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“Renting in The Time of Covid” Report Hits Home for RAHU Members

The Renting in the Time of Covid Report, [released today by the AHURI](#), captures a bleak but accurate snapshot of renters’ situation in Australia.

Financial hardship was a strong, consistent theme across all responses. Only a third of respondents had successfully negotiated a rent reduction, while 36% said their landlord would reject this request. Over 5% of renters still received an eviction notice, despite the eviction moratorium. Over 30% of renters surveyed were forced to access their super to make ends meet. Despite the impacts of the pandemic, landlords and real estate agents are still using every strategy they can – often going outside the law – to maximise their returns.

We all deserve a home, but the rental market has twisted the conversation and left us exposed to the whims of profiteering investors. The Renters and Housing Union, formed out of the rent strike, continues to sound the alarm about the unfolding housing crisis. RAHU commends the report, and we’re actively organising to ensure renters have the support they need to stay at home. While the COVID-19 legislation attempted to address this, the processes are rife with bad faith and power imbalances, and renters have paid the price.

Our rights as renters have been eroded for far too long. Today’s report makes clear just how skewed the balance is between renters and property owners. With [“clear evidence of increased stress and anxiety across Australia’s renting population”](#), it is more important than ever for renters to organise so we can push back against the historic imbalance collectively.

Quotes attributable to:

These numbers are not just statistics; they hit home to renters across the country. Renters cannot bear the burden of this crisis. We’re in rapidly compounding hardship: employment insecurity, food insecurity, and housing insecurity. These hardships are far more significant than an unstable return on an investment property. -- **Eirene Tsolidis Noyce, Renter, RAHU Secretary**

The biggest issue for me in negotiations was not knowing the landlord's position. It seemed like the REA was acting out of personal interests despite my negotiations in good faith. I was coerced into moving out was subjected to rude and racist comments. It was important for me to get a reduction to be able to keep a roof over my head, so I could focus on moving forward in life and getting back out there. I didn't choose to lose my job in the pandemic, but I can fight for secure housing -- **Jolene C, Renter, RAHU member**

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The Renters And Housing Union (VIC) is a member-run Union of renters and people in precarious housing, formed through the Rentstrike as a response to COVID19. We organise collectively to fight for the right to safe and secure housing through self-advocacy, education, and frontline eviction defence.

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