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MEDIA RELEASE



Improved Rights may help to reduce homelessness

A Better lease on Life, a report developed by National Shelter and the National Association of Tenancy Organisations (NATO), has been presented to Minister Plibersek in an effort to reduce homelessness through improved tenancy law.

The report makes a number of key recommendations to government around the areas of unreasonable evictions, opportunities for tenants to rectify rent arrears, and providing tenancy law protections, which will enable more balanced processes in the rental markets.

Chairperson of National Shelter, Adrian Pisarski, said the report is an innovative and necessary platform to assist the government's mission to halve homelessness by 2020.

"This report is about identifying and removing some of the triggers of homelessness and inadequate rights for tenants are definitely examples of such triggers," Mr Pisarski said.

"If we can eliminate the situations in which tenants are taken advantage of or do not have adequate opportunities to rectify tenancy issues before eviction, we will most certainly reduce the rate in which individuals and families are forced into homelessness," he continued.

Chris Martin from NATO said that many mainstream renters are faced with daily insecurities and the prospect of receiving unwarranted eviction notices.

"The report shows that legislation especially in relation to marginal renters like boarders and lodgers is currently patchy, and quite frankly, unsatisfactory," Mr Martin said.

"In some jurisdictions these renters only have common law contracts and no effective legal protections against summary evictions," he continued.

Mr Martin also said that the recommendations made in the report would be beneficial to tenants and landlords alike, and appropriate for all tenure types.

"These reforms would not only protect tenants but accommodate the requirements of landlords to operate their properties fairly and successfully," he concluded

Prior research conducted in the area demonstrates that investment decisions of landlord are not impacted by tenancy law reform.

A Better Lease on Life is available at www.shelter.org.au

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