



Legislative Council Legal and Social Issues Committee

Inquiry: Inquiry into the Rental and Housing Affordability Crisis in Victoria

Hearing Date: 23 August 2023

Question[s] taken on notice

Directed to: Federation of Community Legal Centres, Louisa Gibbs

Received Date: 25 September 2023

1. **Rachel PAYNE, page 42**

Question Asked:

To provide some statistics of what community legal centres have seen in the change of requests for tenancy matters.

Response:

Broadly across the sector, community legal centres continue to see a high number of requests for assistance on tenancy matters. Available data from 2022-2023 from 76% of our members¹, indicates that tenancy and housing issues comprise approximately 7.92% of the sector's funded services delivery. This is an approximate projection due to incomplete Tenants Victoria data that is obtained on a half yearly basis. Notably, tenancy matters are the third most common problem types that community legal centres engage with, after Family Violence and Employment Law matters.

Below is an extract of some key data provided by Tenants Victoria that provides a useful snapshot of changes in requests for tenancy matters.

The table below records the top 8 problem codes from Tenants Victoria's advice line and extended assistance services in across the 2022-2023 financial year with the percentage change from 2022. The data shows notable increases in matters regarding rent increases (86%), rent arrears (73%), mould (48%), notice to vacate (32%) and repairs (23%).

¹ This statistic is based on data from 35 of Victoria's 47 Community Legal Centres for which we have consistent data points; but noting that Tenants Victoria data is for a half year only.

Issue	Fin Year	Number	Percentage	Percentage change
Repairs	2022	2251	20.5%	+23%
	2023	2770	23.7%	
Notice to Vacate	2022	1372	12.5%	+32%
	2023	1812	15.5%	
Bond	2022	1321	12.0%	+16%
	2023	1536	13.1%	
Compensation Claim by Tenants	2022	1009	9.2%	+25%
	2023	1258	10.8%	
Lease Breaking	2022	1008	9.2%	-8%
	2023	925	7.9%	
Mould	2022	519	4.7%	+48%
	2023	769	6.6%	
Rent Arrears	2022	420	3.8%	+73%
	2023	726	6.2%	
Rent Increase	2022	388	3.5%	+86%
	2023	723	6.2%	

In addition, Tenants Victoria recorded a 120 per cent increase in the number of matters they engaged with on issues regarding minimum standards not being met on rental properties, since the introduction of these standards in 2021. The Tenants Victoria webpage saw a 35.2 per cent increase in pageviews related to Minimum Standards during the 2023 financial year and have advised that renters experiencing financial disadvantage and renters living with a disability are more likely to report on issues of minimum standards not being met.

The increase in matters regarding minimum standards not being met aligns with a recent [ABC report](#) on the extremely large increase in applications to the VCAT for urgent repairs since the minimum standards came into effect in May 2021.

2. **Aiv PUGLIELLI, page 43**

Question Asked:

With regard to, say, holiday homes, perhaps the more common setting for short stays, do you have a view to any specific sort of measures – say, hard caps on days per year that they would be offered as a short-term rental?

Any views around that?

Response:

We draw on the examples provided by [Tenants Victoria in their submission](#) to the Inquiry including the use of licensing, fines, and limits on the number of days a property can be let each year.

Other examples cited in Tenants Victoria's submission include limiting short stay accommodation to be available in certain geographical areas only as highlighted in the [submission provided by the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute](#), which notes the impact on the availability of rental properties in high-demand inner city areas that have significant tourism appeal.