



## Media Release

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### **Australian renters still vulnerable: National Cabinet reforms fall short in protecting tenants one year on**

Renters in Australia continue to face inconsistent tenancy laws and an ongoing lack of protection, says a new report out today from National Shelter and the National Association of Renters' Organisations (NARO).

The report by National Shelter and the National Association of Renters' Organisations (NARO) assessed the progress of State and Territories against their commitments of the National Cabinet reforms. It found inconsistent application of the element of the Better Deal for Renters, and that some jurisdictions have failed to meet their obligations. The report also recommends areas requiring attention including the need for fair rent increases and capping the amount of the increases, adequately funding tenancy advice and advocacy services, and better data to inform policy.

The report illustrates that there have been improvements in banning rent bidding, provisions for tenants experiencing domestic and family violence, and restricting rent increases to once per year. However considerably more work is needed in the areas of limiting break lease fees for fixed term agreements, making rental applications easier and protecting renters' personal information, better regulation of short-term accommodation, and phasing in of minimum rental standards.

The report also finds that some jurisdictions, particularly the Northern Territory and Western Australia, are failing to meet their National Cabinet obligations meaning they are failing to meet the needs of renters and reforms are urgently required.

Emma Greenhalgh, CEO National Shelter, said that "States and territories have not done enough to strengthen renters' rights amid the unprecedented housing crisis. They need to lift their game to meet the National Cabinet requirements".

"We continue to call on the Commonwealth to play a leadership role in continuing to coordinate national rental reform. Renters in Australia need protection. The reforms under the Better Deal for Renters are the first step to ensure that housing for 30% of Australians is safe, secure, and affordable".



Leo Patterson Ross, Spokesperson for NARO, said “The Better Deal for Renters signified a recognition from the Commonwealth of the benefit of a greater role in coordinating States and Territories. However it was created without input from renters or their advocates directly, and has no accountability measures built in. We need to take this work and build on it to ensure renters are able to find and keep a safe, healthy and dignified home. The legal framework relies on tenants to assert their right. We need to make sure they are supported to do so, with greater external oversight and guarantees that doing so will not put them, their families or their homes at risk”.

“We need to see Commonwealth, State and Territory governments meaningfully engage sector experts on a meaningful law reform agenda that brings Australian rental regulations into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century acknowledging the significant and lifelong role this tenure provides”.

Contact:

National Shelter  
Emma Greenhalgh  
Chief Executive Officer  
0402 927 243  
Emma.greenhalgh@shelter.org.au

National Association of Renters'  
Organisations (NARO) of  
Spokesperson  
Leo Patterson Ross  
0431 751 599  
[media@tenantsunion.org.au](mailto:media@tenantsunion.org.au)