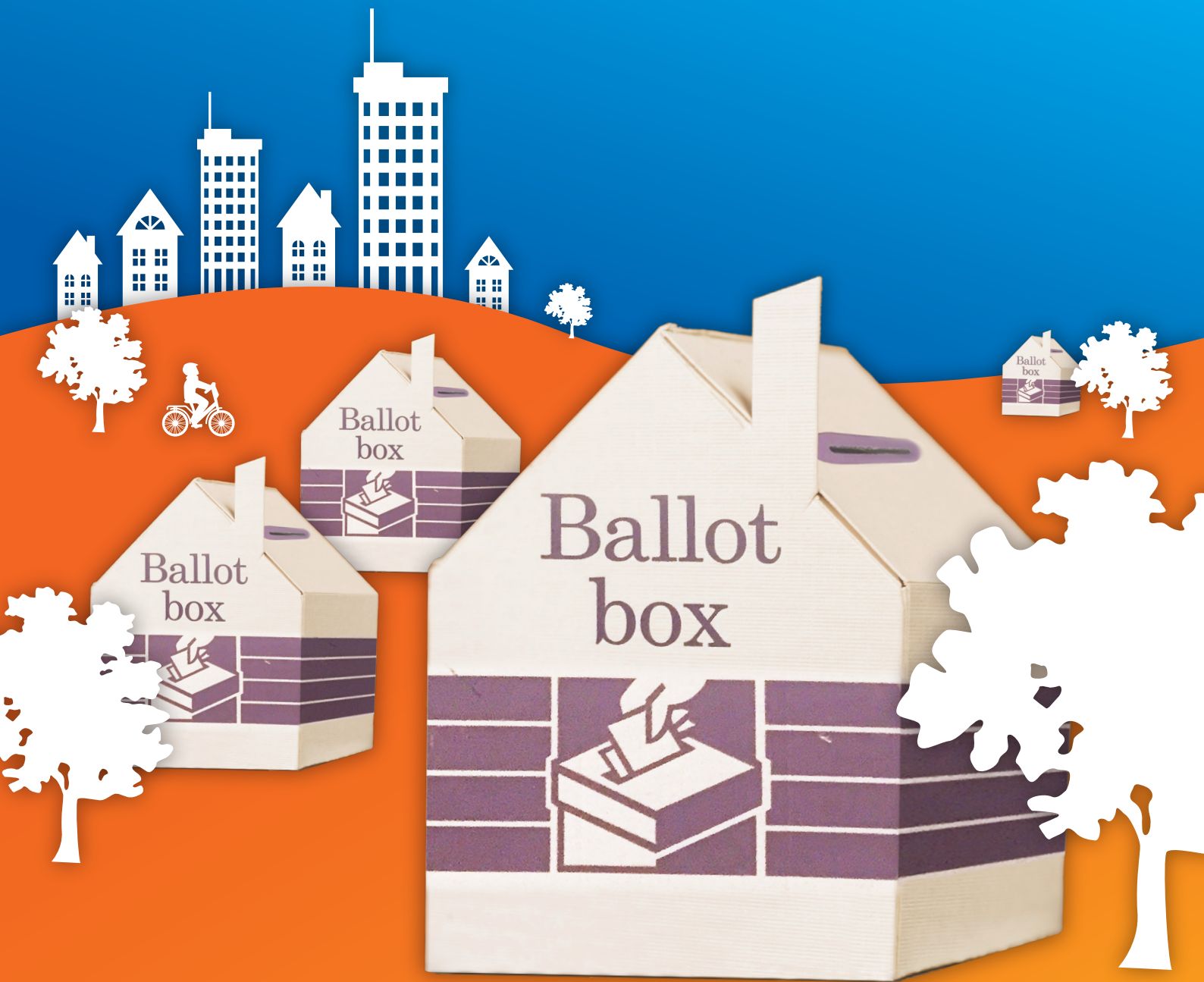


A tenant's guide to the **NSW ELECTION 2019**



**TENANTS'
UNION**
OF NEW SOUTH WALES

Acknowledgements

We acknowledge the traditional owners and holders of knowledge of the land and pay respect to all Elders past, present and future. These owners were evicted from their own land and this displacement has ongoing impacts today.

This report was prepared on the lands of the Gadigal of the Eora Nation. Unlike other inhabitants, the majority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living on the lands of the Eora Nation are renters.

About us

The Tenants' Union of NSW is the peak body representing the interests of tenants in New South Wales. We are a Community Legal Centre specialising in residential tenancy law and policy, and the main resourcing body for the state-wide network of Tenants Advice and Advocacy Services (TAASs) in New South Wales.

We have long-standing expertise in renting law, policy and practice. We are politically independent and have worked productively with successive governments in NSW to strive for a fair and balanced housing system.

Our full policy platform can be accessed at:
<https://www.tenants.org.au/tu/priorities>

About this guide

This guide is intended as educational information regarding the NSW Election to be held on 23rd March 2019. We acknowledge the tenants of NSW hold diverse political views and support this diversity. It is not created for the purpose of changing any individual's vote. Nothing in this report should be read as an endorsement or criticism of any political party or candidate.

For more information about this guide, contact Leo Patterson Ross, Senior Policy Officer on 02 8117 3700 or contact@tenantsunion.org.au

Certain graphics used in this report were created by Freepik – freepik.com

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Electorate demographics

There are 93 electorates covering the state of New South Wales. The Parliamentarians elected to represent these seats form the Legislative Assembly.

There are also 42 seats in the state-wide Legislative Council who are elected for 8 year terms. At each state election half the Legislative Council seats (21) will come to the end of their 8 year term and be contested.

Statewide context

These demographics are taken from the 2016 Census data.

Across the state, 32.50% of people rent their home. 27.70% are in private rentals, while 4.77% of people live in social housing.

Renters aged 50 or over make up 19.30% of the renting population, while 44.50% of homes have children living in them.

Of the private renters 10.03% of homes are overcrowded (needing one or more extra bedrooms) compared to 6.15% in social housing. For every 10,000 people more than 50 were experiencing homelessness in 2016.



ELECTORATES (Albury – Cronulla)

	% of population who rent	% of people living in private rental	% people living in public or community housing	Homelessness rate per 10,000 people	% of people who rent aged 50 or over	% of rented homes with children	% of rented homes which are over-crowded
NSW	32.50%	27.70%	4.77%	50.4	19.30%	44.50%	9.46%
Albury	30.06%	26.90%	3.16%	19.4	21.20%	40.50%	3.42%
Auburn	49.73%	42.70%	7.03%	186.1	14.90%	47.60%	24.39%
Ballina	30.69%	27.30%	3.39%	53.7	25.40%	45.20%	5.05%
Balmain	49.61%	41.80%	7.81%	97.2	15.60%	22.50%	9.53%
Bankstown	55.10%	37.20%	17.90%	89.8	21.00%	58.30%	18.79%
Barwon	36.88%	29.20%	7.68%	44.2	21.70%	46.80%	5.15%
Bathurst	29.99%	25.40%	4.59%	30.7	21.30%	45.60%	3.72%
Baulkham Hills	17.24%	16.50%	0.74%	17.4	17.10%	62.50%	6.19%
Bega	27.26%	23.50%	3.76%	33.7	28.80%	43.20%	3.99%
Blacktown	46.72%	35.50%	11.22%	57.8	19.20%	57.70%	13.51%
Blue Mountains	20.00%	17.70%	2.30%	23.3	23.40%	47.10%	3.40%
Cabramatta	42.10%	31.30%	10.80%	111.6	24.10%	65.40%	19.05%
Camden	21.44%	19.90%	1.54%	14.5	18.10%	62.80%	4.74%
Campbelltown	51.55%	34.10%	17.45%	58.8	18.90%	60.10%	8.15%
Canterbury	38.24%	34.20%	4.04%	67.9	20.20%	48.30%	18.25%
Castle Hill	17.49%	17.10%	0.39%	11.7	17.80%	68.80%	4.33%
Cessnock	28.91%	25.10%	3.81%	18.1	18.30%	55.30%	4.89%
Charlestown	31.09%	23.10%	7.99%	23.6	21.80%	45.80%	4.79%
Clarence	29.36%	25.80%	3.56%	40.5	28.00%	47.30%	4.74%
Coffs Harbour	35.35%	29.90%	5.45%	44.4	24.00%	48.80%	6.47%
Coogee	46.04%	42.50%	3.54%	69.4	13.10%	25.00%	7.67%
Cootamundra	26.61%	23.10%	3.51%	18.6	24.40%	43.40%	2.82%
Cronulla	21.37%	19.80%	1.57%	14.1	18.90%	39.40%	5.42%



ELECTORATES (Davidson – Londonderry)

