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### An independent voice for the community

We are the only locally owned and operated community newspaper on the Mornington Peninsula. We are dedicated to the belief that a strong community newspaper is essential to a strong community. We exist to serve residents, community groups and businesses and ask for their support in return.

## NEWS DESK

# New rental laws 'make life fairer'

PENINSULA Community Legal Centre has praised recent changes to Victoria's rental laws, which include the introduction of "basic standards" and which limit rent rises to once a year, as making renting "fairer for everyone".

It says the revamped laws "strike a better balance between strengthening renters' rights and protecting vulnerable tenants while providing appropriate protections for owners".

The legal centre aims to assist tenants living in private rental properties. For more than a decade it says it has supported tenants who "have not been given a fair go under the previous laws which created a power imbalance that favoured landlords".

The centre was responding to ("Perfect storm leaves renters out in the cold" *The News* 22/6/21) which pointed to a potential crisis in the lack of availability of rental properties on the Mornington Peninsula.

The centre described the rental reforms, which came into effect at the end of March, as a "big step forward in correcting previous imbalances

in the system that allowed landlords to rent out properties, often for high rents, that did not provide basic amenities, such as functioning stoves, heating and deadlocks or have safety measures for gas, electricity and smoke alarms". These are covered by the new laws.

"The changes to the law mean that renters in Victoria are now provided with some of the basic protections that have existed elsewhere in the world for a long time," the centre's CEO Jackie Galloway said. "It is only fair that rental properties must meet basic standards that make them safe and liveable."

Other changes in the law relate to issues that can have a "big impact on renters' quality of life, such as being allowed to have a pet or nail picture hooks in the wall".

While the new laws have been criticised by some as being "too tough" on owners, many of the reforms address basic things which most Victorians would expect to be allowed to do in their own home, Ms Galloway said.

"The new laws enable people to

turn the house they rent into a home. They are not about maintaining a property to a luxury level, they are about maintaining it at a basic liveable level," she said.

"The reforms won't require huge changes for those who are already providing safe and secure rentals."

The centre has seen an increase in the number of renters facing eviction in the past two months. "Since the COVID moratorium on evictions ended in March we have seen more renters receiving notices to vacate due to ongoing financial stress as a result of the pandemic," Ms Galloway said.

"It is important for renters to seek advice and act quickly to avoid the possibility of having to leave the rental property with nowhere to go."

Anyone who has been served a notice-to-vacate their private rental property or who needs advice on the new laws or other general renting matters, such as getting repairs done, can call the Peninsula Community Legal Centre for free advice on 9783 3600 or email [pccl@pccl.org.au](mailto:pccl@pccl.org.au).

# Ambulance station builder chosen

THE Mornington ambulance station to be built in Main Street will have a four-bay garage for ambulances and four bedrooms for paramedics to "rest and recuperate".

Work is expected to start next month on the station which will have training facilities, fully equipped kitchen, and improved security and car parking.

The site at 348 Main Street is aimed

to allow easy access to main roads and major sites, including schools, shopping precincts and community facilities.

Health minister Martin Foley said Bowden Corporation Pty Ltd was the builder.

"We're investing in our hardworking paramedics right across Victoria including in Mornington - this is the

next step in ensuring our paramedics can respond to local emergencies quickly and efficiently," Mr Foley said.

Eastern Victoria MP Jane Garrett said: "This new ambulance station ... is about ensuring our local paramedics have the best resources to ensure the local community gets the best emergency response."

## Solar and energy efficiency bulk buy program

Dreading the power bill? Sick of living in a freezing cold house in winter and a piping hot house in summer? Wanting to do better for the environment?

Together with the Australian Energy Foundation, we now offer our residents free access to energy advice and webinars, access to high quality products

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- Batteries (coming soon).

🔗 [mornpen.vic.gov.au/bulkbuy](http://mornpen.vic.gov.au/bulkbuy)



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