

## **Briefing on Ipsos Public Affairs Polling Research: Reasonable Grounds Reform**

March 2024

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### **Summary of Polling Research**

#### **New research shows NSW renters want action on eviction reform; strong backing from landlords and community.**

NSW renters want to see action from the NSW Government on promised rental reforms to end 'no grounds' evictions.

New polling, undertaken by Ipsos Public Affairs for the Tenants' Union of NSW, shows significant support from landlords for the reforms. The research also shows the community expects reforms should apply uniformly for all renters.

#### *Key findings from polling:*

- 84% of people agree if a renter is being told to leave their home they should be provided with a reason.
- 88% of renters support the NSW Government's proposal to introduce reasonable grounds and end 'no grounds' evictions
- 77% of landlords and 76% within the community also support the proposed eviction reform.
- 2 out of 3 people feel eviction reforms should apply for all renters; 75% of renters agree.
- 82.5% of renters report a recent increase in their housing costs; with 84% cutting back on discretionary spending or other household costs

- 75% of people polled believe the NSW government should act to reduce unfair evictions as a cost-of-living measure.

A year on from the NSW Labor Government taking office, NSW's million renting households are still waiting for the government to introduce eviction reform and make a real difference in the housing crisis.

### **'No grounds' evictions cause profound distress.**

Around 30,000 renting households each year receive a 'no-grounds' eviction – that's 1 eviction every 18 minutes, or three every hour, every day in NSW. Previous research has demonstrated these evictions have a significant financial impact on households – on average the immediate costs of moving are \$4000 each move.<sup>1</sup> And they take a physical and mental toll on renters, causing real distress leading for some to anxiety episodes and bouts of depression.<sup>2</sup>

### **There is strong support among renters, landlords, and the wider community for proposed eviction reform.**

Renters know the harm no grounds evictions cause, they overwhelmingly (88% of those polled) want to see change. The broader community (76%) supports reform to address these harms. And it is clear a majority of landlords (77%) also support the proposed reforms.

### **The research made clear the community would like the Government to urgently act.**

More than 70% of those polled said they felt the Government should act now to fulfil the commitment to end no grounds made at the last election, with close to 80% of renters and 67% of landlords agreeing.

### **The research also found rising cost of living burden continues to fall hard on NSW renters.**

82.5% of renters reported they have seen a recent increase to their housing costs. In response to this, 84% are cutting back on discretionary spending or other household expenses. Over a quarter of renters (27.4%) shared they were considering moving to cope with rising housing costs. The research

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<sup>1</sup> Tenants' Union of NSW (2022), *Evictions, Hardship and the Housing Crisis*, See <https://files.tenants.org.au/policy/2022-Eviction-Hardship-and-the-Housing-Crisis-TUNSW.pdf>, Accessed 21 March 2024

<sup>2</sup> Ang Li, Emma Baker, Rebecca Bentley (2022), 'Understanding the mental health effects of instability in the private rental sector: A longitudinal analysis of a national cohort' in *Social Science and Medicine*, Volume 296, See [Science Direct](https://www.tenants.org.au/blog/time-to-end-trauma-no-grounds-evictions); Zuzia Buszewicz (2024), *The trauma of no grounds eviction*, See <https://www.tenants.org.au/blog/time-to-end-trauma-no-grounds-evictions>, Accessed 21 March 2024

suggests over 60,000 renting households in NSW (over 150,000 people) may be considering moving away from NSW due to concerns about the cost of rental housing.

**The cost of unfair eviction is a cost of living pressure that needs to be addressed.**

Given current cost of living pressures it is not surprising 87% of renters whose housing costs have recently increased said they felt the government should act to reduce the number of unfair and unnecessary evictions as a cost-of-living measure. There was broad support for this, with 75% of all people polled agreeing.

**Renters are looking to the NSW government and other political parties to demonstrate leadership on rental reform and support for renters.**

Almost three quarters of renters (73.6%) identify support for renters as either their most important issue or in the top three issues they consider when deciding their support for a political party. More broadly, almost half of all people polled (47.8%) told us they saw rental housing policy as a priority issue.

**Rental reforms must be a priority**

The community is looking to the NSW government to deliver on this election commitment to make renting fairer. They would like to see a fair and transparent approach to ending a tenancy, and that reforms are effective and bring greater stability and trust for all NSW renters.

