



Benedict Bartl
Principal Solicitor
Tenants' Union of Tasmania

27 June 2025

RE: Tenants's Union of Tasmania election priorities

Dear Ben,

Thank you for your email of June 19 and the accompanying election questionnaire.

Over the past 15 months I have used my position as an independent in a minority parliament to advocate for good policy and the need to improve the quality of life for all Tasmanians, particularly when it comes to housing.

Some elements of Federal policy - negative gearing and capital gains tax concessions - are big contributors to inflated house and rental prices, but there are measures which can be taken by the Tasmanian Government to help offset housing market failure.

I recognise the impact the short stay sector is having on affordability and availability in the private rental market. I support short-stay levy starting at 15 per cent with a view to closing the gap between the price of short stay and rental prices, combined with tighter regulation of short stay. Levy revenues would be directed to homeless and tenancy support services. The levy would require periodic review to ensure it has the necessary market impact. I note that tighter regulation of short stay may also be needed.

I used question time in state parliament to pressure the government over this issue, and was disappointed to learn the government had put a policy for a modest 5 per cent short stay levy on hold.

I have also asked many questions in relation to the state government's failure to meet public housing construction targets through Homes Tasmania.

I have always maintained the semi-privatised Tasmanian Housing authority is no solution to the housing crisis and during this term I successfully used my private member's time in Parliament to move for a review of Homes Tasmania.



The review by former New South Wales Auditor-General Margaret Crawford was released in early June and revealed the dysfunction of the Homes Tasmania model. The government agreed to adopt all Ms Crawford's recommendations and if I'm re-elected I will lobby the new state government to continue this process.

My preference would be for public housing to be brought back "in house" by the government and not handed over to a statutory authority, which places housing at arm's length from government when really it should be front of mind.

Overall, decisive action is required to deal with the structural barriers and social conditions which drive inequality. This requires a whole of Government approach based on more responsive State department and agencies, increased public investment, inclusive economic and social policy driven by the public good, and partnership and collaboration with community organisations and stakeholders.

An integrated set of policy measures based on a proper analysis of the underlying dynamics of the housing market is needed if the rental and housing affordability crisis is to be overcome.

I have attached my response to your election questionnaire in which I indicate my support for the removal of no-grounds evictions, a short-stay levy, the right to make minor modifications, appeal rights against excessive rent increases and energy efficiency measures.

I support your request for additional financial support.

If I have the privilege of being re-elected I will continue to advocate for the most disadvantaged and vulnerable Tasmanians, and housing will remain high on my agenda.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'David O'Byrne', with a stylized, flowing script.

David O'Byrne
Independent for Franklin