

NEARLY 60% OF RENTERS FACING AFFORDABILITY ISSUES DUE TO COVID-19

The majority of renters in Australia are finding it harder to pay the rent due to COVID-19, a survey conducted by Australia's leading rental property website Rent.com.au, has revealed. Almost two-thirds say they would like more support and information from Government, property managers and property owners.

Key Points:

- › 59% of renters have either stopped working or had their working hours reduced
- › 22% say their ability to pay rent has been severely affected
- › 66% don't feel confident seeking support from their property manager or landlord
- › 35% of tenants have requested a rent reduction or deferral

Around the world, communities are impacted by COVID-19 differently. In this recent Rent.com.au renters survey, 1,600 Australian respondents gave an insight into the direct impact of the pandemic on their rental affordability, the response to the crisis by the industry, and their plans and sentiments for the future.

Rental affordability under stress

While 59% of renters indicated they are earning less as an impact of the pandemic, 33% have stopped working completely and 22% indicated that their ability to pay the rent has been severely affected.

Rent.com.au Chief Executive Officer, Greg Bader, said. "We know the necessary shutdowns have been devastating for many businesses, particularly those in hospitality, tourism and retail. These are also the sort of industries that typically over-index with younger staff, the largest cohort of the renting community.

"Even though state and federal governments moved relatively quickly to support tenants, there is still a level of confusion and uncertainty in the renting market in terms of process and responsibilities. Over half of the respondents (53%) would like to see more support for renters from our leaders and just 21% believe the response so far has been enough.

"As we start to emerge from the worst of the pandemic, we (as an industry and as a community) need to understand that renters, who make up 30% of us, will continue to deal with the financial impact for months or years to come. Short-term protections such as a moratorium on evictions, or a deferral in rent, provide some comfort, but there are concerns that this is just kicking the can down the road. We hope to see the industry and government respond in innovative ways to support renters and the industry-at-large."

More communication from property managers and landlords needed

Two-thirds of renters said they don't feel confident asking their property manager or landlord for help, and only 32% said their property manager or landlord was helpful and informative during the crisis.

"We would encourage property managers and owners to check in with their tenants," Mr Bader said. "Open and honest communication is the key and can only be an advantage for all parties as we prepare for the months ahead.

"Not all renters are actually seeking financial assistance. In fact, only 35% have asked for a reduction or a deferral in their rent. Of those, 50% have successfully negotiated (or are in the process of doing so), but unfortunately that means that half have been refused.

"Obviously, every case is different, and the renter will generally be required to demonstrate any impact on their income/affordability. Property managers and landlords are also affected by the crisis and all of us are navigating new ground. So once again, open communication is important, with both parties needing to be empathic and understanding of each other's situation."

Moving plans left on hold

The survey also revealed that half of the respondents had planned to move in the next six months. Of that group though, 46% have now put those plans on hold indefinitely, with another 30% indicating that their planned moves will be delayed.

"This is not surprising during a period of uncertainty. With record levels of rental properties available right now and the possibility of downward pressure on rents, there is even more incentive for landlords and property managers to negotiate with their tenants, because finding a new one will be a little harder," Mr Bader said.

"We have seen some positive sentiment returning to the market in the last two weeks. Activity is certainly up (traffic, Renter Resumes, property enquiries, for example) from where it was a month ago. With talk of the shutdowns being wound back, 28% of renters surveyed indicated that they were now feeling optimistic about life post COVID-19.

"That's a good sign for us as a community, and we hope to see that grow over the next few months, as the economy re-opens and renters get a little more security. In the meantime, we encourage renters and property managers to stay connected."

ENDS

For media enquiries, please contact:

Lauren Vardy

e: media@rent.com.au

m: +61 428 419 709

Attachments: [INFOGRAPHIC: COVID-19: Impact on Australian Renters](#)

COVID-19: IMPACT ON AUSTRALIAN RENTERS



59%

either stopped working or working reduced hours

22%

had their ability to pay rent severely affected

Most renters believe state and federal government initiatives have been inadequate



34%

Need to do more



23%

Neutral

13%

support is enough



32%

say their property manager/landlord has been helpful

66%

renters wouldn't feel confident asking for a reduction or deferral in rental payments



35%

have requested a reduction or deferral of rental payments



52% were refused 17% successful

How did PM/landlord handle the situation?

22%
Positively

31%
Neutral

47%
Negatively

50%

renters were planning to move in the next 6 months

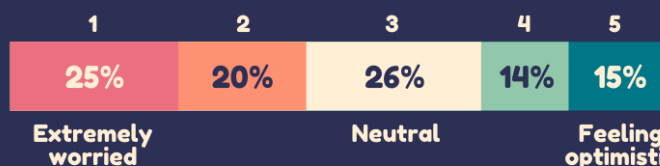
Indefinitely on hold 47%

Delayed 30%

Going ahead 23%






How are you feeling about life after COVID-19?






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
	Flick 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 free and easy to use utility connection service to make moving hassle free – ensuring the lights are on and the water is hot when a renter moves into their new place.	Learn More

Renter (and Pet) Resume

Renters can streamline their rental search with Renter Resume. Creating it once and using it to apply for as many properties as they like.

[Learn More](#)

RentPay

Rental payments in the palm of their hand. Renters can make payments, track payments, view their rental history, and set-up reminders.

[Learn More](#)