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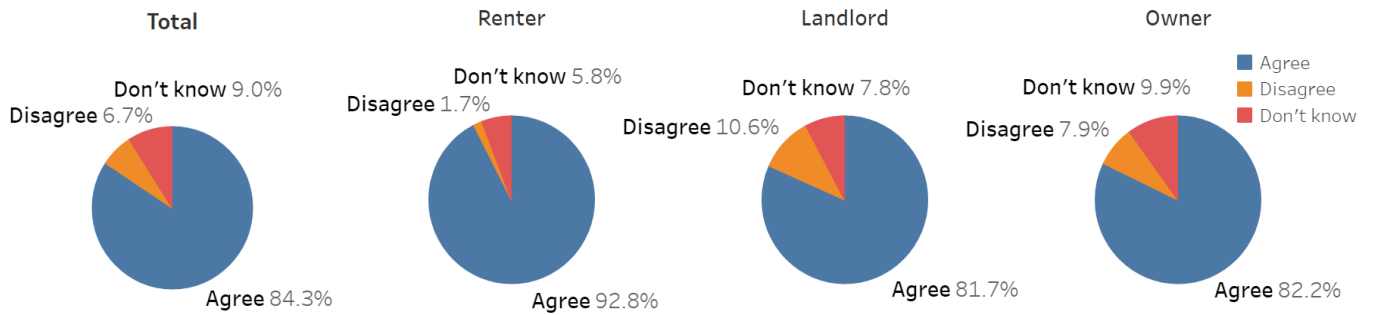
*The Ipsos Public Affairs polling was commissioned by the Tenants' Union of NSW and undertaken by Ipsos Public Affairs – Digital with fieldwork conducted 6 - 11 March 2024. Survey sample size: 1200 respondents, 21 questions*

*All results have been weighted to Census 2021 demographics to ensure that the sample accurately reflects the larger population. This is done to minimise bias and increase survey results reliability and validity of survey results.*

## Tables

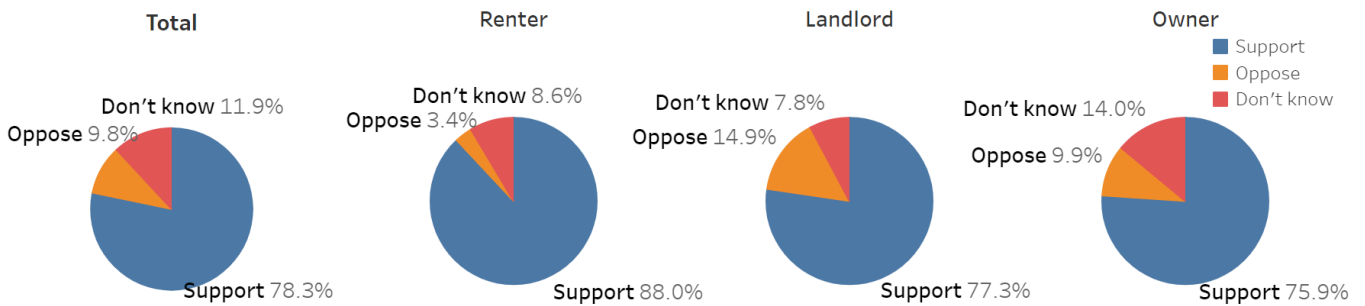
**If a renter is being told to leave their home, should they be provided with a reason?**

	Total	Renters	Landlords	Community (owner occupier)
Agree	84.3%	92.8%	81.7%	82.2%
Disagree	6.7%	1.7%	10.6%	7.9%
Don't know	9%	5.8%	7.8%	9.9%