	% of population who rent	% of people living in private rental	% people living in public or community housing	Homelessness rate per 10,000 people	% of people who rent aged 50 or over	% of rented homes with children	% of rented homes which are over-crowded
NSW	32.50%	27.70%	4.77%	50.4	19.30%	44.50%	9.46%
Davidson	15.83%	15.30%	0.53%	12.1	19.60%	65.40%	6.02%
Drummoyne	35.11%	32.30%	2.81%	23.3	17.20%	35.40%	9.93%
Dubbo	33.43%	28.10%	5.33%	29.5	19.80%	48.90%	4.38%
East Hills	33.92%	24.50%	9.42%	38.5	23.10%	57.90%	9.79%
Epping	23.23%	21.40%	1.83%	16.2	18.30%	61.00%	9.45%
Fairfield	49.23%	38.00%	11.23%	119.8	24.60%	61.80%	20.41%
Gosford	35.93%	30.90%	5.03%	46.3	27.30%	42.80%	4.58%
Goulburn	25.60%	21.60%	4.00%	24.7	23.50%	46.50%	3.59%
Granville	51.38%	42.10%	9.28%	102.5	16.20%	55.40%	20.14%
Hawkesbury	23.86%	20.40%	3.46%	33.6	21.40%	52.60%	5.20%
Heathcote	17.83%	15.80%	2.03%	9.7	19.30%	50.80%	6.50%
Heffron	55.44%	49.20%	6.24%	75.9	11.50%	20.40%	15.23%
Holsworthy	28.65%	23.40%	5.25%	32.6	18.30%	64.80%	10.52%
Hornsby	21.96%	20.10%	1.86%	22.4	19.50%	52.60%	9.10%
Keira	32.97%	23.60%	9.37%	27.5	23.10%	43.80%	6.35%
Kiama	24.02%	20.30%	3.72%	19.8	22.40%	52.50%	3.69%
Kogarah	39.92%	37.20%	2.72%	56.2	16.50%	44.90%	21.35%
Ku-ring-gai	22.82%	21.20%	1.62%	9.3	19.20%	55.50%	9.75%
Lake Macquarie	27.69%	22.90%	4.79%	30.7	23.70%	53.00%	4.80%
Lakemba	53.53%	39.70%	13.83%	94.3	18.40%	56.80%	22.86%
Lane Cove	33.06%	29.40%	3.66%	17.8	17.90%	36.40%	7.74%
Lismore	28.75%	25.10%	3.65%	58.9	24.80%	45.50%	4.90%
Liverpool	50.43%	35.10%	15.33%	71.8	22.20%	58.70%	13.97%
Londonderry	48.65%	35.80%	12.85%	58.3	18.50%	59.40%	8.87%



ELECTORATES (Macquarie Fields – Port Stephens)

	% of population who rent	% of people living in private rental	% people living in public or community housing	Homelessness rate per 10,000 people	% of people who rent aged 50 or over	% of rented homes with children	% of rented homes which are over-crowded
NSW	32.50%	27.70%	4.77%	50.4	19.30%	44.50%	9.46%
Macquarie Fields	38.19%	27.90%	10.29%	54.9	19.80%	63.70%	9.45%
Maitland	34.75%	28.60%	6.15%	16.2	16.90%	54.50%	3.68%
Manly	31.86%	30.40%	1.46%	33.3	13.40%	33.60%	7.24%
Maroubra	46.52%	34.00%	12.52%	29.4	22.30%	39.20%	10.26%
Miranda	23.70%	19.10%	4.60%	13.5	23.30%	46.90%	6.37%
Monaro	28.19%	25.20%	2.99%	23.1	18.10%	42.00%	4.04%
Mount Druit	46.09%	33.70%	12.39%	54.5	17.50%	68.90%	14.04%
Mulgoa	18.48%	17.80%	0.68%	28.4	16.20%	68.70%	6.14%
Murray	29.92%	26.60%	3.32%	31.2	22.30%	44.10%	5.32%
Myall Lakes	31.20%	26.70%	4.50%	23.8	27.80%	47.70%	4.92%
Newcastle	42.64%	34.70%	7.94%	70.3	20.40%	26.10%	4.04%
Newtown	63.69%	51.60%	12.09%	169.8	13.40%	10.80%	9.41%
North Shore	43.96%	42.50%	1.46%	47.8	16.70%	24.60%	5.66%
Northern Tablelands	37.42%	31.40%	6.02%	61	20.80%	44.60%	4.68%
Oatley	27.56%	23.80%	3.76%	27	21.50%	50.80%	12.33%
Orange	32.73%	27.30%	5.43%	16.5	20.40%	46.00%	4.05%
Oxley	30.14%	25.60%	4.54%	41.1	27.00%	50.10%	5.78%
Parramatta	56.32%	46.40%	9.92%	58.7	17.10%	47.50%	14.90%
Penrith	37.46%	29.80%	7.66%	45	19.80%	50.40%	5.19%
Pittwater	19.24%	18.40%	0.84%	15.6	22.00%	49.50%	6.85%
Port Macquarie	29.76%	26.00%	3.76%	33.5	27.80%	44.20%	3.75%
Port Stephens	29.96%	26.30%	3.66%	19.1	23.90%	52.90%	3.20%



ELECTORATES (Prospect – Wyong)

	% of population who rent	% of people living in private rental	% people living in public or community housing	Homelessness rate per 10,000 people	% of people who rent aged 50 or over	% of rented homes with children	% of rented homes which are over-crowded
NSW	32.50%	27.70%	4.77%	50.4	19.30%	44.50%	9.46%
Prospect	33.58%	26.90%	6.68%	73	20.90%	63.60%	13.92%
Riverstone	24.00%	22.60%	1.40%	14.8	15.60%	69.60%	6.03%
Rockdale	37.60%	35.20%	2.40%	64.4	15.80%	37.10%	17.08%
Ryde	42.03%	38.00%	4.03%	36.4	16.40%	38.80%	12.56%
Seven Hills	36.11%	29.40%	6.71%	36.2	17.10%	54.20%	11.20%
Shellharbour	34.51%	24.80%	9.71%	27.5	23.90%	55.00%	5.54%
South Coast	30.62%	26.00%	4.62%	29	25.10%	48.80%	3.48%
Strathfield	43.62%	40.30%	3.32%	132.7	14.50%	38.10%	22.45%
Summer Hill	43.88%	40.10%	3.78%	146.1	15.30%	29.80%	12.09%
Swansea	24.62%	21.40%	3.22%	16.1	25.60%	50.80%	4.78%
Sydney	58.08%	54.80%	3.28%	247.9	11.80%	10.80%	14.89%
Tamworth	33.80%	29.60%	4.20%	29	19.80%	47.90%	4.46%
Terrigal	20.47%	18.30%	2.17%	23.6	22.10%	52.90%	3.71%
The Entrance	30.84%	26.00%	4.84%	25.2	24.20%	51.80%	5.83%
Tweed	29.67%	26.40%	3.27%	45.7	28.40%	48.50%	4.51%
Upper Hunter	30.93%	27.10%	3.83%	26.9	20.10%	48.40%	3.44%
Vaucluse	37.84%	36.90%	0.94%	37.1	13.70%	26.20%	6.76%
Wagga Wagga	35.26%	29.90%	5.36%	19.4	17.00%	44.00%	3.86%
Wakehurst	26.05%	23.10%	2.95%	25	19.50%	45.00%	10.50%
Wallsend	37.09%	30.40%	6.69%	27.7	17.10%	42.50%	6.19%
Willoughby	35.79%	34.60%	1.19%	28.8	15.40%	40.70%	12.00%
Wollondilly	17.96%	16.10%	1.86%	16.6	22.20%	54.40%	5.40%
Wollongong	46.49%	35.40%	11.09%	59	21.10%	34.40%	7.86%
Wyong	34.30%	29.50%	4.80%	37.4	21.70%	56.50%	5.56%



Party survey

The Tenants' Union of NSW wrote to all political parties registered for the NSW state election and all sitting independent Parliamentarians. We asked them to complete a ten question survey by the 28th of February. Some policy positions may have been announced subsequent to this survey. The responses here are published verbatim without edits other than style formatting.

Of current Parliamentarians we received responses from NSW Liberals and Nationals, NSW Labor, the NSW Greens, Animal Justice Party and Independent Member for Sydney, Alex Greenwich. The Shooters, Fishers and Farmers acknowledged the request, noting that they had no policies concerning housing but made an invitation to meet to discuss these issues after the election.

Of parties not represented in NSW Parliament we received responses from Socialist Alliance and Sustainable Australia. We were also contacted by Flux who noted that their party policy of putting all questions of legislation to the community for a vote made it impossible to reply on specific questions of policy.



1. *Do you support bringing an end to 'no ground' evictions and instead implementing a fair and balanced list of 'reasonable' grounds for ending a tenancy?*

How will you work in the next Parliament to make sure rented homes are stable homes, and that people who rent their home cannot be evicted in retaliation for seeking performance of their contract?

The *Residential Tenancies Act 2010* (the RT Act) contains a number of important protections for tenants and their families. If a landlord wishes to end a tenancy after the fixed term has expired, the landlord must provide the tenant with at least 90 days' notice to vacate. This notice period is designed to give tenants a reasonable time to find and move to another property.

The NSW Government considers that a landlord should be able to regain possession of their property, provided they comply with the RT Act and give appropriate notice to the tenant.

Landlords' reasons for wishing to gain possession of their property are varied and it is not appropriate to limit the permissible reasons for ending a tenancy to a prescribed list.

In October 2018, the NSW Parliament passed significant amendments to the RT Act. The reforms implement the recommendations from a statutory review of the RT Act carried out in 2015-16, and include changes which aim to ensure rented homes are stable homes and which minimise the potential for retaliatory evictions.

For example, the reforms will make it easier for tenants to make alterations by prescribing a list of minor alterations for which it would be unreasonable for landlords to refuse consent. This reform was introduced to give residents the opportunity to make reasonable minor alterations to their rental premises.

Additionally, the reforms limit the frequency of rent increases in a periodic lease to a maximum of one in any 12-month period. This will limit the ability of landlords to raise the rent in response to a request to carry out repairs.

