



Dr Peter Toyne
MINISTER FOR JUSTICE AND ATTORNEY-GENERAL

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GREATER VOICE FOR TENANTS

Tenants will get a greater voice with the establishment of an independent Tenants' Advice Service.

The service will be set-up following the passing of amendments to the *Residential Tenancies Act 1999* in the NT Parliament earlier this week.

Minister for Justice Dr Peter Toyne said the changes will mean tenants will no longer have to go to a solicitor to get advice about their rights, or rely on the service provided by the Commissioner of Tenancies who is limited in the advice he can provide as he is also the person with the authority to resolve disputes.

“This is a great step forward for tenants – their voices will now be able to be heard, their questions answered,” Dr Toyne said.

“An emphasis on dispute resolution, and better informed tenants and landlords should see fewer disputes and lower costs for all concerned.

“The service will be operated by a community based organisation and will provide advice to tenants, information to the public and give the community more input into housing and tenancy issues.

“The advice service will be established by a steering committee which will include tenancy groups, the NT’s biggest landlord, Territory Housing, and the Real Estate Institute of the Northern Territory

The service will be funded through the Tenancy Trust Account following this week’s amendments to the *Residential Tenancies Act 1999* for the purposes of information and education.

Previously there was doubt about whether or not the Tenancy Trust Account could be used for this purpose – the changes to the Act removes that doubt.

The *Residential Tenancies Act 1999* has always allowed landlords and agents to have access to the account.

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