



tenants' union
of queensland inc

International Tenants' Day 2010 First Monday in October

This year as we celebrated International Tenants' Day on Monday 4th October we noted that all is not well for tenants in the land of Oz.

While the rental market works well for some renters low income renters are doing it tough, with high rents and limited access to affordable housing. At the same time all tenants in Australia face the same challenge of limited security of tenure.

Tenancy legislation in all states, including Queensland, allows lessors to ask tenants to leave without a reason (without grounds). As a result tenants can feel powerless and reluctant to enforce their tenancy rights, such as request maintenance repairs or enforce privacy rights, for fear the lessor will terminate their tenancy without a reason.

Many people who live in rented homes feel they are treated like second class citizens with tenancy laws that do not adequately protect their rights.

In Queensland the introduction of a new Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008 in July 2009 introduced some improvements to tenancy laws. Significantly for tenants, when the lessor is ending a fixed term agreement without grounds, the new Act increased the notice to leave that lessors must give tenants at the end of a lease from 2 weeks to 2 months.

This 2 month notice at the end of a lease gives tenants a more reasonable time period to move out. It also brings this notice period into line with notice required for lessors to end a periodic tenancy without grounds.

It is disappointing that one year after these changes were introduced the Real Estate Institute of Queensland has called on the Queensland government to reduce this without grounds notice that lessors must give to end a tenancy at the end of a lease.

The Tenants' Union and Tenant Advice and Advocacy Services (TAAS) have strongly objected to any reduction in the notice period. It is unreasonable to

think that tenants can find a new place and move with less than 2 months notice. If the lessor is ending the agreement without a reason then the lessor should be required to give tenants a reasonable amount of notice to find a new home and relocate.

The Tenants' Union of Queensland advocates on behalf of tenants and aims to ensure that tenant rights are respected and that renting is seen as a secure and respected tenure. The Tenants' Union provides a free statewide phone advice service for Queensland tenants on 1300 744 263.

In October the Tenants' Union will also commence a weekly advice service for tenants in the Queensland Civil Administrative Tribunal (QCAT) in Brisbane. This service will operate on Wednesday mornings to advise and assist tenants who are lodging QCAT applications or attending tenancy hearings.

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