The reforms are expected to commence throughout 2019. The NSW Government will consult widely with stakeholders to amend the Residential Tenancies Regulation 2010 to support the recent changes to the RT Act.

2. *In NSW we have a shortfall of more than 200,000 homes available to lower income households at truly affordable rents and this will grow by more than 100,000 over the next 20 years. How will you work in the next Parliament to address this shortfall?*

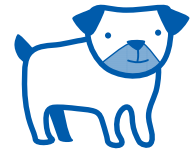
The NSW Government has commenced the biggest social housing building program in the country. Through Communities Plus, the NSW Government is building 23,000 new and replacement social housing dwellings over the next 10 years. Additionally, the NSW Government will deliver an additional 3,400



social and affordable housing properties under Phase 1 and 2 of the Social and Affordable Housing Fund.

3. *Most Australians own a pet, and many of those who don't wish they did. Pet ownership holds demonstrated positive health and wellbeing impacts for individuals, as well as communities.*

The majority of landlords do not allow pets, even in homes which are appropriate for animals to live in. At the same time, we have tens of thousands of animals in shelters needing homes. Do you support the idea that people who rent a home and want a pet should generally be able to have one? How will you work in the next Parliament to achieve this goal?



The RT Act leaves the issue of whether a tenant can keep a pet (other than an assistance animal) to be negotiated between a landlord and tenant. Properties vary greatly, and different types of pets may be suitable for some properties but not others. The landlord and tenant are best placed to negotiate whether a particular pet would be appropriate for a property. For these reasons, the NSW Government believes the current provisions and arrangements to be appropriate.

4. *Residents of boarding houses and other marginal renters such as people living in lodgings and hostels do not have sufficient protections against arbitrary evictions, unfair fees and charges and other contract violations. An increasing number of people are living in these types of accommodation as their principal place of residence.*

Do you support introducing or amending current legislation to ensure all people who rent their home have protection against unfair evictions, and access to effective dispute resolution services?



The key purpose of the *Boarding Houses Act 2012* (the Boarding Houses Act) is to protect the rights of residents living in boarding houses. Existing provisions in the Boarding Houses Act provide protections against unfair evictions. There are also provisions which allow renters to access Fair Trading's independent dispute resolution services and the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal if a tenant cannot resolve a dispute with a boarding house operator.

The NSW Government intends to undertake a statutory review of the Boarding Houses Act in the coming year, which will cover a range of issues including compliance investigations and enforcement, and occupancy agreements. Amendments to the current Boarding Houses Act may occur once a public review has taken place and if such a review recommends legislative and regulatory change. This will ensure all stakeholders in the community have an opportunity to contribute to the review and that any legislative changes are underpinned by the findings of the review.

The review will involve the Department of Finance, Services and Innovation and the Department of Family and Community Services jointly preparing a discussion paper to seek public feedback on the Boarding Houses Act.



5. While NSW's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities make up 3% of the population they make up 24% of people seeking assistance from homelessness services, and are twice as likely to rent their home. These communities seek greater control over their own housing provision.

How will you work to improve the housing situation of NSW's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities?



The NSW Government has a strong record of delivering Aboriginal Housing and has delivered a 15% increase in Aboriginal Housing Office (AHO) owned properties since 2011. The NSW Government has also invested in a new \$33.1 million Aboriginal Housing Strategy that is built on the principle that housing empowers Aboriginal people to lead fulfilling lives. The Strategy has four pillars that were released in July 2018 including:

1. delivering housing solutions for Aboriginal people informed by evidence of demand for social and affordable housing;
2. achieving better outcomes with Aboriginal tenants by facilitating partnerships across human services agencies, Aboriginal organisations and creating opportunities for economic participation;
3. strengthening and growing Aboriginal Community Housing Providers through capacity building, regulation and transfer of housing and asset management; and
4. enhancing data collection, evaluation and analysis functions to ensure planning is robust and resources are targeted where they are needed most.

The AHO commenced community consultation on the development and implementation of programs under the Strategy including holding several forums across NSW that will inform the next steps.

6. At the 2016 census, 100,000 people aged 65 or over were living in private rental accommodation in NSW. This number is growing. The cost of housing for older Australians who privately rent their homes is over 6 times higher than those who are owner occupiers. For those relying on the Single Aged Pension housing costs in the private rental market would represent close to 60% of their income. Private rental housing is also insecure, and much of it is unsafe and unadaptable for older renters.

How will you work in the next Parliament to ensure that their homes are stable, affordable and appropriate?



The NSW Government appreciates the challenges tenants, and particularly older tenants, face in securing stable, affordable and appropriate housing. The recent reforms to the RT Act, summarised below, provide tenants with increased financial stability and ensure that rental properties meet basic minimum standards.



Measures to ensure rental homes are stable and affordable

The recent reforms to the RT Act provide protections against rent increases for tenants on periodic or 'ongoing' agreements. Under these agreements the landlord cannot increase the rent more than once in any 12 month period.

If a tenant considers that the amount of a rent increase is excessive, they can challenge the rent increase in the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal. The Tribunal considers a range of factors, including rents for comparable properties, in determining whether or not a rent increase is excessive.

Broader rental affordability is also affected by housing affordability, the costs incurred by landlords and the number of households who are renting. The NSW Government's measures to support first

home buyers through stamp duty exemptions, boosting housing supply and delivering infrastructure to support growing communities, are designed to keep the cost of housing down.

Measures to improve the regulation of real estate professionals, strata schemes and the home building and construction sector are also contributing to housing supply by boosting consumer confidence and ensuring quality building outcomes.

Balanced regulation of the residential tenancy market is required to ensure that the interests of landlords and tenants are considered, that tenants are protected from excessive rent increases, and that the need for affordable and liveable housing for tenants is balanced against the need to encourage landlords to provide rental properties.

Measures to ensure rental homes are appropriate and can be modified

One of the key measures the NSW Government has introduced to ensure that rental premises are safer and more adaptable, including for older renters, are provisions which make it easier for renters to modify rental premises.

The RT Act currently allows tenants to add fixtures or make minor alterations to the premises at their own expense if they have the landlord's written consent or if the residential tenancy agreement permits it.

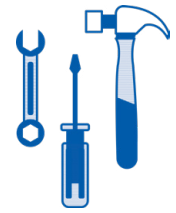
Under the recent reforms, the regulations will be able to prescribe minor alterations for which it would be unreasonable for the landlord (or their agent) to refuse consent. This has been introduced to give residents the opportunity to make reasonable minor alterations to their rental premises.

This reform also allows the regulations to specify certain alterations where the landlord's consent may be conditional on the alteration only being carried out by a qualified person. Further consultation will be undertaken to develop the list of prescribed minor alterations.



7. In December 2018 the 'Disrupted' report found that 56% of NSW rented homes were in need of some level of maintenance - the worst performance of any state. More than 80% of new apartment buildings have defects in them. More than half of homes in apartment buildings are tenants' homes.

How will you work in the next Parliament to improve the quality and maintenance of NSW's homes?



The recent reforms to the RT Act establish new, basic minimum standards that rental properties must meet at the start of and throughout a tenancy.

Currently, landlords are required to provide the residential premises in a reasonable state of cleanliness and fit for habitation by the tenant. The 2018 reforms to the RT Act introduce minimum standards that further clarify the meaning of 'fit for habitation' and set clearer expectations for both landlords and tenants. The amendments have been introduced to ensure that all rental properties are safe, secure and do not endanger people's health. Importantly, the reforms do not mean that a property is automatically fit for habitation if it meets these minimum standards, as these standards are not an exhaustive list of what it means to be fit for habitation.

The reforms recognise that there may be other significant problems that mean a specific property is considered unfit for habitation. In setting the baseline standards, the reforms also ensure that there is flexibility for consideration to be given to other issues. This includes matters such as kitchen space, dampness and insulation, if those specific issues are causing a particular residential premise to be unfit for habitation.

All landlords are required to provide a rental property that is fit for habitation. The reforms will mean that landlords need to ensure their rental properties meet the minimum standards at all times during the lease.

8. The Residential (Land Lease) Communities Act 2013 contains a number of provisions regarding operator conduct, including rules of conduct. Unfortunately poor operator conduct and the lack of enforcement action continues to be one of the most common issues raised. Complaints include ignoring orders made by the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NCAT), interference in the sale of homes, bullying and harassment.

What would you do to ensure operators behave in a professional manner and comply with the rules of conduct when dealing with residents?



The NSW Government is committed to ensuring that residential community operators comply with their obligations under the Residential Land Lease Communities Act 2013 (the RLL Act), including the rules of conduct.

The RLL Act came about following a comprehensive review into the residential parks sector in November 2011. The review found that the previous Residential Parks Act 1998 was confusing and created unnecessary conflict between operators and residents. As a result, the RLL Act commenced on 1 November



2015, introducing more than 100 reforms for the better regulation of residential communities.

If home owners are having difficulties with a specific operator, they can lodge a complaint with NSW Fair Trading. NSW Fair Trading undertakes inspection programs for residential communities, and also investigates complaints about operators not complying with their obligations under the RLL Act. If an operator is found to be breaching their obligations, disciplinary action can be taken. This can include a maximum penalty of \$11,000 for a corporation or \$5,500 for an individual, a requirement to give a particular undertaking, or suspending or banning a particular operator.

A statutory review of the RLL Act is due to commence in 2020. This will provide an opportunity for all of the provisions of the RLL Act to be reviewed, including the rules of conduct requirements, to ensure that their policy objectives remain valid and to determine whether any changes are needed.

