

## DRAFT SECOND READING SPEECH

HON. GUY BARNETT MP

### *Residential Tenancy Amendment Bill 2018*

*\*check Hansard for delivery\**

Madam Speaker, I move that the Bill now be read a second time. The purpose of the Bill is to make a number of amendments to the Residential Tenancy Act 1997 to improve the operation of that Act, and to give effect to commitments made by this Government with regard to the National Disability Insurance Scheme, social housing, family violence and red tape reduction.

Madam Speaker, a number of the amendments in this Bill will give effect to strategies identified at the Housing Summit and as part of the Affordable Housing Strategy to improve access to affordable private rental accommodation.

The Residential Tenancy Act provides strong protections for tenants and landlords, however we have proactively identified situations where social housing tenants are unintentionally being excluded from the protections due to the current definitions and subleasing provisions.

Currently, the Director of Housing may subsidise rent and bond payments following arrangements entered into under the Homes Act 1935. This Bill amends the Residential Tenancy Act to ensure that such contributions are not regarded as an increase in rent.

Amendments to the definition of social housing and social housing provider also ensures there is consistency between the Residential Tenancy Act and the Homes Act.

This Amendment Bill clarifies how the Residential Tenancy Act applies to leasing and subleasing arrangements entered into under the Homes Act.

We have listened to stakeholders in the social housing space, and therefore include amendments to allow security deposits to be paid in instalments, to expand the categories of organisations that may receive a security deposit, and to extend the timeframe within which a security deposit must be paid to the Rental Deposit Authority in those circumstances.

This allows a social housing provider to collect and retain the bond money until the full amount has been received, before depositing it with the Rental Deposit Authority.

This is a clear benefit to social housing tenants, and a reduction in red tape for the administration of bonds.

Madam Speaker, this Government is committed to implementing the accommodation requirements of the National Disability Insurance Scheme, which will take effect in Tasmania on 1 July 2019.

This Bill includes an amendment to allow for a number of NDIS participants accommodated at a premises. Individual written agreements will allow each tenant exclusive access to a bedroom, but shared access to common areas such as kitchens and living areas.

Madam Speaker, this Government is committed to ensuring that our most vulnerable citizens have access to safe and affordable housing.

Under the Family Violence Act 2004, a Court may make a Family Violence Order which directly impacts on a rental tenancy agreement.

If a tenant needs to terminate a residential tenancy agreement as a result of a Family Violence Order, this amendment removes the requirement to create a new agreement on varied terms and conditions.

Madam Speaker, these amendments to the Residential Tenancy Act, will improve operability between this Act and the Homes Act, improve access to social housing, prepare for the introduction of the NDIS for vulnerable adults, improve access to safe, affordable housing for those fleeing family violence and further reduce red tape.

I commend this Bill to the House.