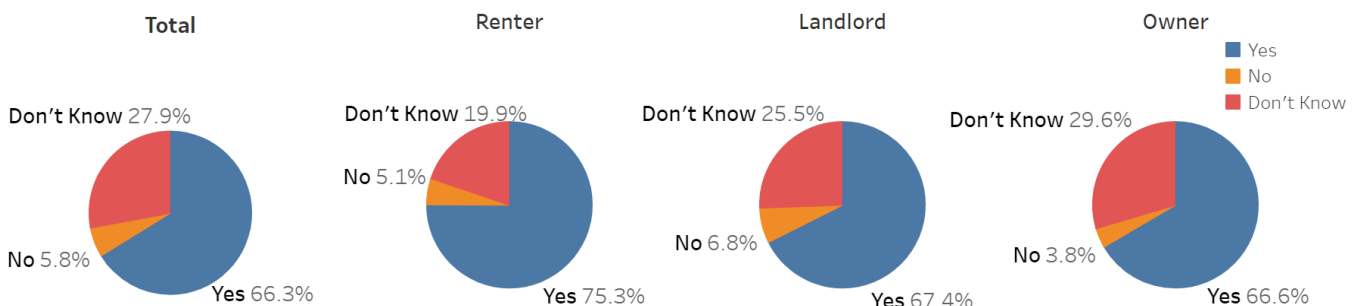
**The NSW Government is proposing to change rental laws to require a landlord to give a reason when evicting a renter. Do you support or oppose this?**

	Total	Renters	Landlords	Community (owner occupier)
Support	78.3%	88%	77.3%	75.9%
Oppose	9.8%	3.4%	14.9%	9.9%
Don't know	11.9%	8.6%	7.8%	14%



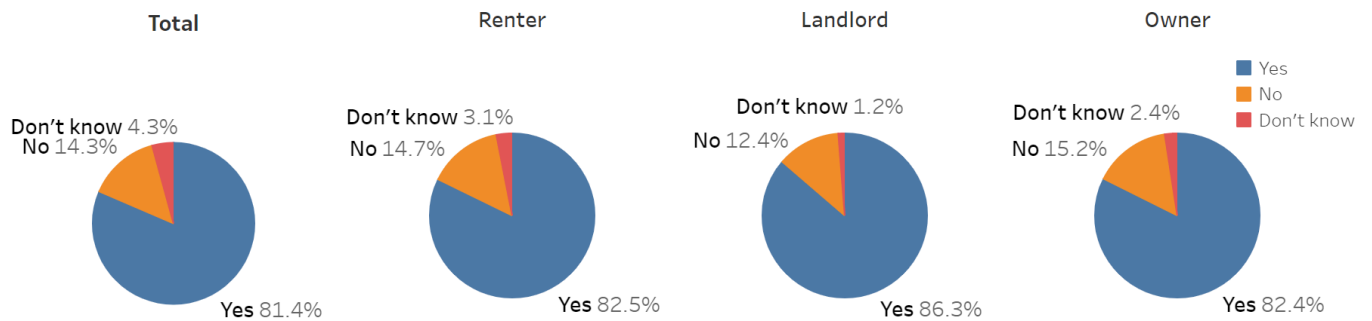
**If NSW rental laws are changed, should changes apply for all renters?**

	Total	Renters	Landlords	Community (owner occupier)
Yes	66.3%	75.3%	67.4%	66.6%
No	5.8%	5.1%	6.8%	3.8%
Don't know	27.9%	19.9%	25.5%	29.6%



### Have there been any recent changes (an increase) to your housing costs for you and your household?

	Total	Renters	Landlords	Community (owner occupier)
Yes	81.4%	82.5%	86.3%	82.4%
No	14.3%	14.7%	12.4%	15.2%
Don't know	4.3%	3.1%	1.2%	2.4%