9. *Affordability and rental stress are real issues for many home owners in residential land lease communities. The Act has failed to strike the right balance between supporting viable communities and protecting home owners from unfair business practices. Site fees are commonly set above fair market value for new home owners and fixed method increases in new site agreements have become a complex mix of several factors that make it impossible for a prospective home owner to reasonably predict how much their site fees will increase in future years. Fixed method increases are non-negotiable and can never be challenged as excessive. Home owners are being locked into methods that result in large above-market annual increases over a number of years.*

What will you do to improve the processes for increasing these site fees?

The NSW Government recognises that site fees can have a major impact on the cost of living of residents in residential communities. The RLL Act has a number of protections in place for home owners. This includes a process to dispute site increases by notice and information disclosure requirements prior to a new agreement being entered into by a home owner. In particular, operators are required to provide a prospective or existing resident with a disclosure statement at least 14 days prior to entering into a new agreement. This statement must include details of the fees and charges that will be payable under the proposed agreement for the particular residential site.

The statutory review of the RLL Act will provide an opportunity for the site fee provisions of the RLL Act to be reviewed. This process will ensure that their policy objectives remain valid and identify any changes which could be made to further ensure the ongoing sustainability of residential land lease communities.

The NSW Government is also keenly aware of the broader cost of living pressures facing households, including those in residential communities. In response, it has introduced the Cost of Living Service, under which Service NSW has consolidated more than 40 NSW Government rebates and savings from over 12 agencies together in one convenient location.



The rebates and savings are across areas including energy, driving, public transport, health, sport and recreation and programs for children. Customers can access, view and apply for rebates and savings from the Service NSW website and determine eligibility by calling Service NSW or using the online Savings Finder. Customers that need more help can book a free appointment with a Cost of Living Specialist at one of over 60 Service NSW centres across NSW.

10. *Every year up to 30,000 people across NSW receive free, expert advice and advocacy from the Tenants' Advice and Advocacy Services (TAASs). Up to 4,000 people receive ongoing assistance with cases, including in the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal. This work helps avoid long and protracted disputes while ensuring people who could not afford legal representation are not treated unjustly. The program is funded from the interest earned on tenants bonds, and from interest earned on real estate agent trust accounts and so places little burden on other state revenue.*

However, since the last real increase of funding to the TAASs in 2003, the number of tenants in NSW has risen by nearly 50% and many people are missing out on assistance.

Will you support an increase in funding free independent legal tenancy advice for renters to reflect the growth of both the funding source and the need in community? The program requires an increase of \$5.2 million per year immediately, and then increasing yearly in line with the total number of bonds held in the Rental Bond Board.



The NSW Government funds tenancy advice and advocacy services through two main avenues: by providing funding to the Tenants Advice and Advocacy Program (TAAP) and through Fair Trading's contact centres, engagement and complaints unit and compliance and enforcement activities. Fair Trading's free tenancy complaints service provides impartial advice to both tenants and landlords and makes suggestions as to the best way to finalise the complaint.

The recent amendments to the RT Act provide NSW Fair Trading with new powers to resolve disputes between tenants and landlords over repairs and maintenance. NSW Fair Trading will be able to issue rectification orders that set out the steps that need to be taken to repair a property and a due date.

The funding the TAAP is considered from time to time and it will be considered again following the election.



1. *Do you support bringing an end to 'no ground' evictions and instead implementing a fair and balanced list of 'reasonable' grounds for ending a tenancy?*

How will you work in the next Parliament to make sure rented homes are stable homes, and that people who rent their home can not be evicted in retaliation for seeking performance of their contract?



NSW Labor will end unfair, no-fault evictions in the first 100 days of Government and will determine a list of reasonable grounds in consultation with stakeholders.

2. *In NSW we have a shortfall of more than 200,000 homes available to lower income households at truly affordable rents and this will grow by more than 100,000 over the next 20 years.*

How will you work in the next Parliament to address this shortfall?



A Daley Labor Government will introduce a comprehensive set of measures to help making housing more affordable, including:

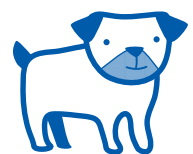
1. A full audit of publicly-owned land to create an Affordable Housing Land Register to identify holdings that could be developed for affordable housing.
2. Deliver a 25 per cent Affordable Housing mandate on
3. government-owned land. Labor will work with stakeholders to ensure that land owned by the Government which is fast-tracked for development will have a 25 per cent mandate of Affordable Housing within our first term.
4. Implement a 15 per cent Affordable Housing mandate on privately developed land. Labor will work with stakeholders to introduce a mandate of 15 per cent of new dwelling or floor space on privately developed land within our first term.

3. *Most Australians own a pet, and many of those who don't wish they did. Pet ownership holds demonstrated positive health and wellbeing impacts for individuals, as well as communities.*

The majority of landlords do not allow pets, even in homes which are appropriate for animals to live in. At the same time we have tens of thousands of animals in shelters needing homes.

Do you support the idea that people who rent a home and want a pet should generally be able to have one?

How will you work in the next Parliament to achieve this goal?



NSW Labor's first priority will be ensuring that we end unfair no-fault evictions.

Security of tenure is the number one issue for renters. Improving security of



tenure will mean tenants can make requests about changes to their tenancy agreement without fear of retribution.

4. *Residents of boarding houses and other marginal renters such as people living in lodgings and hostels do not have sufficient protections against arbitrary evictions, unfair fees and charges and other contract violations. An increasing number of people are living in these types of accommodation as their principal place of residence.*

Do you support introducing or amending current legislation to ensure all people who rent their home have protection against unfair evictions, and access to effective dispute resolution services?



NSW Labor does not believe unfair, no-fault evictions should be tolerated in any rental situation.

NSW Labor is committed to ensuring all people feel secure in their housing and will review the relevant legislation as per the statutory requirements for specific Acts.

5. *While NSW's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities make up 3% of the population they make up 24% of people seeking assistance from homelessness servicesii, and are twice as likely to rent their home. These communities seek greater control over their own housing provision.*

How will you work to improve the housing situation of NSW's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities?



A Daley Labor Government will establish a Treaty process in NSW, in consultation and negotiation with the state's Indigenous representatives. Housing would be one of the areas that a Daley Labor Government will deal with under the Treaty process with a view to creating an agreement based on self determination.

6. *At the 2016 census, 100,000 people aged 65 or over were living in private rental accommodation in NSW. This number is growing. The cost of housing for older Australians who privately rent their homes is over 6 times higher than those who are owner occupiers. For those relying on the Single Aged Pension housing costs in the private rental market would represent close to 60% of their incomeiii. Private rental housing is also insecure, and much of it is unsafe and unadaptable for older renters.*

How will you work in the next Parliament to ensure that their homes are stable, affordable and appropriate?



NSW Labor will end no-fault evictions in the first 100 days of Government which will ensure all tenants across NSW feel secure in their housing, including the increasing number of older people in the private rental market.

Labor takes a big picture approach to affordable housing. This includes:



- reforming negative gearing
- setting affordable housing targets on new developments
- introducing a tax on properties that are vacant for longer than 6 months and,
- creating the Affordable Housing Land Register

7. *In December 2018 the 'Disrupted' report found that 56% of NSW rented homes were in need of some level of maintenance - the worst performance of any state. More than 80% of new apartment buildings have defects in them. More than half of homes in apartment buildings are tenants' homes.*

How will you work in the next parliament to improve the quality and maintenance of NSW's homes?



NSW Labor will end no-fault evictions in the first 100 days of Government which will ensure all tenants across NSW feel secure in their housing. This will ensure tenants can ask for vital repairs and ongoing maintenance without the fear of retaliatory no-fault eviction.

In addition, NSW Labor has announced a strong policy to improve the quality of new buildings. NSW Labor will introduce a standalone building act, establish a building authority and introduce a chain of responsibility for everyone involved in the building process to ensure homes are livable and free of defects.

8. *The Residential (Land Lease) Communities Act 2013 contains a number of provisions regarding operator conduct, including rules of conduct. Unfortunately poor operator conduct and the lack of enforcement action continues to be one of the most common issues raised. Complaints include ignoring orders made by the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NCAT), interference in the sale of homes, bullying and harassment.*

What would you do to ensure operators behave in a professional manner and comply with the rules of conduct when dealing with residents?



A NSW Labor Government will establish a Retirement Villages and Residential Land Lease Communities Ombudsman to stamp out bad behaviour in the residential land lease communities, including the unscrupulous actions of some community operators.

9. *Affordability and rental stress are real issues for many home owners in residential land lease communities. The Act has failed to strike the right balance between supporting viable communities and protecting home owners from unfair business practices.*

Site fees are commonly set above fair market value for new home owners and fixed method increases in new site agreements have become a complex mix of several factors that make it impossible for a prospective home owner to reasonably predict how much their site fees will increase in future years. Fixed method increases are non-



negotiable and can never be challenged as excessive. Home owners are being locked into methods that result in large above-market annual increases over a number of years.

What will you do to improve the processes for increasing these site fees?

A NSW Labor Government will establish a Retirement Villages and Residential Land Lease Communities Ombudsman to stamp out bad behaviour in the residential land lease communities and act as a cop on the beat in the industry. We predict this will stamp out many dodgy operators, including those who write sneaky and unclear contracts and engage in processes that leave residents feeling helpless.

We acknowledge the ambiguity surrounding many terms in the legislation, including "fair market value" and such terms will be looked at in the review of the legislation.

