

Residential Tenancies Act Review
Consumer Affairs Victoria
GPO Box 123
MELBOURNE VIC 3001

Dear Review Members,

Re: Residential Tenancies Act Review: Issues Paper (Security of Tenure)

I welcome this review of the Residential Tenancies Act 1997, and am encouraged that the feasibility of secure leases with annual rent increases is being considered in this Issues Paper.

As noted in the Paper, landlords enjoy considerable power over tenants, particularly in Australia's tight rental market. With an increasing proportion of Melburnians now seeing renting as their only option, including the emergence of 'renters for life', and many renters under extreme pressure from a lack of choice and unaffordable rents, improving the security of tenants' tenure is well overdue.

In response to the paper's questions for consideration on the importance of security of tenure and renters' preferences for longer-term tenancies, the Greens' Rental Health Survey revealed figures strongly in support of more secure leases:

- 65% of respondents had been forced to leave their rental through no fault of their own - 22% of them more than once in the past 5 years. The most common reason mentioned was that the house was sold;
- 56% of respondents had previously had to stay with friends or family because they couldn't find a place to rent;
- 50% of respondents had been renting for more than 10 years, and of these, 65% had been in their current house less than 2 years; and
- 68% of respondents indicated they would like to be able to enter into a long term lease (of at least 2 – 5 years).

While there is no current limitation on the ability to offer or accept fixed-term agreements up to five years, lease breaking and the associated costs is a major issue for many tenants. Security of tenure and tenant rights are therefore more important than length of lease per se. I am particularly concerned about the ability of landlords to terminate tenancies using 'without grounds evictions', and would encourage the review to recommend removing the ability of landlords to evict renters without lawful reason.

Yours sincerely,



Ellen Sandell
State MP for Melbourne

ELLEN SANDELL
STATE MP FOR MELBOURNE

t: (03) 9328 4637 e: office@ellensandell.com
146-148 Peel St, North Melbourne VIC 3051

 /ellensandell.mp
 @ellensandell

ellensandell.com