



22 April 2020

## **An Open Letter to the Chief Minister on No Forced Evictions of Tenants**

It's been three weeks now since National Cabinet agreed to the introduction of a six month moratorium on evictions due to financial hardship.

This was an important demonstration of leadership and unity by Australia's Prime Minister, Premiers and Chief Ministers. We were pleased to see our Chief Minister as a key participant in this commitment.

The NT government must step up to the plate by tabling legislation on Friday to Parliament that ends the uncertainty and anxiety for renters who have lost their job or have lost significant income and are in serious rental stress.

For the 50% of Territorians who are renters, anything short of the introduction of a six month moratorium on evictions for tenants in financial hardship will be a broken promise on what was a clear and unambiguous commitment that all governments, including you on behalf of the NT government, made in Canberra on 29 March 2020.

We are fortunate that - so far - we have not had any community transmission of COVID-19 in the Northern Territory but this is no reason for being the only state or territory that does not put in place a moratorium on evictions. This is needed for economic reasons which are hitting people hard right now.

Territorians expect their government to deliver on the commitments it makes.

Some bureaucrats are claiming there are Constitutional or other legal reasons why the Territory government cannot comply with the agreement their government made but they refuse to provide details of the rationale for this or the legal advice they are relying on. Others suggest that the Northern Territory can go it alone and take a different approach to the rest of the country. But why should it?

Landlords understandably have concerns about reduced rental income from tenants who don't have the capacity to pay full rent. We support the introduction of the six month moratorium commitment along with reasonable measures to ensure that landlords get a fair go too. We can look to what other states such as Western Australia and NSW have done to strike a fair balance.

You have said on a number of occasions that you will "do whatever it takes" to keep Territorians safe and keep the economy going.

We call on you and your government to put this into practice right now by striking a fair deal for tenants and landlords alike.

Territorians deserve nothing less.

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**NT Shelter**

**Deborah Di Natale**  
**Chief Executive Officer**  
**NT Council of Social Service**

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