In addition, a NSW Labor has introduced legislation into the Parliament to outlaw electricity bill gouging in Residential Land Lease Communities.

10. *Every year up to 30,000 people across NSW receive free, expert advice and advocacy from the Tenants' Advice and Advocacy Services (TAASs). Up to 4,000 people receive ongoing assistance with cases, including in the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal. This work helps avoid long and protracted disputes while ensuring people who could not afford legal representation are not treated unjustly. The program is funded from the interest earned on tenants bonds, and from interest earned on real estate agent trust accounts and so places little burden on other state revenue.*

However, since the last real increase of funding to the TAASs in 2003, the number of tenants in NSW has risen by nearly 50% and many people are missing out on assistance.

Will you support an increase in funding free independent legal tenancy advice for renters to reflect the growth of both the funding source and the need in community? The program requires an increase of \$5.2 million per year immediately, and then increasing yearly in line with the total number of bonds held in the Rental Bond Board.



NSW Labor understands that the number of tenants in NSW is growing, and that for many it has become a way of life rather than a transition to home ownership.

The advocacy of the Tenant's Union is important to ensure that unscrupulous landlords and tenants are held to account, either with Fair Trading or NCAT.

Ongoing funding of tenancy advice services is crucial, as is Labor's commitment to establish an ombudsman for residential land lease communities.

This will be examined in the next statutory review of the Residential Tenancy Act.





7. *Do you support bringing an end to 'no ground' evictions and instead implementing a fair and balanced list of 'reasonable' grounds for ending a tenancy?*

How will you work in the next Parliament to make sure rented homes are stable homes, and that people who rent their home can not be evicted in retaliation for seeking performance of their contract?



The Greens have a 10 point plan for renters and working closely with the Make Renting Fair campaign we were successful in achieving 4 of these asks in 2018. We believe that renters should have the same rights as anyone else in their ability to have a secure, affordable home.

We will continue to work with people who rent, organisations and groups who want to see improved rights for renters, until we:

- End Unfair 'No-Grounds' Evictions by specifying and limiting grounds for eviction and stopping people from being kicked out of their home for no reason.
- Regulate to Prevent Rent Increases Beyond CPI. At present there are no restrictions on how much rent can be increased (provided requisite notice is given).
- Publicly Available Maintenance Logs and Maintenance Reports to address the serious health and safety concerns faced by many people renting and to provide information to potential tenants so that they are aware of any issues prior to entering into a lease arrangement. This log would include all maintenance requests made and work completed.
- Remove 'no pets' clauses from rental agreements. Having pets is both a personal choice and personal responsibility. Wherever possible, people living in rental accommodation should have the same rights as people who have a mortgage or own their own home.
- Improve Management of Tenant's Bonds and Interest. Increase oversight on landlords making claims on bonds and support tenants to transfer bonds between properties. Interest made on bonds should benefit the tenant, through direct reimbursement and a percentage used for Tenant Advice and Advocacy Services and affordable housing measures.
- Improve Protections for People Living in Sharehouses by ensuring that they have access to legally enforceable protections and rights.

The Greens will increase federal funding by \$30 million for tenancy advice services nation-wide, indexed to CPI for 10 years from 1 July 2019, to improve access to free and independent information, advice and advocacy for people who rent.

Greens MP, Jenny Leong, has been working to put renters rights on the agenda since before she was elected in 2014. If re-elected, Jenny will continue to advance these priorities working collaboratively with organisations, groups and people impacted by the current unfair laws.



2. *In NSW we have a shortfall of more than 200,000 homes available to lower income households at truly affordable rents and this will grow by more than 100,000 over the next 20 years.*

How will you work in the next Parliament to address this shortfall?



The Greens have a plan to build 30,000 new social homes every year for the next ten years. We will gradually broaden the eligibility criteria for social housing, eventually making a universal scheme where no one will pay more than 30% of their income on rent with those on lower incomes paying less. This will give millions of people a stake in social housing and generate the political will to grow the sector.

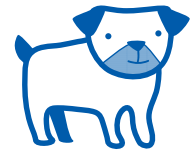
In the last term of parliament, the Greens motion to recognise housing as a human right, introduced by Jenny Leong MP, passed through the Legislative Assembly - we are committed to changing the way housing is seen, ensuring it is invested in and prioritised as essential infrastructure and services are.

3. *Most Australians own a pet, and many of those who don't wish they did. Pet ownership holds demonstrated positive health and wellbeing impacts for individuals, as well as communities.*

The majority of landlords do not allow pets, even in homes which are appropriate for animals to live in. At the same time we have tens of thousands of animals in shelters needing homes.

Do you support the idea that people who rent a home and want a pet should generally be able to have one?

How will you work in the next Parliament to achieve this goal?



Yes. We will ban blanket 'no-pets' clauses in advertising and leases.

When the Residential Tenancy Act was being debated last year, the Greens moved a significant number of amendments, including to allow people who rent to have pets. We were very disappointed that the NSW Labor opposition joined with Liberal and National coalition to oppose our amendments - including the change that would have achieved this change for renters with pets.

4. *Residents of boarding houses and other marginal renters such as people living in lodgings and hostels do not have sufficient protections against arbitrary evictions, unfair fees and charges and other contract violations. An increasing number of people are living in these types of accommodation as their principal place of residence.*

Do you support introducing or amending current legislation to ensure all people who rent their home have protection against unfair evictions, and access to effective dispute resolution services?



Yes, we support extending the same protections to residents of boarding houses and hostels as for other renters. Ultimately, we would like to see vulnerable people in such accommodation have a viable option of living in secure, independent and supported social housing.



5. While NSW's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities make up 3% of the population they make up 24% of people seeking assistance from homelessness servicesii, and are twice as likely to rent their home. These communities seek greater control over their own housing provision.

How will you work to improve the housing situation of NSW's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities?



We will promote housing which is autonomous and culturally appropriate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Specific housing for these communities will also get a funding boost through our broader plan to grow the social housing sector.

6. At the 2016 census, 100,000 people aged 65 or over were living in private rental accommodation in NSW. This number is growing. The cost of housing for older Australians who privately rent their homes is over 6 times higher than those who are owner occupiers. For those relying on the Single Aged Pension housing costs in the private rental market would represent close to 60% of their incomeiii. Private rental housing is also insecure, and much of it is unsafe and unadaptable for older renters.

How will you work in the next Parliament to ensure that their homes are stable, affordable and appropriate?

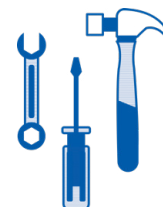


We will strengthen protections for renters in the private market by ending 'no-grounds' evictions and capping rent increases to the Consumer Price Index.

We will also grow the social housing sector by 30,000 homes per year to provide a viable and desirable option to renting in the private market.

7. In December 2018 the 'Disrupted' report found that 56% of NSW rented homes were in need of some level of maintenance - the worst performance of any stateiv. More than 80% of new apartment buildings have defects in themv. More than half of homes in apartment buildings are tenants' homes.

How will you work in the next parliament to improve the quality and maintenance of NSW's homes?



The Greens know that maintenance is a huge and concerning issue for people who rent - and from our consultation and engagement with people who have shared their 'rental horror stories' it must be a priority to resolve. Ending unfair 'no grounds' evictions is key to achieving this. By removing the threat of tenants being kicked out of their homes for requesting reasonable maintenance repairs or making complaints about unsafe situations.

We will end private certification of buildings and invest in certifiers employed directly by local councils. We will work to mandate higher building standards. In terms of maintenance, we will mandate publicly available maintenance logs and records for all rental properties.



The Greens also advocated for renters in apartments and strata to be able to have a say over what happens in their building when the strata laws were reformed.

Our Cool Homes, Cool Planet initiative will mean that every home, new or old, will be zero emissions by 2030. Zero emissions houses will be easier to cool in summer and warm in winter. Every private home will make the transition to a pollution-free future by 2030, with appropriate support for households.

Our long term solution is to support the construction of more social housing that is not driven by the profit motive that is encouraging low-quality construction.

8. *The Residential (Land Lease) Communities Act 2013 contains a number of provisions regarding operator conduct, including rules of conduct. Unfortunately poor operator conduct and the lack of enforcement action continues to be one of the most common issues raised. Complaints include ignoring orders made by the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NCAT), interference in the sale of homes, bullying and harassment.*



What would you do to ensure operators behave in a professional manner and comply with the rules of conduct when dealing with residents?

We would consider increasing penalties for non-compliance to act as a deterrent to operators breaching the rules.

9. *Affordability and rental stress are real issues for many home owners in residential land lease communities. The Act has failed to strike the right balance between supporting viable communities and protecting home owners from unfair business practices.*



Site fees are commonly set above fair market value for new home owners and fixed method increases in new site agreements have become a complex mix of several factors that make it impossible for a prospective home owner to reasonably predict how much their site fees will increase in future years. Fixed method increases are non-negotiable and can never be challenged as excessive. Home owners are being locked into methods that result in large above-market annual increases over a number of years.

What will you do to improve the processes for increasing these site fees?

The Greens will ensure that site fees in new agreements are set at fair market value. We support the Tenants' Union of NSW call for removing the factors of projected increases in costs and planned repairs or improvements from consideration of challenges to site fee increases.



