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Tenancy laws to provide stronger protection for victims of domestic violence

Women's Legal Service NSW welcomes new laws introduced into parliament to provide stronger protections for victims of domestic violence renting in NSW.

"We welcome the government's introduction of a Bill to amend NSW tenancy laws to ensure women and children experiencing violence can leave immediately without penalty," says Kellie McDonald, Senior Solicitor, Women's Legal Service NSW.

"Under the current tenancy laws in NSW women escaping violence need a final apprehended violence order (AVO) with an exclusion order to leave without penalty. Additionally, even then they have to provide 14 days notice," says Ms McDonald.

"Women and children experiencing domestic violence often need to flee their home quickly in order to remain safe. In our experience, it can take up to 12 months to finalise an AVO, especially where there are criminal charges," says Ms McDonald.

"If women just abandon their rental property, they can incur significant debts and be black listed, which can make it very difficult for them to rent again" says Ms McDonald.

The proposed reforms will allow victims of domestic violence to end their tenancy immediately without penalty, by giving a notice of termination, attaching a copy of a domestic violence (protection) order, a family law injunction, a record of conviction or a declaration from a medical practitioner.

Being able to rely on a declaration from a medical practitioner will allow victims too fearful to seek out a domestic violence order to leave their tenancy without needing to seek a Tribunal order as well as assuring landlords that the reason for ending their tenancy was justified in the circumstances," says Ms McDonald.

Women's Legal Service NSW looks forward to working with the NSW Government on the implementation of these important reforms.

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Women's Legal Service NSW is a community legal centre that aims to achieve access to justice and a just legal system for women in NSW. We seek to promote women's human rights, redress inequalities experienced by women and to foster legal and social change through strategic legal services, community development, community legal education and law and policy reform work.

Further information:

[Residential Tenancies Amendment \(Review\) Bill 2018](#)



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