

INTERNATIONAL TENANTS' DAY 2018 OPENS CONVERSATION AROUND RENTING IN AUSTRALIA

Rental property website Rent.com.au, together with the Tenants' Union of New South Wales, has used International Tenants' Day 2018 (October 1) to emphasise a need to 'de-stigmatise' renting, as more Australians look to renting as a deliberate and practical choice.

Key Highlights:

- New data from RENT highlights mismatch of 'want versus get' lease durations
- International Tenants' Day an opportunity to further the conversation on tenant rights
- 30.9% of Australia's population is renting, data from census 2016 shows

Around the world, community groups, organisations and tenancy unions use International Tenants' Day to promote the need for an overhaul of tenancy laws. This year is no different with the theme: 'Life on a lease, a lease on life'.

A changing rental landscape and a market keen to stay for the longer-term

Rent.com.au Chief Executive Officer, Greg Bader said the country's rental sector has changed and will continue to change over time. "Today our average renter is younger, more likely to be earning a good wage and is choosing to rent less out of necessity, but more for logical and practical reasons," he said.

"Affordability is still a significant factor for many (especially the last few years in Sydney and Melbourne, and more recently in Hobart), but we are also seeing that people enjoy the flexibility (financial, location) that renting can offer – in fact, around 20% of our customers are actually property owners, just not in the location they prefer to live in at the moment."

"We (as an industry and as a community) need to understand that 30% of us rent and that number is growing. Lease security and flexible lease durations are all major issues that renters face."

Lease duration

"Rent.com.au has continued to evolve its Renter Resume product (a personal renting profile for renters) based on customer needs," Mr Bader said. "A recent addition to our process has allowed customers (both renters and landlords) to indicate their preferred lease duration during the application and listing processes, respectively."

"What we can see is that only around 40% of renters are looking for a 12-month lease, and yet 80% will end up with one. Even more telling, 40% of our renters also indicated a preference for a lease longer than 12 months, and yet less than 10% of those people ended up with one. This sort of imbalance is not in the best interest of either landlords or renters, neither of whom want the instability that results."

Recent changes made by the Andrews Government in Victoria to give tenants more rights do go some way to show governments are prepared to look at change. "We surveyed our Victorian renter database in the lead-up to these changes, and the issue of lease duration was one of the major focuses for the respondent group," Mr Bader said.

“What tenants want is a place to live – a home – and the ability to manage that property as their home. Our customers overwhelmingly support these changes, which if enacted, will go some way to addressing some of the imbalance that has existed in the past”.

“We would like to see Federal and State governments take this further. One of the real challenges we have in Australia is that ‘mums and dads’ are left to supply to majority of our rental stock. That in itself is not the problem, but it does impact overall lease security - situations change for individuals, the property may need to be sold or moved back into. Ideally, a more balanced supply of stock could be developed, including purpose-built rental properties. Our local and State governments have significant levers that can be used (zoning/density/legislation) to encourage more development in this area.”

Using Tenants’ Day as an opportunity to further conversation

Leo Patterson Ross, Senior Policy Officer with the Tenants' Union of NSW said Australia lags behind many countries worldwide when it comes to the rights of renters. “International Tenants' Day highlights the work needed to bring Australia and NSW into the modern world. We need to have a much closer look at the way we house ourselves,” he said.

“The basic proposition around much of the world is that as long as you keep meeting the terms of your contract and the property remains available for rent then you get to decide when you leave your home.”

“The fixed term contract should be seen as a promise from the tenant to stay for at least that long. At the moment, for a few months at a time, it’s the only protection against unreasonable eviction a tenant can hope for. This is why there’s such a mismatch between what tenants would like and what they get. As the numbers of families with children and older people who rent increases, this situation should no longer be acceptable to our community or our governments. “

With a growing cohort of long-term renters as well as people choosing to rent as a lifestyle choice, Australia should be looking to lead the world not be left behind.”

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Media Requests

For further information, or to organise an interview with Rent.com.au CEO Greg Bader or Tenants’ Union of NSW Senior Policy Officer, Leo Patterson Ross, please contact:

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About International Tenants' Day

Every year, events are held across the world to mark International Tenants' Day and act as a prompt to tenants to be aware of their rights and for the wider community to be aware of tenancy issues. International Tenants' Day originated in 1986 when the French tenant organisation CNL proposed a special world day for tenants. The council of the International Union of Tenants agreed and decided that it coincide with World Habitat Day (the first Monday in October). On this day throughout the world housing and tenancy issues are promoted and expounded. Issues such as rights for tenants, affordable rental, and tenant participation in all matters related to housing highlight the universality of tenancy.

About Tenants' Union of New South Wales

The Tenants' Union of New South Wales is the peak non-government organisation advocating for the interests of tenants and other renters in New South Wales. The Tenants' Union works for tenants as a specialist community legal centre with its own legal practice in residential tenancies law; as the primary resource agency for the Tenants Advice and Advocacy Services (TAASs), and as the recognised voice of tenants' interests in public debate.

About rent.com.au

rent.com.au (ASX:RNT) is Australia's #1 website dedicated to rental property. Our rental only positioning allows RNT to legitimately advocate for renting and renters.

Our Rules



Renters in Suits

Our renters will always be presented in such a fashion as to maximise their chances of getting the home they want



Properties on Pedestals

We present our properties with additional and relevant information



Click the Forms

Let's automate where we can. We can't remove the need for you to eyeball the property before signing (yet!), but we can remove most of the paperwork

Our Products



An easy way for a renter to verify their ID and check for any reported breaches in their tenancy history, giving them an edge on their application.

[Learn More](#)



A convenience product that helps renters bridge the gap from one rental to another by financing their bond online.

[Learn More](#)



A simple and free utility connection service to make moving hassle free – ensuring the lights are on and the water is hot when a renter moves in to their new place.

[Learn More](#)

Renter (and Pet) Resume

Streamline your rental search with Renter Resume. Create it once and use it to apply for as many properties as you like.

[Learn More](#)