10. *Every year up to 30,000 people across NSW receive free, expert advice and advocacy from the Tenants' Advice and Advocacy Services (TAASs). Up to 4,000 people receive ongoing assistance with cases, including in the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal. This work helps avoid long and protracted disputes while ensuring people who could not afford legal representation are not treated unjustly. The program is funded from the interest earned on tenants bonds, and from interest earned on real estate agent trust accounts and so places little burden on other state revenue.*

However, since the last real increase of funding to the TAASs in 2003, the number of tenants in NSW has risen by nearly 50% and many people are missing out on assistance.

Will you support an increase in funding free independent legal tenancy advice for renters to reflect the growth of both the funding source and the need in community? The program requires an increase of \$5.2 million per year immediately, and then increasing yearly in line with the total number of bonds held in the Rental Bond Board.

Yes, we will increase federal funding by \$30 million for tenancy advice services nationwide, indexed to CPI for 10 years from 1 July 2019, to improve access to free and independent information, advice and advocacy for people who rent.



References in the first person are a reference to Emma Hurst, lead candidate in the Legislative Council for the Animal Justice Party.

1. Do you support bringing an end to 'no ground' evictions and instead implementing a fair and balanced list of 'reasonable' grounds for ending a tenancy?

How will you work in the next Parliament to make sure rented homes are stable homes, and that people who rent their home can not be evicted in retaliation for seeking performance of their contract?



Yes. See answer at 3

2. In NSW we have a shortfall of more than 200,000 homes available to lower income households at truly affordable rents and this will grow by more than 100,000 over the next 20 years.

How will you work in the next Parliament to address this shortfall?



Build to rent sector

Subsidised rental accommodation

3. Most Australians own a pet, and many of those who don't wish they did. Pet ownership holds demonstrated positive health and wellbeing impacts for individuals, as well as communities.

The majority of landlords do not allow pets, even in homes which are appropriate for animals to live in. At the same time we have tens of thousands of animals in shelters needing homes.

Do you support the idea that people who rent a home and want a pet should generally be able to have one?

How will you work in the next Parliament to achieve this goal?



100% This is an area I am very passionate about. I am a registered psychologist and have worked in the area of domestic violence and animal abuse. One reason many victims do not leave their homes is because they can't find accommodation elsewhere that will allow their companions to join them. So they remain in unsafe conditions to protect their animals. This must be changed by legislation and I will take this angle to push for all rentals to allow companion animals



4. Residents of boarding houses and other marginal renters such as people living in lodgings and hostels do not have sufficient protections against arbitrary evictions, unfair fees and charges and other contract violations. An increasing number of people are living in these types of accommodation as their principal place of residence.

Do you support introducing or amending current legislation to ensure all people who rent their home have protection against unfair evictions, and access to effective dispute resolution services?



Yes

5. While NSW's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities make up 3% of the population they make up 24% of people seeking assistance from homelessness servicesii, and are twice as likely to rent their home. These communities seek greater control over their own housing provision.

How will you work to improve the housing situation of NSW's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities?



Boost the supply of affordable and accesable rental homes Rental assistance

6. At the 2016 census, 100,000 people aged 65 or over were living in private rental accommodation in NSW. This number is growing. The cost of housing for older Australians who privately rent their homes is over 6 times higher than those who are owner occupiers. For those relying on the Single Aged Pension housing costs in the private rental market would represent close to 60% of their incomeiii. Private rental housing is also insecure, and much of it is unsafe and unadaptable for older renters.

How will you work in the next Parliament to ensure that their homes are stable, affordable and appropriate?

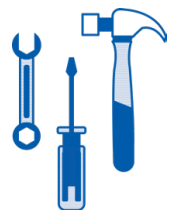


Tax incentives to landlords who make necessary modifications to homes plus minimal standards.

Policies that ensure rental prices are affordable and leases are more secure. Rent assistance payments

7. In December 2018 the 'Disrupted' report found that 56% of NSW rented homes were in need of some level of maintenance - the worst performance of any stateiv. More than 80% of new apartment buildings have defects in themv. More than half of homes in apartment buildings are tenants' homes.

How will you work in the next parliament to improve the quality and maintenance of NSW's homes?



Minimal standards for accomodation



8. *The Residential (Land Lease) Communities Act 2013 contains a number of provisions regarding operator conduct, including rules of conduct. Unfortunately poor operator conduct and the lack of enforcement action continues to be one of the most common issues raised. Complaints include ignoring orders made by the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NCAT), interference in the sale of homes, bullying and harassment.*



What would you do to ensure operators behave in a professional manner and comply with the rules of conduct when dealing with residents?

Better enforcement

9. *Affordability and rental stress are real issues for many home owners in residential land lease communities. The Act has failed to strike the right balance between supporting viable communities and protecting home owners from unfair business practices.*



Site fees are commonly set above fair market value for new home owners and fixed method increases in new site agreements have become a complex mix of several factors that make it impossible for a prospective home owner to reasonably predict how much their site fees will increase in future years. Fixed method increases are non-negotiable and can never be challenged as excessive. Home owners are being locked into methods that result in large above-market annual increases over a number of years.

What will you do to improve the processes for increasing these site fees?

Maximum increases need to be set

Clear policies around acceptable site fees

10. *Every year up to 30,000 people across NSW receive free, expert advice and advocacy from the Tenants' Advice and Advocacy Services (TAASs). Up to 4,000 people receive ongoing assistance with cases, including in the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal. This work helps avoid long and protracted disputes while ensuring people who could not afford legal representation are not treated unjustly. The program is funded from the interest earned on tenants bonds, and from interest earned on real estate agent trust accounts and so places little burden on other state revenue.*



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Will you support an increase in funding free independent legal tenancy advice for renters to reflect the growth of both the funding source and the need in community? The program requires an increase of \$5.2 million per year immediately, and then increasing yearly in line with the total number of bonds held in the Rental Bond Board.

Yes



Alex Greenwich, Ind. (Sydney)



1. *Do you support bringing an end to 'no ground' evictions and instead implementing a fair and balanced list of 'reasonable' grounds for ending a tenancy?*

How will you work in the next Parliament to make sure rented homes are stable homes, and that people who rent their home can not be evicted in retaliation for seeking performance of their contract?

Last session I called and voted for amendments to remove 'no ground' evictions and supported the Make Renting Fair campaign. I will again push for the replacement of the 'no ground' eviction provision with an expanded list of reasonable ground provisions, working with other members across the political spectrum.



2. *In NSW we have a shortfall of more than 200,000 homes available to lower income households at truly affordable rents and this will grow by more than 100,000 over the next 20 years.*

How will you work in the next Parliament to address this shortfall?

I will continue to call for the building of at least 5,000 new social housing homes each year and a mandatory minimum affordable housing target of at least 15 per cent for redevelopment projects. I will oppose any further inner city housing sell offs and push for policies that stop the wholesale conversion of homes into short term lets, which is reducing rental stock. Councils must also be permitted to set levies on development to deliver affordable housing like the successful Pymont and Green Square programs, without state government approval.



3. *Most Australians own a pet, and many of those who don't wish they did. Pet ownership holds demonstrated positive health and wellbeing impacts for individuals, as well as communities.*

The majority of landlords do not allow pets, even in homes which are appropriate for animals to live in. At the same time we have tens of thousands of animals in shelters needing homes.

Do you support the idea that people who rent a home and want a pet should generally be able to have one?

How will you work in the next Parliament to achieve this goal?



Pets are an important part of many people's lives and provide love, companionship, security and health benefits. Widespread rental pet bans prevent pet owners finding a home and force many to abandon a loved companion. I support a system where blanket pet bans are replaced with pet friendly rentals with lease conditions that promote responsible pet ownership.



4. Residents of boarding houses and other marginal renters such as people living in lodgings and hostels do not have sufficient protections against arbitrary evictions, unfair fees and charges and other contract violations. An increasing number of people are living in these types of accommodation as their principal place of residence.



Do you support introducing or amending current legislation to ensure all people who rent their home have protection against unfair evictions, and access to effective dispute resolution services?

Yes. Loss of bond and termination without notice are also common problems for marginal renters and I will again push to extend occupancy agreements to cover marginal renters and leases to cover sub-tenants.

5. While NSW's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities make up 3% of the population they make up 24% of people seeking assistance from homelessness servicesii, and are twice as likely to rent their home. These communities seek greater control over their own housing provision.



How will you work to improve the housing situation of NSW's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities?

Improving housing outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is a vital step in 'closing the gap'. With large numbers of renters, both social and private, many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people will benefit from work to improve renting conditions such as removal of 'no ground' evictions, and to increase social and affordable housing stock. In addition we need more Aboriginal controlled community housing, targeted subsidised loans to increase home ownership, a transfer of state owned Aboriginal housing to direct management by Aboriginal controlled organisations and government funding for culturally appropriate rental, mortgage and financial advice services.

6. At the 2016 census, 100,000 people aged 65 or over were living in private rental accommodation in NSW. This number is growing. The cost of housing for older Australians who privately rent their homes is over 6 times higher than those who are owner occupiers. For those relying on the Single Aged Pension housing costs in the private rental market would represent close to 60% of their incomeiii. Private rental housing is also insecure, and much of it is unsafe and unadaptable for older renters.



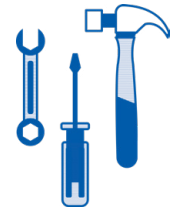
How will you work in the next Parliament to ensure that their homes are stable, affordable and appropriate?

