

7 August 2020

Ms Lizzie Blandthorn MP,  
Chair,  
Public Accounts and Estimates Committee  
Parliament of Victoria,  
Spring Street  
East Melbourne, 3002



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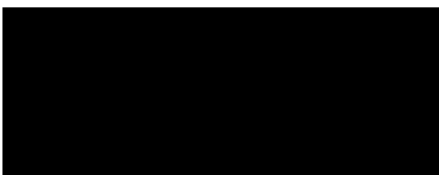
Dear Chair,

Tenants Victoria undertook to provide some further information to the committee on the uptake of measures to mitigate the pandemic's impact on our state's renters. Whilst we regard the package available to renters in Victoria as the best responses among the states and territories, a key challenge we have identified is the continued low uptake by tenants of administrative processes available to obtain a rent reduction through Consumer Affairs Victoria (CAV). Feedback we have received from tenants has shown a primary challenge remains insufficient community awareness of the supports currently available. These insights have been provided to government.

In recognition of this, we have been funded by CAV, alongside the Victorian Council of Social Service, Financial Counselling Victoria, the peak body for financial counsellors in Victoria, to undertake a program of engagement work to boost community awareness and education, including among culturally and linguistically diverse communities. We are hopeful that, with this community investment, we will see measurable improvements by the end of the September 2020 and more tenants utilising rental reduction processes.

Tenants Victoria is continuing to work productively with the State Government and the new Minister for Consumer Affairs, Melissa Home, to ensure renters are protected from the continued impacts of the pandemic as restrictions intensify. We are also hopeful of an announcement soon from the Victorian Government to extend eviction protections in the light of further hard lockdowns and consequent impact on renters who are over-represented in hard hit sectors such retail, hospitality and the broader gig economy.

Yours sincerely,



Jennifer Beveridge