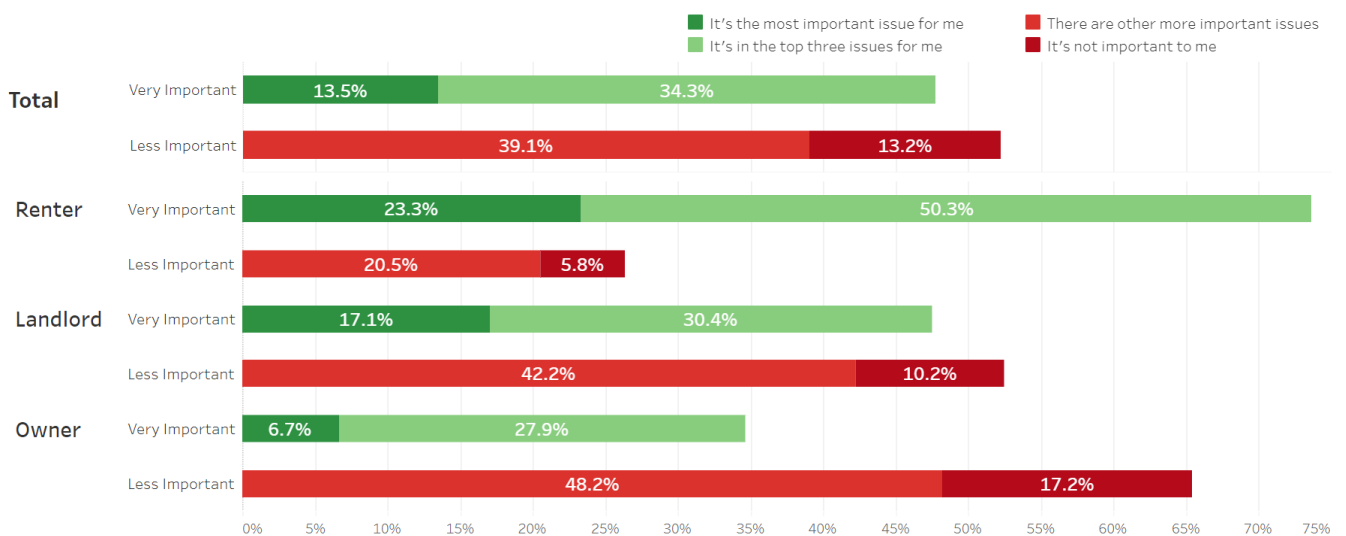
### Which of the following actions are you taking, or considering taking, to cope with housing costs?

<i>Multiple response</i>	Total	Renters	Landlords	Community (owner occupier)
Cutting discretionary spending (e.g., eating out)	71.7%	78.1%	66.8%	74.1%
Cutting spending on other household expenses	55.1%	57.2%	57.1%	57.7%
Moving house	18.6%	27.4%	21.7%	10.7%
Moving out of NSW	4.7%	6.5%	5.6%	3%

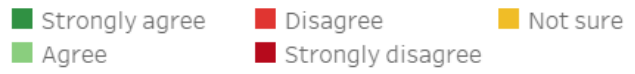
## Generally, how important or unimportant to your voting decision is it that a political party has policies that support renters?

	Total	Renters	Landlords	Community (owner occupier)
It's the most important issue for me	13.5%	23.3%	17.1%	6.7%
It's in the top three issues for me	34.3%	50.3%	30.4%	27.9%
There are other more important issues	39.1%	20.5%	42.2%	48.2%
It's not important to me	13.2%	5.8%	10.2%	17.2%

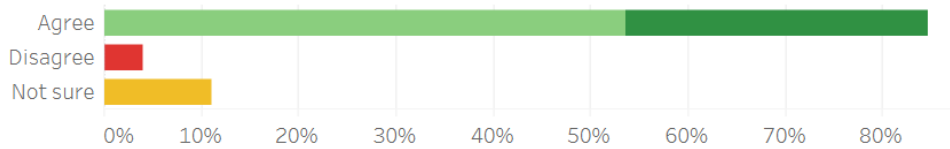
All respondents were asked - Generally, how important or unimportant to your voting decision is it that a political party has policies that support renters?



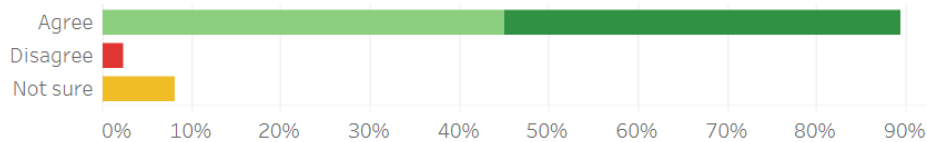
Landlord were asked – As an investor to what extent do you agree with the following statements:



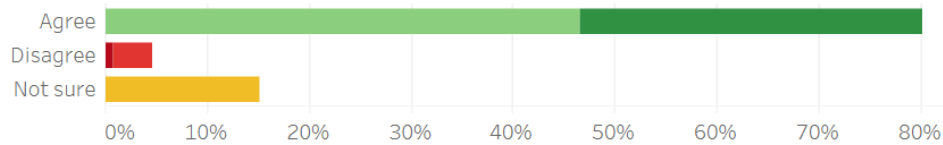
*My investment property provides an essential service:*