The option to age-in-place should not rely on home ownership and I will oppose any sale of inner city social housing stock, as I opposed the Millers Point social housing sell-off. Long term leases should be encouraged to give older tenants who have no option to buy a home greater security. Limits need to be placed on rental increases linked to properties and 'no grounds' evictions must be removed so that older tenants are not afraid to report any repair needs. We need to build more affordable rental homes designed for older people and retrofit existing properties to improve accessibility.



7. In December 2018 the 'Disrupted' report found that 56% of NSW rented homes were in need of some level of maintenance - the worst performance of any state. More than 80% of new apartment buildings have defects in them. More than half of homes in apartment buildings are tenants' homes.

How will you work in the next parliament to improve the quality and maintenance of NSW's homes?



I will call for a special commission of inquiry into building defects and continue to push for a ban on developers and builders selecting the private certifier who ticks off on their construction. I will monitor the new building defects scheme and call for improvements to ensure the developer cannot drag out negotiations to fix problems. The basic standards introduced for rental properties should be expanded to include cooking and laundry facilities and for the home to be safe and free from infestation. Removal of no ground evictions will ensure tenants can pursue these standards without fear of reprisal.

8. The Residential (Land Lease) Communities Act 2013 contains a number of provisions regarding operator conduct, including rules of conduct. Unfortunately poor operator conduct and the lack of enforcement action continues to be one of the most common issues raised. Complaints include ignoring orders made by the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NCAT), interference in the sale of homes, bullying and harassment.

What would you do to ensure operators behave in a professional manner and comply with the rules of conduct when dealing with residents?



While there are no land lease communities in my electorate, I will support better enforcement options and regulatory action to improve operator conduct. I will also support Labor's call for an ombudsman for retirement village and land lease communities.

9. Affordability and rental stress are real issues for many home owners in residential land lease communities. The Act has failed to strike the right balance between supporting viable communities and protecting home owners from unfair business practices.

Site fees are commonly set above fair market value for new home owners and fixed method increases in new site agreements have become a complex mix of several factors that make it impossible for a prospective home owner to reasonably predict how much their site fees will increase in future years. Fixed method increases are non-negotiable and can never be challenged as excessive. Home owners are being locked into methods that result in large above-market annual increases over a number of years.

What will you do to improve the processes for increasing these site fees?



I will support changes that reduce the complexity of site fees and increase the fairness of site fee increases, and limit operator electricity charges to direct usage. An ombudsman would help determine the best approach.



10. *Every year up to 30,000 people across NSW receive free, expert advice and advocacy from the Tenants' Advice and Advocacy Services (TAASs). Up to 4,000 people receive ongoing assistance with cases, including in the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal. This work helps avoid long and protracted disputes while ensuring people who could not afford legal representation are not treated unjustly. The program is funded from the interest earned on tenants bonds, and from interest earned on real estate agent trust accounts and so places little burden on other state revenue.*



However, since the last real increase of funding to the TAASs in 2003, the number of tenants in NSW has risen by nearly 50% and many people are missing out on assistance.

Will you support an increase in funding free independent legal tenancy advice for renters to reflect the growth of both the funding source and the need in community? The program requires an increase of \$5.2 million per year immediately, and then increasing yearly in line with the total number of bonds held in the Rental Bond Board.

Yes. I have already called for this in Parliament. I've worked with community legal centres to get longer term funding commitments that recognise the vital role they play in access to justice.



1. *Do you support bringing an end to 'no ground' evictions and instead implementing a fair and balanced list of 'reasonable' grounds for ending a tenancy?*

How will you work in the next Parliament to make sure rented homes are stable homes, and that people who rent their home can not be evicted in retaliation for seeking performance of their contract?



A. Socialist Alliance supports the elimination of “no grounds” evictions. However, this will not be enough to ensure that tenants are no longer intimidated into not seeking enforcement of landlords’ leasehold responsibilities. Existing “reasonable” grounds (e.g. landlord’s intention to sell or reside) will still be used to evict tenants at the landlord’s whim. Further reform of tenancy legislation is necessary.

B. Socialist Alliance will work with the NSW TU, local TAASs, Aboriginal Advice and Tenancy Services, Sydney Alliance and other community organisations campaigning for tenants’ rights and sustainable affordable housing.

2. *In NSW we have a shortfall of more than 200,000 homes available to lower income households at truly affordable rents and this will grow by more than 100,000 over the next 20 years.*

How will you work in the next Parliament to address this shortfall?



A. Socialist Alliance’s policy on housing recognises that over a number of decades there has been significant cuts to capital funding for housing. At the same time, existing stock has been depleted via sell offs of public housing.

B. Socialist Alliance seeks, over time, to replace “welfare” housing with genuine public housing for all who want it. It involves regulating the private sector and injecting a massive funding boost to the construction of public and social housing. In the next parliament, we would continue to campaign to end the sell-off of public housing across NSW, and to expand public housing by building 60,000 new public housing units in four years. We would conduct an audit of vacant housing, owned by speculators benefitting from negative gearing, and make it available to those in need of accommodation. We would amend planning legislation to mandate 20% of all new apartment blocks for public/social housing and make the incoming NSW government responsible for covering the costs of heating and cooling.

C. Socialist Alliance would work for legislation to cap public and private rent at 30% of residents’ income. It would push for alternative housing options, such as co-housing, cooperatives and communal housing.

3. *Most Australians own a pet, and many of those who don't wish they did. Pet ownership holds demonstrated positive health and wellbeing impacts for individuals, as well as communities.*



The majority of landlords do not allow pets, even in homes which are appropriate for animals to live in. At the same time we have tens of thousands of animals in shelters needing homes.

Do you support the idea that people who rent a home and want a pet should generally be able to have one?

How will you work in the next Parliament to achieve this goal?

A. Socialist Alliance supports the rights of tenants in private rental to own pets. Pet ownership should not be an additional barrier to housing. We support amendments to tenancy legislation (as implemented in Victoria) to remove this barrier and would work with other parties and independents, as well as tenancy organisations, to make renting with pets a lot easier.

4. *Residents of boarding houses and other marginal renters such as people living in lodgings and hostels do not have sufficient protections against arbitrary evictions, unfair fees and charges and other contract violations. An increasing number of people are living in these types of accommodation as their principal place of residence.*

Do you support introducing or amending current legislation to ensure all people who rent their home have protection against unfair evictions, and access to effective dispute resolution services?



A. Yes. Residents in boarding houses and hostels are often the most vulnerable people in our community and therefore open to exploitation by landlords and facility managers. For their mental and physical health, they need to be certain they have long-term safe accommodation. Councils could be more involved in making this a reality.

5. *While NSW's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities make up 3% of the population they make up 24% of people seeking assistance from homelessness services, and are twice as likely to rent their home. These communities seek greater control over their own housing provision.*

How will you work to improve the housing situation of NSW's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities?



A. Any real plan to achieve social and economic equality for Indigenous people must include the following measures, developed and overseen by the appropriate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations. Aboriginal control over the administration of Aboriginal affairs must be the practice, not just on paper.

B. Socialist Alliance supports, as part of expanding social housing, the development and adequately funding of an Indigenous housing plan to: address unmet need (nationally 17% of people using homelessness services are



Indigenous compared to less than 2% of the total population); implement an emergency repair and upgrading plan for Indigenous households; help Indigenous communities maintain and improve their housing stock by providing the necessary training and resources; develop local production of building materials; and provide housing opportunities that meet with cultural and community needs.

6. *At the 2016 census, 100,000 people aged 65 or over were living in private rental accommodation in NSW. This number is growing. The cost of housing for older Australians who privately rent their homes is over 6 times higher than those who are owner occupiers. For those relying on the Single Aged Pension housing costs in the private rental market would represent close to 60% of their incomeⁱⁱⁱ. Private rental housing is also insecure, and much of it is unsafe and unadaptable for older renters.*

How will you work in the next Parliament to ensure that their homes are stable, affordable and appropriate?

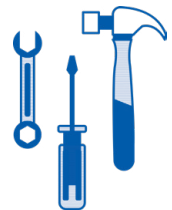


A. Insecure and unadaptable private rental is not suitable accommodation for older people. An increase in public/social housing (see answer to Question 2) is necessary to reduce wait times for social housing applicants. Immediate measures are needed to assist aged private tenants. This will necessitate the support of the Commonwealth government.

B. At present, there is a lengthy wait for home-care services to assist older people stay in their homes and avoid being placed in nursing homes. Such services can assist tenants in cleaning, laundry, transport as well as home modifications. Landlord's permission is required for home modifications which are structural. Even if the waiting time was drastically reduced, the package of home-care services provided to an individual may not be sufficient. Socialist Alliance considers that local government is a suitable base for the planning and delivery of home-care services for older people in private rental, as well as for ensuring that housing is suitably located and constructed through the planning process.

7. *In December 2018 the 'Disrupted' report found that 56% of NSW rented homes were in need of some level of maintenance - the worst performance of any state^{iv}. More than 80% of new apartment buildings have defects in them^v. More than half of homes in apartment buildings are tenants' homes.*

How will you work in the next parliament to improve the quality and maintenance of NSW's homes?



A. The dangerous cracks discovered in the Opal Tower has drawn attention the inadequacies of planning laws in NSW. The outsourcing of the building approval process is a contributing factor. Socialist Alliance is opposed to the privatisation of all stages of the building approval process.



B. If elected, we will campaign for a percentage of tenants' bond monies (in addition to the \$6.2 Million to TASSs) to be allocated to the Tenant's Union to undertake a research project to consider options for the provision of advice and advocacy services for residents in apartments.

