NSW LABOR'S "FAIR GO FOR RENTERS" A STRONG STEP TOWARDS MAKING RENTING FAIR

MEDIA STATEMENT: FOR IMMEDIATE CIRCULATION

A coalition of 90 tenants, community organisations, unions and faith based groups called "Make Renting Fair" has welcomed NSW Labor's new renters' rights policy.

Announced today, Labor's policy would allow renters to make a house into a home by limiting rent increases, improving security of tenure and putting an end to unfair evictions.

"This is a significant announcement," said Ned Cutcher, Senior Policy Officer with the Tenants' Union of NSW. "The demographics of housing in New South Wales are changing very rapidly as for many the dream of home-ownership has slipped away. Fixing housing affordability could take generations, so turning our attention to improving renters' rights has taken on increased importance."

Jack de Groot of the St Vincent de Paul Society of NSW said "between July 2016 to March 2017, **almost 60 per cent of people assisted by the Society were in housing stress as they spent more than 30 per cent of their income on accommodation**. Of that group, almost 20 per cent spend more than 60 percent of their income on rent. In addition **the vast majority of the people who come to us do not own their homes, they rent.** Long-term renting is their only option and they need rental stability."

CEO of Homelessness NSW, Katherine McKernan, said "unfair evictions increase the chance of someone being evicted into homelessness. We need reforms that provide secure housing for vulnerable tenants. NSW Labor's announcement today takes the policy discussion in that direction, and that's to be applauded".

A spokesperson from Uniting said "secure housing is critical if people are to have a decent life and a stable base to nurture children. Uniting recognises the importance of rental security. Landlords shouldn't have carte blanche to evict tenants without a valid reason."

Mark Riboldi of Community Legal Centres NSW said ""Labor's announcement is a welcome acknowledgement of the broad community support for renters' rights in NSW, and housing affordability more broadly. We encourage the government to take on these policies, if not go further, to make renting fair in NSW".

Karen Walsh, CEO of Shelter NSW said "It's about time this issue is taken seriously. Unfair evictions is a major concern for thousands of renters across NSW. In a civil society individuals and families should be able to live without the stress and worry of being evicted for no reason. NSW Labor's announcement today demonstrates leadership and commitment to this groundbreaking reform".

For more information about the Make Renting Fair coalition please visit www.rentingfair.org.au.