

# Memorandum

**Date:** 22 January 2020  
**To:** Incumbents, Church Wardens and Parish Secretaries of Parishes with residential rental property  
**From:** Diocesan Office  
**Subject:** Upcoming changes to residential tenancy laws  
**Document:** 001-2020

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Dear Incumbents, Church Wardens and Parish Secretaries

Reforms to residential tenancy laws by the NSW Government will take effect from 23 March 2020. For the most part these will be managed by your appointed property manager/s. However, we wanted to make you aware of them as property managers may need additional information or to arrange additional works to comply with new requirements.

Key changes include:

- landlords must ensure that their rental property meets 7 minimum standards to be 'fit for habitation'
- new and improved disclosure obligations on landlords and agents as well as new remedies for tenants when these obligations aren't met
- landlords must ensure that smoke alarms are in working order and batteries are regularly replaced
- making it easier for tenants to install fixtures or make alterations, additions or renovations that are minor
- mandatory set fees when a tenant breaks their lease will apply to all new fixed-term leases that are 3 years or less
- limiting rent increases to once every 12 months for periodic (continuing) leases
- water efficiency measures, including all taps and toilets need to be checked at the start of a tenancy so any leaks are fixed
- new powers for Fair Trading to resolve disputes between tenants and landlords. This includes powers to investigate and issue rectification orders to require landlords to carry out repairs and maintenance, or tenants to fix damage.

Longer term it will be a requirement that all toilets in rented properties must be dual flush with a minimum 3-star water efficiency rating by 23 March 2025. Many toilets are likely to already meet this standard but in older properties where single flush toilets are still in use the Parish will need to plan to replace these in the coming years.

More detailed information is available on [NSW Fair Trading](#)'s website or you are welcome to contact the Property Services Unit at [property@newcastleanglican.org.au](mailto:property@newcastleanglican.org.au) or 4926 3733 if you have any queries about any Parish property that is rented for residential use. Alternatively, if you have any concerns that the appointed property manager is not performing fully in their services please get in contact with us to discuss actions that can be taken.

We are also investigating expanding our insurance coverage to specifically include landlord insurance, reflecting the increasing number of Parishes who have residences being used as rentals. Additional information may be required as part of your Parish Return this year to collect the data needed to put this extra coverage in place. More information will be provided with Parish Return documentation.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Elyssa Kingston-Brown', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

**Elyssa Kingston-Brown**  
Strategic Property Advisor  
[property@newcastlenaglican.org.au](mailto:property@newcastlenaglican.org.au)