8. *The Residential (Land Lease) Communities Act 2013 contains a number of provisions regarding operator conduct, including rules of conduct. Unfortunately poor operator conduct and the lack of enforcement action continues to be one of the most common issues raised. Complaints include ignoring orders made by the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NCAT), interference in the sale of homes, bullying and harassment.*



What would you do to ensure operators behave in a professional manner and comply with the rules of conduct when dealing with residents?

A. Investigate the capacity of the Department of Fair Trading to enforce rulings, such as the imposition of fines and having the potential to deregister.

9. *Affordability and rental stress are real issues for many home owners in residential land lease communities. The Act has failed to strike the right balance between supporting viable communities and protecting home owners from unfair business practices.*



Site fees are commonly set above fair market value for new home owners and fixed method increases in new site agreements have become a complex mix of several factors that make it impossible for a prospective home owner to reasonably predict how much their site fees will increase in future years. Fixed method increases are non-negotiable and can never be challenged as excessive. Home owners are being locked into methods that result in large above-market annual increases over a number of years.

What will you do to improve the processes for increasing these site fees?

A. Extend existing cooling-off provisions during which time residents can seek advice from legal aid. Extend the provisions for negotiation after an initial period.

10. *Every year up to 30 000 people across NSW receive free, expert advice and advocacy from the Tenants' Advice and Advocacy Services (TAASs). Up to 4,000 people receive ongoing assistance with cases, including in the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal. This work helps avoid long and protracted disputes while ensuring people who could not afford legal representation are not treated unjustly. The program is funded from the interest earned on tenants bonds, and from interest earned on real estate agent trust accounts and so places little burden on other state revenue.*



However, since the last real increase of funding to the TAASs in 2003, the number of tenants in NSW has risen by nearly 50% and many people are missing out on assistance.

Will you support an increase in funding free independent legal tenancy advice for renters to reflect the growth of both the funding source and the need in community? The program requires an increase of \$5.2 million per year immediately, and then increasing yearly in line with the total number of bonds held in the Rental Bond Board.

A. Socialist Alliance supports the immediate increase of \$5.2million to Tenants' Advice and Advocacy Services (TAASs) as well as annual increases to cover increases in tenancies. This will still be a small fraction of the tens of millions of dollars' interest earned from tenants bonds. Two-thirds of the total amount of annual interest earned goes to government departments, and not specifically for programs relevant to tenants or housing. Allocate funds generated from tenants' bond money to fund programs that improve housing standards and the rights of tenants.





1. *Do you support bringing an end to 'no ground' evictions and instead implementing a fair and balanced list of 'reasonable' grounds for ending a tenancy?*

How will you work in the next Parliament to make sure rented homes are stable homes, and that people who rent their home can not be evicted in retaliation for seeking performance of their contract?



Affordable housing for first home buyers and renters is one of Sustainable Australia's four main policy priorities. Sustainable Australia believes housing is a fundamental need and human right. Perversely, homes are now treated as an investment asset by governments rather than a shelter in which to live and/or raise a family.

We have a comprehensive plan to secure affordable housing for all Australians. See: www.sustainableaustralia.org.au/housing

If elected our policy is to fight for the removal of 'no-fault' termination from residential leases so that tenants have more security and stability. This will mean there will only be four situations in which a tenant can be removed from their home: 1) sale of the property, 2) major renovations, 3) failure to meet tenancy conditions including rent payments, or 4) Owner wants to move in to their property.

2. *In NSW we have a shortfall of more than 200,000 homes available to lower income households at truly affordable rents and this will grow by more than 100,000 over the next 20 years.*

How will you work in the next Parliament to address this shortfall?



Since the mid naughties, housing has become much less affordable. This is due several factors. Firstly tax concessions and negative gearing have made property speculation an attractive investment despite it not adding value to the economy and profiting off our less well off citizens. Secondly, the allowance of foreign investment in property has increased the demand on housing pushing prices up. Thirdly, inadequate funding for public housing means the supply needed is not there. Fourthly, our population growth rate is one of the highest in the developed world. This has put great pressure on the demand for housing especially in urban and suburban areas.

Sustainable Australia would address all of these causal factors through: Removing CGT tax concessions for property and abolishing negative gearing; Stopping foreign investment in Australian residential housing; Supporting an increase in public investment and encourage private investment in public housing; Reducing population pressures by returning the immigration rate back to the long term average 70,000 from a record 200,000+ per annum.

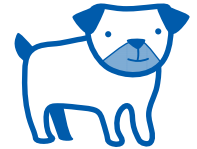


3. *Most Australians own a pet, and many of those who don't wish they did. Pet ownership holds demonstrated positive health and wellbeing impacts for individuals, as well as communities.*

The majority of landlords do not allow pets, even in homes which are appropriate for animals to live in. At the same time we have tens of thousands of animals in shelters needing homes.

Do you support the idea that people who rent a home and want a pet should generally be able to have one?

How will you work in the next Parliament to achieve this goal?



Sustainable Australia strongly supports tenancy law reform to offer improved renters' rights, including greater ability to keep pets.

4. *Residents of boarding houses and other marginal renters such as people living in lodgings and hostels do not have sufficient protections against arbitrary evictions, unfair fees and charges and other contract violations. An increasing number of people are living in these types of accommodation as their principal place of residence.*

Do you support introducing or amending current legislation to ensure all people who rent their home have protection against unfair evictions, and access to effective dispute resolution services?



Sustainable Australia strongly supports amending current legislation to ensure all people who rent their home have protection against unfair evictions, and access to effective dispute resolution services.

5. *While NSW's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities make up 3% of the population they make up 24% of people seeking assistance from homelessness services, and are twice as likely to rent their home. These communities seek greater control over their own housing provision.*

How will you work to improve the housing situation of NSW's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities?



The disadvantages faced by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are sadly not limited to homelessness. Sustainable Australia supports the properly resourcing of a national 'Closing the Gap' program, especially when relating to life expectancy, infant mortality, early childhood development, secure housing, education and employment. Furthermore we believe that the government should provide greater employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres

Strait Islander people, particularly those that facilitate their ongoing relationship with the land and natural environment. Additionally, our comprehensive plan to secure affordable housing for all Australians will greatly benefit Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.



6. At the 2016 census, 100,000 people aged 65 or over were living in private rental accommodation in NSW. This number is growing. The cost of housing for older Australians who privately rent their homes is over 6 times higher than those who are owner occupiers. For those relying on the Single Aged Pension housing costs in the private rental market would represent close to 60% of their incomeⁱⁱⁱ. Private rental housing is also insecure, and much of it is unsafe and unadaptable for older renters.

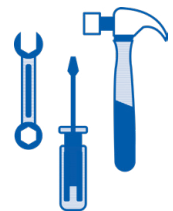
How will you work in the next Parliament to ensure that their homes are stable, affordable and appropriate?



To ensure that their homes are stable, affordable and appropriate for older Australians, Sustainable Australia believes we should encourage developers to include an element of social or affordable housing in new projects. Additionally the government should increase investment in public housing.

7. In December 2018 the 'Disrupted' report found that 56% of NSW rented homes were in need of some level of maintenance - the worst performance of any state^{iv}. More than 80% of new apartment buildings have defects in them^v. More than half of homes in apartment buildings are tenants' homes.

How will you work in the next parliament to improve the quality and maintenance of NSW's homes?



The main campaign focus of Sustainable Australia at the 2019 NSW State election is better planning to stop overdevelopment. We believe that breakneck population growth is contributing to poor planning, overdevelopment and related building defects.

8. The Residential (Land Lease) Communities Act 2013 contains a number of provisions regarding operator conduct, including rules of conduct. Unfortunately poor operator conduct and the lack of enforcement action continues to be one of the most common issues raised. Complaints include ignoring orders made by the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NCAT), interference in the sale of homes, bullying and harassment.

What would you do to ensure operators behave in a professional manner and comply with the rules of conduct when dealing with residents?



We support legislation to ensure compliance with the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal and penalties for those that do not comply.



9. *Affordability and rental stress are real issues for many home owners in residential land lease communities. The Act has failed to strike the right balance between supporting viable communities and protecting home owners from unfair business practices.*

Site fees are commonly set above fair market value for new home owners and fixed method increases in new site agreements have become a complex mix of several factors that make it impossible for a prospective home owner to reasonably predict how much their site fees will increase in future years. Fixed method increases are non-negotiable and can never be challenged as excessive. Home owners are being locked into methods that result in large above-market annual increases over a number of years.

What will you do to improve the processes for increasing these site fees?

Through consulting with all stakeholders, we would support legislation to ensure fairer site fees.

10. *Every year up to 30,000 people across NSW receive free, expert advice and advocacy from the Tenants' Advice and Advocacy Services (TAASs). Up to 4,000 people receive ongoing assistance with cases, including in the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal. This work helps avoid long and protracted disputes while ensuring people who could not afford legal representation are not treated unjustly. The program is funded from the interest earned on tenants bonds, and from interest earned on real estate agent trust accounts and so places little burden on other state revenue.*

However, since the last real increase of funding to the TAASs in 2003, the number of tenants in NSW has risen by nearly 50% and many people are missing out on assistance.

Will you support an increase in funding free independent legal tenancy advice for renters to reflect the growth of both the funding source and the need in community? The program requires an increase of \$5.2 million per year immediately, and then increasing yearly in line with the total number of bonds held in the Rental Bond Board.

We are strongly in favour of greater renter's rights and an increase in funding for independent tenancy advice.

