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Our Ref: 145



Mr Russell Keith
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Dear Sir

RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES ACT AMENDMENTS

Law Society Northern Territory (the Society) welcomes the opportunity to comment on the draft legislation amending the Residential Tenancies Act (Bill).

The draft legislation provides a framework for the use of residential tenancy databases, and to set out the parameters for how landlords, landlord agents (real estate agents) and database operators can use, record and access personal information about tenants and potential tenants listed on residential tenancy databases.

It is apparent that there has been an imbalance of power between a landlord and tenant in the Northern Territory for a long time. The Society supports the reforms outlined in the Bill which go some way to equalising the power imbalance that currently exists. If any amendments were to be made, the Society would recommend adopting an approach similar to that in Victoria where recently announced reforms, among other things, allow for tenants to use the data base to look if they are about to enter into an agreement with a rogue landlord or estate agent¹. This is particularly important in a jurisdiction like the Northern Territory where bonds are not held in a central bond holding scheme.

Should you have any queries in relation to our response, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Kellie Grainger", written over a horizontal line.

KELLIE GRAINGER
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
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¹ <https://www.consumer.vic.gov.au/latest-news/new-reforms-designed-to-make-renting-fairer-news-alert>