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Elise Archer, Minister for Building and Construction

# Assisting Tasmanian renters during COVID-19

The Tasmanian Government is committed to supporting all Tasmanians through the difficulties faced as a result of COVID-19.

The establishment of the COVID-19 Rent Relief Fund will ensure targeted support of up to \$2000 or four weeks rent is available for tenants suffering from extreme hardship.

While the Federal Government's JobKeeper and increased Jobseeker payments have considerably relieved pressure on affected Tasmanians, there remain some who are suffering hardship and who require further assistance with rental payments.

While the Government has already taken action to protect residential tenants, including a halt on rental evictions, restrictions on inspections to support social distancing and a ban on rental increases during the emergency period, this new Fund will support those who continue to experience pressure.

Assistance will be made available to tenants experiencing COVID-19 related hardship and are in rental stress, that is, they are paying more than 30 per cent of their income in rent and with less than \$5000 in savings.

As well as tenants covered by the Residential Tenancy Act 1997, those tenants who rent rooms, are part of a share-house or are sub-tenants will also be eligible for assistance.

The Fund will also be made available to migrants and temporary visa holders subject to them meeting all other eligibility criteria.

Payments will be made to landlords of eligible tenants and it will be a requirement they pass on this level of assistance to their tenant via rent reductions.

The Fund will be administered by Communities Tasmania through Housing Connect which has expertise in social and affordable housing needs with applications open from next week.

We are confident this fund will reduce financial pressure on tenants as well as landlords, helping to ensure Tasmanians can recover and rebuild as we emerge from the pandemic.