

Tenants face appalling conditions – National report reveals

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Shelter Tas, the State's Peak Body for Housing and Homelessness, and the Tenants' Union of Tasmania welcome new research on the experiences of people in the private rental market by CHOICE, National Shelter and the National Association of Tenants' Organisations.

"This new report gives a better understanding of the experiences of tenants in the private rental market, alongside issues of housing unaffordability. Renters are an increasing proportion of the housing market, as home ownership rates decline. 31% of Australians were renting their homes in 2013-4, increasing from 25.7% in 1994-5", Shelter Tas Executive Officer, Pattie Chugg said.

Key findings of the Report:

- 83% of renters have no fixed-term lease or are on a lease less than 12 months long
- 75% of renters agree or strongly agree that competition for rental properties is fierce
- 50% of renters report experiencing discrimination when applying for a rental property
- 20% of renters experiencing leaking, flooding and issues with mould
- 8% of renters are living in a property in need of urgent repairs.

"People are doing it tough in the private rental market. Tasmanian renters face housing insecurity, poor quality housing, and low-income renters in Hobart face unaffordability second only to Sydney. Tasmania's Minimum Standards for rental accommodation is a national first, and a great start, but there is still a long way to go", Tenants' Union spokesperson, Ben Bartl said.

"The Report explains that renters receive the lowest amount of support from the Commonwealth compared with owners and investors. Research shows that renters receive \$1,000 in assistance on average, while owners receive \$8,000 and investors \$4,000 per annum", Ms Chugg said.

The Report shows that three out of five renters fear requesting improvements or challenging unfair behaviour by landlords, and one in five private renters face leaking, flooding and mould issues in their rented homes.

"We call for law reform so that tenants have the security of knowing that if they pay their rent on time and keep the property in good condition that they will be able to remain in their homes in the long-term", Mr Bartl said.

Shelter Tas and the Tenants' Union are deeply concerned by the Federal Government's recent proposal to axe the National Affordable Housing Agreement, reported in the *Australian* newspaper on Friday. The Commonwealth Government and States have jointly provided support for homelessness services, private rental and social housing since the 1940s. Cutting NAHA will worsen conditions for tenants even further.

For more information and comment, contact:

Ben Bartl, Tenants' Union of Tasmania spokesperson
P: 0417 032 832
E: Ben_Bartl@clc.net.au

Pattie Chugg, Shelter Tas Executive Officer
P: 0419 536 100
E: eo@shelertas.org.au