your team.

Thankyou for considering my perspective.

Regards