

Media Release

The Hon Daniel Andrews MP
Premier



Friday, 4 September 2020

FURTHER CERTAINTY FOR VICTORIAN TENANTS AND LANDLORDS

With a home more important than ever, the Victorian Government is ensuring greater certainty and security for residential tenants and landlords by extending the eviction moratorium until 28 March 2021.

Under legislation introduced to Parliament this week, evictions will continue to be banned for residential tenancies, except in certain circumstances, until that date. Rental increases would continue to be banned for the same period.

The further extension will give tenants security in knowing that even if they are struggling to meet their rent due to the coronavirus pandemic, they won't lose the roof over the head.

Tenants and landlords are encouraged to continue working together in good faith to resolve any tenancy issue they may be facing. Demonstrating the ongoing partnership between tenants and landlords, roughly 32,000 agreements for reduced rent are now registered with Consumer Affairs Victoria (CAV).

Residential tenants and landlords who struggle to strike a deal over rent reductions are able to access the dispute resolution service run by CAV – which has provided advice and dispute resolution services more than 93,000 times since it launched in April.

Rental relief grants – which were recently increased from \$2,000 to \$3,000 – will also be extended until 28 March, giving tenants and their landlords more certainty as we continue to battle coronavirus.

Eligibility for the grant will also be expanded, with the assets threshold increasing from \$5,000 to \$10,000 – ensuring tenants aren't being asked to draw down on their savings before accessing support.

Eligible residential landlords will also receive a 25 per cent reduction in their 2021 land tax bill, with the remainder able to be deferred until 30 November 2021 – including any deferred land tax from 2020.

These changes come on top of the recently announced \$600,000 package to help advocacy groups and agencies can provide stronger support for vulnerable tenants as we continue to fight this virus.

The funding will allow Tenants Victoria, Victorian Council of Social Service, Financial Counselling Victoria and Registered Accommodation Association Victoria to provide more training and resources to help tenancy and community sector workers support vulnerable tenants in resolving disputes with their landlords.

It will also allow ensure information about the Government's residential tenancies dispute resolution scheme is reaching people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities, along with direct client support.

The Consumer Affairs Victoria website has information for tenants and landlords, including a step-by-step process on how to register a rent reduction agreement.

For more information, visit www.consumer.vic.gov.au/coronavirusandrenting.

Quotes attributable to Premier Daniel Andrews

"We know there are plenty of Victorians doing it tough right now – the last thing they need to worry about is whether they can keep a roof over their head."

"With an extended timeline and expanded eligibility for rental help, it means a little less stress and a little more certainty for tenants."

Quote attributable to Treasurer Tim Pallas

“We’ve continued to listen to residential renters and landlords during this challenging time and we’ve taken steps to provide even more certainty and support into 2021.”

Quote attributable to Minister for Consumer Affairs Melissa Horne

“This extension will help to alleviate those very real concerns of residential tenants who are financially struggling due to the economic impacts of the pandemic.”