



12 January 2021

To the Premier
11th Floor, Executive Building
15 Murray St
Hobart TAS 7000
attn: Peter Gutwein

via email: peter.gutwein@parliament.tas.gov.au

To the Honourable Peter Gutwein,
Re: Extension of Rental Protections during COVID-19

We thank you for ensuring that during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, Tasmania continues to have some of the strongest protections for residential tenants in Australia.

Ensuring that residential tenants are largely protected from eviction and that their rents cannot be increased has meant that they have not had to worry about whether they have a roof over their heads.

However, if protections for residential tenants are not extended beyond 31 January 2021 there is a high likelihood of evictions for people who, through no fault of their own, have lost their jobs and are struggling to pay rent. It will also result in rent increases for tenants who simply cannot afford any rent increase at this time. The winding back of the moratorium will coincide with the reduction in JobKeeper and the JobSeeker coronavirus supplement and the possibility of a second wave of the pandemic in Tasmania, with the associated economic disruption and general uncertainty as we enter a period of economic recovery. In short, there are many unknowns in terms of whether the thousands of Tasmanians whose employment was affected by COVID-19 that now is not the time to be reducing support that ensures people have access to essential services such as housing.

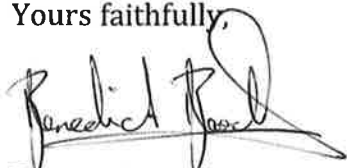
We note that the eviction moratorium has been extended until the end of March 2021 in most Australian jurisdictions including New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia and the ACT. We are concerned that if protections for residential tenants in Tasmania are not extended there will be a large number of eviction orders and/or rent rises for tenants who are already in financial stress.

We therefore call on you to extend the moratorium on evictions and rent increases until the end of March 2021.

We also strongly recommend that residential tenants who can demonstrate financial hardship should be able to re-apply for funding through the Residential Rent Relief Scheme. A further payment of up to \$2000 or four weeks rent will act as an important protection for residential tenants in their continued efforts to keep up with their rent whilst ensuring that landlords are assured continued rent payments.

In summary, we call on you to extend the moratorium on evictions and rent increases until the end of March 2021 and to extend the Residential Rent Relief Scheme for those tenants who can demonstrate ongoing financial hardship.

Yours faithfully,



Benedict Bartl
Principal Solicitor
Tenants' Union of Tasmania



Pattie Chugg
Chief Executive Officer
Shelter Tasmania



Dr Chris Jones
CEO
Anglicare Tasmania



Adrienne Picone
Chief Executive Officer
Tasmanian Council of Social Service Inc

cc: Elise Archer
Minister for Justice

Rebecca White
Leader of the Opposition

Cassy O'Connor
Leader of the Tasmanian Greens