

MEDIA RELEASE

Tenants Service tells Parliamentary Inquiry that HNSW policies have failed

The Illawarra & South Coast Tenants Service has told a NSW Parliamentary Inquiry that a raft of changes to Housing New South Wales policies over the past year has failed to fix a broken public housing system.

In its submission to the Public, Social and Affordable Housing Inquiry, the Tenants Service has highlighted how policies such as the introduction of the vacant bedroom charge, changes to who can succeed a public housing tenancy and changes to the way that market rent is valued have only worsened conditions for vulnerable tenants.

In particular, the Tenants Service condemned last year's directive by the Minister for Housing not to discount the market rent of properties on the basis that they are used for public housing.

This has resulted in rent increases of up to \$150 per week for tenants who are not eligible for a rental subsidy due to their income. Warren Wheeler, the Tenancy Team Leader at the Tenants Service states:

“The practical effect of this directive is that it will encourage those who are paying market rent to relinquish employment and return to complete reliance on government benefits.”

The Service used their submission to call upon the government to increase funding for repairs and maintenance of properties, invest in social and affordable housing stock, and ensure that funds from the sale of public housing stock are reinvested into maintaining existing stock or creating new stock.

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