

TENANTS' UNION OF TASMANIA QUESTIONNAIRE

<p>Do you commit to building more public housing properties during the next term of Government? If so, how many?</p>	<p>Yes, the Tasmanian Greens will invest in 8357 additional social and affordable homes by 2030 in order to meet the 11000 homes deficit in Tasmania.</p> <p>Our commitment includes an early investment in 4,000 public housing dwellings to meet current housing waiting list demands, and 2,000 rent-to-buy affordable homes for low to middle income earners to take the pressure off those in lower income brackets.</p> <p>We will adopt a Housing First approach to homelessness, providing secure tenancy and wrap-around supports to homeless Tasmanians and changing lives for the long term. This policy, that originated in Finland, is ambitious and requires significant investment in housing. To meet the, according to UTAS, approximate 11000 deficit in affordable homes, we will establish a Department of Public Works to deliver well planned public housing. This will lower the cost of increasing housing supply to taxpayers, and drive down private sector costs through competition.</p> <p>We recognise that having a secure place to call home is a basic human right, yet it's one thousands of Tasmanians are denied. Our 'A Home for All Tasmanians' plan provides a framework to substantively tackle the housing crisis, and deliver a housing-led recovery from COVID.</p>
<p>Will you commit to repealing no reason end of lease evictions?</p>	<p>Yes, we will remove provisions allowing tenants to be evicted solely on grounds of lease expiration.</p> <p>Not only do the current laws fail to provide natural justice to tenants, they also provide landlords with cover to evict tenants for exercising their legal rights or to discriminate against tenants based on protected attributes under the <i>Anti-Discrimination Act 1998</i>.</p> <p>Removing the ability to evict tenants solely on the grounds of lease expiration would not prevent the non-renewal of the lease for legitimate reasons, including but not limited to, intent to sell the property or use it for another purpose, or for non-compliance with lease conditions.</p>

<p>Will you introduce rent control measures?</p>	<p>Yes. We will establish rent control laws modelled on provisions in the ACT's Residential Tenancy Act 1997 that set a threshold for reasonable rent increases.</p> <p>Tasmania's laws currently allow for the challenging of rent increases on the grounds of unreasonableness, commonly known as a form of rent control. The current arrangements have significant limitations. The burden is on a tenant to establish that a rent increase is unreasonable, and the question of reasonableness applies to the rent increase only - not whether the resulting rent is unreasonable.</p> <p>The Australian Capital Territory's rent control provisions, in contrast, set a threshold (CPI + CPI/10) over which the onus is on the landlord to establish the rent is reasonable. Evidence suggests the ACT's rent controls have successfully contributed to a reduction in overall rent levels. Aside from broader market affordability issues, rent controls empower individuals to ensure their rents are reasonable.</p>
<p>Will you provide stronger protections to victims of family violence?</p>	<p>Yes, we would prioritise homes for women and families escaping family violence.</p> <p>This became the practice under a Green Housing Minister.</p>
<p>Will you support amendments to the Act to allow for standard residential lease agreements and standard forms including a standard application form?</p>	<p>Yes, the Tasmanian Greens will develop standard forms and tenancy agreements.</p> <p>We agree with the Tenants' Union of Tasmania that the current leases and application forms contain a range of provisions that are unlawful or unreasonable.</p> <p>Tenants too often comply with these conditions because they aren't informed of their rights or they fear being evicted and not finding a home. Apart from the Northern Territory, Tasmania is currently the only Australian jurisdiction without a standard tenancy agreement. Implementing standard forms and agreements will increase the likelihood of agreements being legally compliant and provide a valuable reference point for tenants.</p>
<p>Do you support amending the Act to allow pets in rentals unless there is a good reason for their exclusion?</p>	<p>Yes, the Tasmanian Greens will protect tenants' right to own pets.</p>

	<p>We will make it unlawful to prohibit assistance animals in rental properties, and institute the Victorian model for refusing a request for pets, which requires a Tribunal order in circumstances where the landlord has a reasonable reason.</p> <p>Animal welfare organisations confirm people will feel forced to give up their much-loved pets in or to secure a tenancy. Current laws allow for the automatic exclusion of pets in tenancy agreements. The only exemption to this is guide dogs, which has forced tenants with other assistance animals to pursue their rights under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 in the courts. The Greens will work to achieve better outcomes for Tasmanian tenants.</p>
<p>Will you support stronger regulation of the short-term accommodation sector in Tasmania, returning investment properties to the long-term private rental market?</p>	<p>Yes, we will regulate short-stay accommodation to limit the number of whole properties able to be used as short-stay in residential zones in tight rental markets.</p> <p>The regulations will exempt people listing a part of their principal residence, or those listing their principal residents while they are temporarily absent. We will institute an immediate freeze on new listings in areas of rental shortage, and provide Local Government with powers to refuse to issue or renew permits when areas are under rental shortages. The determinations of rental shortages will be made by the office of the State Demographer.</p>
<p>Do you support increased funding for services providing tenancy advocacy?</p>	<p>Yes. Given the necessary reforms to tenancy laws, the Tasmanian Greens acknowledge that additional resourcing will be required for both the Residential Tenancy Commissioner (to deal with a higher volume of applications and to provide further public information) and for the Tenants' Union of Tasmania.</p> <p>We will fund the Tenant's Union of Tasmania to establish a dedicate office in Northern Tasmania, increase their base funding levels and extend the duration of funding contracts.</p>