



tenants' union of queensland inc

TENANTS WORKING TOGETHER

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## **Last of the bond interest withdrawn from services for tenants**

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After protracted negotiations with the state government, the Tenants' Union of Queensland (TUQ) has been unsuccessful in securing funds to represent tenants' interests in current policy and law reform debates.

The TUQ were informed last October that their recurrent policy money was being withdrawn. Since that time they have been in negotiations with government to provide a small amount of interim funding to continue to represent tenants' interests in the review of tenancy law and social housing entitlements being progressed through 2013.

The Property Owners Association, the Real Estate Institute and housing policy advocates will now be left to debate tenancy law reform without adequate specialist representation for tenants.

TUQ spokesperson, Ms Penny Carr, said, *'Whilst the government has definitely left the door open to future negotiations, the very sad fact is that tenants are left unrepresented and the sector has now lost three more positions and experienced workers as a result'*.

The decision means that as of December 31, 2012, the Queensland government no longer applies tenants' bond interest to any specialist tenant advocate in the state, despite making just over \$36M last financial year and just under \$46M the year before on it.

The withdrawal of policy funding follows the total discontinuation of the Tenant Advice and Advocacy Program (which provided advice and representation for tenants), announced by the state government last July. Tenant specific services are still available in Queensland only due to emergency funding announced by Federal Housing Minister Brendan O'Connor. These funds will run out at the end of June.

*'Our organisation has been advising tenants and representing their interests in policy and law reform debates since 1986. With no specialist voice at the table where tenancy law reforms are being debated, the risk of unbalanced outcomes is heightened, with tenants being the big losers'*, continued Ms Carr.

The TUQ will take up the state government's offer to continue discussions about future funding and hopes to restore some services funded through tenant bond interest.

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