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Proposed 'zero-day' evictions will lead to more homelessness

Proposed new laws that would make it faster and easier to evict tenants will only exacerbate Victoria's homelessness crisis, warns Victoria's peak body for homelessness, the Council to Homeless Persons.

The reforms being considered under a [review of the Residential Tenancies Act](#) would mean, amongst other things, that landlords could evict someone with zero-day's notice for damage previously done, but since repaired, or for previous late payment of rent, even when the rent is now up-to-date.

"We're gravely concerned about the potential number of vulnerable people who would be put out in the street at a moment's notice if these reforms get through," said Kate Colvin, Acting CEO, Council to Homeless Persons.

Currently when tenants receive a notice to vacate, the landlord must specify the reason for the eviction, and the tenant has a period of time to remedy the issue in order to keep the tenancy. Under the reforms being slated, tenants would no longer have an opportunity to remedy the issues, and the eviction could be immediate.

In addition, the reforms propose an almost unlimited interpretation of 'anti-social behaviour', which CHP says has grave implications for people experiencing family violence, mental health issues or other trauma.

"Getting into private rental and keeping it is already hard enough for many people struggling on low or intermittent incomes, or who've experienced family breakdown, job loss or mental illness. People need more security, not less, but the changes seem focused on making it easier and quicker to evict people from their homes," said Ms Colvin.

"If these changes come into effect we'll see an immediate increase in the number of people turning up to homelessness services, and in people sleeping rough on our streets or in cars.

"It's simply not possible to secure a new tenancy in a day, and given fierce competition for lower cost rentals, someone on a low income who has been evicted is likely to be unable to secure another rental property for months, if at all," she said.

Currently in all of metropolitan Melbourne just 8-in-100 rentals are affordable to someone on a low income. The situation is even more dire for a single parent on Centrelink who would find just 2-in-100 rentals that they could afford.

"For thousands of Victorian renters, the Residential Tenancies Act provides the last protection against homelessness. We must protect the rights of vulnerable people to keep a roof over their head, particularly in the midst of a housing affordability crisis that has seen so many fall into homelessness," said Ms Colvin.

"We want to see a Residential Tenancies Act which focuses on remedying disputes, not giving greater powers to landlords to make people homeless."

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