



JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

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REPORT CALLS FOR FAIRNESS FOR RENTERS

Rental stress, poor living conditions, lack of responsiveness to repairs, discrimination in accessing housing and lack of security are all commonplace for those who rent their home. As renting becomes the new normal it is clear that laws and policy that leave renters relatively powerless is no longer acceptable.

The national report released today by consumer and advocacy groups CHOICE, National Shelter and the National Association of Tenant Organisations (NATO) shows it is time renters are given a level playing field, according to NT based advocates NT Shelter and Darwin Community Legal Service's Tenants' Advice Service.

A national survey of tenants entitled, *Disrupted – The Consumer Experience of Renting in Australia* reveals that 51% of renters are currently living in a home that need repairs.

NT Shelter Executive Officer Peter McMillan said that the report was a sobering reminder of the lack of protection that consumers have in relation to renting, with 44% of people who rent across Australia afraid that a request for repairs could lead to eviction and 68% concerned it would result in a rent increase.

"We join calls for a ban on "no-grounds" evictions, noting that the Territory is home to the greatest proportion of rental households (50%) compared to the national average of 30%. Yet the NT has the least protection for renters, with as low as 14 day notice periods for retaliatory, no-cause evictions the shortest in the country", said Mr McMillan.

Darwin Community Legal Service Executive Officer Linda Weatherhead said that the Northern Territory's *Residential Tenancies Act* was in urgent need of review. "Changes to the legislation are long overdue and we welcome the commitment by the Attorney General for this to occur in 2019. The NT is the only jurisdiction in Australia without an independent bond board and lacks many basic protections provided to renters in other parts of the country.", said Ms Weatherhead.

Mr McMillan said that the short-term nature of rental leases provided unnecessary stress and anxiety to many Territorians, with 55% of long-term renters having moved properties five times or more and 9 in 10 renters uncertain of where they will be living in a year's time.

“We want to attract people to live and work in the NT. They want to make a new home here in the Territory with some comfort that they won’t need to look for a new place in a year’s time and go through the expense and anxiety of moving their family”, said Mr McMillan.

NT Shelter and Darwin Community Legal Service reaffirm their commitment to working constructively with the Northern Territory Government, the real estate sector and other stakeholders to achieve a system that is ‘FAIR, SAFE AND CERTAIN’ for renters while maintaining appropriate protections for landlords.

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Enclosed: Copy of *Disrupted – The Consumer Experience of Renting in Australia*, 5 December 2018
Graphics, courtesy of CHOICE, National Shelter and NATO, 5 December 2018