



Property Management

news

BURDEN ON OWNERS TO INCREASE SECURITY IN RENTALS

Did you know that the state government is proposing to change the Residential Tenancies Act (RTA) in relation to the level of security that you must provide for a tenant?

The proposal would require owners of residential investment properties to install deadlocks on the main entry door and any other external timber doors.

Currently, the RTA requires that the owner provides and maintains locks that are 'reasonably secure'. The proposed change would do away with this wording which has worked perfectly well for more than two decades.

Instead, it would be replaced with wording to describe that deadlocks have to be installed along with a front light that is switched on from inside the house.

The problem with this is two-fold:

- Firstly, there is no clear definition for 'deadlock'. Australian standards in relation to locks are categorised by strength. However, 'deadlock' is a generic term and not a standard. The lack of definition around what is being proposed will cause confusion among owners who will understandably be concerned about how to properly comply with this law, if it comes to pass in its recommended form; and
- Secondly, there is the cost of change. Owners are subject to many expenses related to managing an investment property and in recent times have had to comply with new laws for RCDs and hard-wired smoke alarms.

If this new regulation is passed most owners will be up for about \$60 per lock, plus labour costs if these are installed by a tradesperson. Most dwellings will therefore incur costs of between \$200 and \$500 as a result.

It is hard to understand from where this proposal for deadlocks has come. The State Government has claimed that deadlocks provide better security for tenants. It has also said

that tenants cannot secure contents' insurance without deadlocks in place.

Neither claim can be substantiated. There is no evidence that generic deadlocks are better than other forms of locks and other devices and most insurance companies will provide contents' insurance to tenants without deadlocks in their rental properties.



REIWA has discussed this issue at length with the Department of Commerce and held a meeting with the Minister. Whilst the Minister was sympathetic with REIWA's view and modified his proposal, REIWA remains of the view that the proposal itself is unnecessary.

REIWA's view is that most owners are not aware of the government's proposed legislation and would oppose the new rules had they had been consulted. REIWA is therefore urging owners to please contact Minister O'Brien and alert him to your concerns.

To assist with this, REIWA has provided a standard letter opposing this change, the text for which you can send in an email, or print, sign and then forward to the Minister in the post. If you would like to access this letter, please contact the office.



David Airey
REIWA President



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