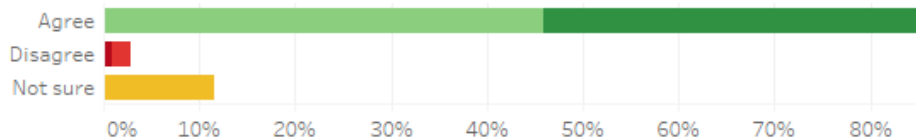
*It is important to me that my tenants are comfortable raising maintenance issues with the property*



*The way some landlords or agents behave creates an unfair perception of landlords generally*



*I am comfortable with fair rules in place to give guidance for both landlords and tenants*





## Polling research background information

Polling Organisation: Ipsos Public Affairs - Reasonable Grounds, Australia  
Commissioned by: Tenants' Union of NSW  
Date: 6 - 11 March 2024  
Survey length: 21 questions.

### Sample information

Sample size: 1200 respondents

Age:	18-30	30%	Gender:	Male	49%
	31-50	50%		Female	51%
	51-99	20%			
Tenure type:	Owned outright	24%	Landlord:	No	75%
	Owned, mortgaged	23%		Yes in NSW	21%
	Rented	50%		Yes but none in NSW	4%
	Neither	2%			
	Don't Know	1%			

*All results have been weighted to Census 2021 demographics to ensure that the sample accurately reflects the larger population. This is done to minimise bias and increase survey results reliability and validity of survey results.*

### Questions

1. Have there been any recent changes to your housing costs for you and your household?
2. Which of the following actions are you taking, or considering taking, to cope with your housing costs?
3. If a renter is being told to leave their home, should they be provided with a reason?
4. Have you, or someone you know, ever been evicted without being given a formal reason?

5. Generally, how important or unimportant to your voting decision is it that a political party has policies that support renters?
6. The NSW Government is proposing to change rental laws to require a landlord to give a reason when evicting a renter. Do you support or oppose this?

*Background information provided for Q6:* Under proposed reform to NSW renting laws, landlords will be required to provide a reason for evicting a renter.

Landlords will continue to be able to evict a renter (terminate their tenancy agreement) for existing reasons in NSW renting law that include:

- Non-payment of rent
- Property damage
- Other violation of lease terms
- Uninhabitability
- Property has been sold

And will gain reasons such as:

- Landlord's intent to move in, or have their family move in to the property
- Landlord's intent to sell or renovate the property
- Landlord's intent to use the property for another purpose (a change in use)

7. If NSW rental laws are changed, should changes apply for all renters?

*Background information provided for Q7:* In NSW, 58% of renting households (more than 500,000 households) are renting on a fixed-term lease and most people move in with a 6 or 12 month fixed-term lease.

At the end of a fixed-term lease, if the renter is not asked to leave or sign a new fixed-term, the lease is automatically converted to an ongoing 'periodic' agreement. The majority of tenancies continue on to either a new fixed-term lease or a periodic agreement.

In Tasmania in 1997 and Queensland in 2022, reforms to evictions applied to periodic agreements but not at the end of fixed-term leases.

8. *If support proposed reform and did vote Labor, or opposed proposed reform and did not vote Labor:* Would you consider changing your vote if the NSW government does not change rental laws to require a landlord to give a reason when evicting a renter?

9. *If oppose proposed reform and did vote Labor, or supported proposed reform and did not vote Labor:* Would you consider changing your vote if the NSW government changes NSW rental laws to provide a reason when evicting a renter?
10. NSW Labor promised to end no grounds evictions (eviction for no reason) in NSW at the last election (March 2023). Should the NSW Labor government now meet its commitment to the electorate?
11. The average cost of an eviction to a renter in NSW is \$4,000. Should the NSW Government work to reduce the number of unfair and unnecessary evictions as a cost-of-living measure?
12. *Question for landlords only:* As an investor to what extent do you agree with the following statements:
- My investment property provides an essential service
  - It is important to me that my tenants are comfortable raising maintenance issues with the property
  - The way some landlords or agents behave creates an unfair perception of landlords generally
  - I am comfortable with fair rules in place to give guidance for both landlords and tenants