

December 5, 2018

## **Latest report on renting shows NSW tops the country for rental homes in need of repairs and the prevalence of insecure leases**

### **Fear of eviction, properties in disrepair, just getting by – the experience of renting in Australia**

“Disrupted; the consumer experience of renting in Australia”, is the second report commissioned by CHOICE, National Shelter, and the National Association of Tenant Organisations (NATO), that delves into the renting experiences of our country’s renters.

“Disrupted” reveals that there are three common issues facing renters across the nation:

- living in a poor quality home and afraid to request repairs;
- insecure tenancies; and
- struggling with rental affordability and cost of living pressures.

### **More insecure leases and substandard housing in NSW than any other state or territory**

For renters in NSW, the report shows that the Premier State is far from premier, when it comes to the quality of rental housing.

NSW leads the country in the proportion of people living in properties that need repair – 56 per cent of NSW renters report their homes need repairs compared to 51 per cent nationally.

And more NSW renters are worried about being evicted if they ask for repairs – 55 per cent compared to 44 per cent nationally.

NSW also has the highest reported incidences of mould problems in their bathroom, at 35 per cent compared to 33 per cent nationally. One in five reported mould problems in their bedrooms.

And for renters with children, 39 per cent reported problems with mould in their bathroom compared to 29 per cent of other people who rent.

NSW also tops the country for the highest proportion of non fixed term leases – 39 per cent of NSW rental arrangements are rolling, periodic or non-fixed.

The experiences of renters revealed in “Disrupted” paints a picture of a housing system and regulatory framework that disadvantages renters;

- 75 per cent of NSW renters were worried that their request for a repair will lead to a rent rise
- 72 per cent of NSW renters expected a repairs request would be ignored indefinitely
- 55 per cent of long term renters have moved 5 times or more
- 83 per cent of people who rent are concerned by the stress of moving
- 43 per cent of renters are finding it difficult to get by on their current income
- 39 per cent of people who rent in metropolitan areas would find a 10 per cent rent increase difficult to afford. In regional areas this increases to 42 per cent.

### **Australia’s housing system is weighted against renters**

“It’s better to put up with a home that’s falling to bits than being asked to leave”; this sums up the choices or lack of choice facing many of Australia’s 2.6 million renting households.

A recent report from the Australian Housing and Research Institute (AHURI); “Inquiry into the future of the private rental sector”, found that over 10 years, two out of every three new homes is a rented one. This growth is expected to continue in the future.

“Our housing system has been predicated on the primacy of home ownership – the world has changed but we still treat renting as secondary. The consequence - renters are often stigmatised and seen as second class citizens in our housing system”, said Shelter NSW CEO Karen Walsh.

“The relationship between landlords and tenants needs an urgent rebalancing”, said Leo Patterson Ross of the Tenants Union of NSW.

“None of us should find it acceptable that our families and loved ones have to deal with such substandard housing in such a wealthy country. This research shows the need to make renting fair. As we head into an election next year, all parties should show leadership on this issue”, Mr Patterson said.

“We need a housing system that addresses the three main challenges facing renters – poor quality housing, insecurity and a lack of low cost rental housing. We need to see renting differently. We need to strive for a renting sector that is vibrant, diverse, and professional, providing high quality housing. Renting provides a home for almost one in three Australians, and that home should be a secure and quality one”, Ms Walsh said.

### **For more information contact:**

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## **About Shelter NSW**

Shelter NSW has been operating since 1975 as the State's peak housing advocacy and policy body. Our vision is "A secure home for all". We pursue our vision through critical engagement with policy and practice, and thought leadership.

We provide systemic advocacy and advice on policy and legislation for the whole NSW housing system to resolve housing inequality and we seek to ensure that the voices of housing consumers are included in our policy responses and review.

Our approach involves engaging, collaborating and connecting with government, the private and not for profit sectors, stakeholders and consumers. Our research centres on the causes of inequity and injustice in the housing system and we advocate solutions that aim to make the housing system work towards delivering a fairer housing system for all.

## **About The Tenants Union of NSW**

The Tenants Union NSW is an independent, secular not-for-profit membership based cooperative and community legal centre specialising in NSW residential tenancies law.

We aim to make a positive difference to the lives of residential tenants in NSW, and particularly tenants who are economically and socially disadvantaged by;

- Informing and educating tenants
- Advocating for the reform of policies and laws affecting tenants
- Conducting strategic litigation to advance the interests of tenants
- Supporting Tenants Advice and Advocacy Services
- Training tenancy advocates and other community organisations.