

# Eviction during Covid-19: Locked down & out

Lessons from the pandemic for building a crisis-resilient renting system.

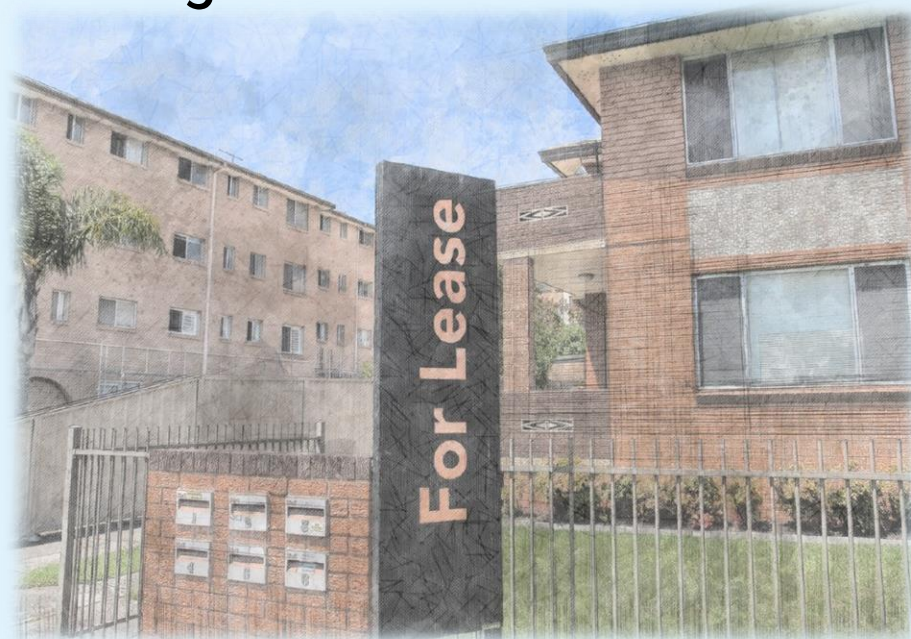
**Jemima Mowbray**

Tenants' Union of NSW



## **EVICTION, HARDSHIP & THE HOUSING CRISIS**

- › Building a crisis-resilient renting system
- › Published February 2022



## BACKGROUND TO REPORT

- What does available data tell us about how tenancies in NSW were ending through Covid-19?
- What can we learn from our experiences supporting renting households during the Covid-19 health crisis?
- What supports were provided during Covid? Why/how did these help? What weaknesses or gaps were uncovered?
- What could a crisis-resilient renting system look like?

# TRIBUNAL DATA RELATING TO EVICTION

## *NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NCAT)*

### Number of applications to NCAT for renting matters

Pre vs during Covid (July – Dec 2019 vs July – Dec 2020):

- Application for all NSW tenancy matters **decreased** by around 10%
- Applications for private rental matters **increased** by around 2%
- Applications for social housing matters **decreased** by around 35%

# TRIBUNAL DATA RELATING TO EVICTION

## *NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NCAT)*

### Percentage (%) total NCAT matters relating to eviction

- All NSW tenancies - % of NCAT matters relating to eviction
  - Pre Covid* 60% (July – Dec 2019)
  - During Covid* 48% (July – Dec 2020)
- For private rental list - % of NCAT matters relating to eviction
  - Pre Covid* 57% (July – Dec 2019)
  - During Covid* 45% (July – Dec 2020)
- For Social Housing list - % of NCAT matters relating to eviction
  - Pre Covid* 60% (July – Dec 2019)
  - During Covid* 61% (July – Dec 2020)

# RENTERS FORCED TO LEAVE

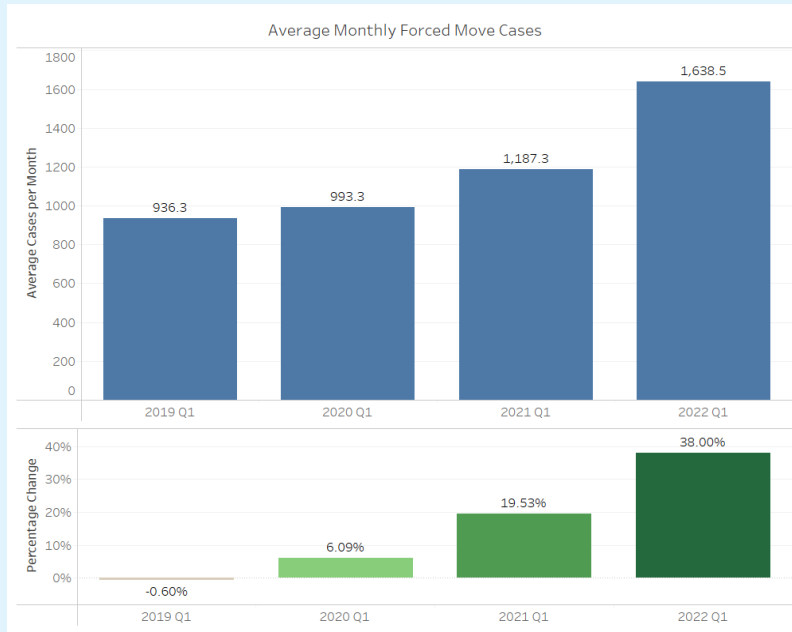


Table 1. Showing the projected total advices and the year on year change in Tenants Advice and Advocacy Service advices regarding financial matters.

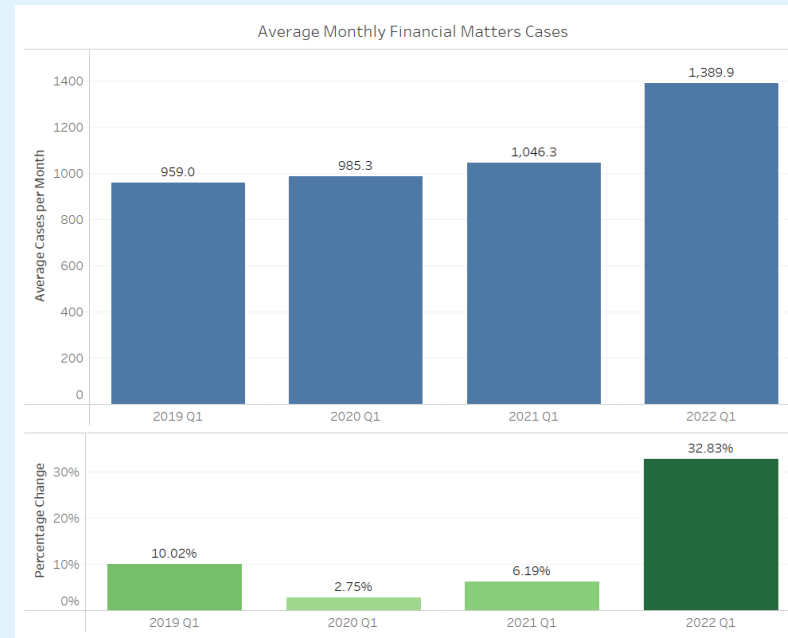
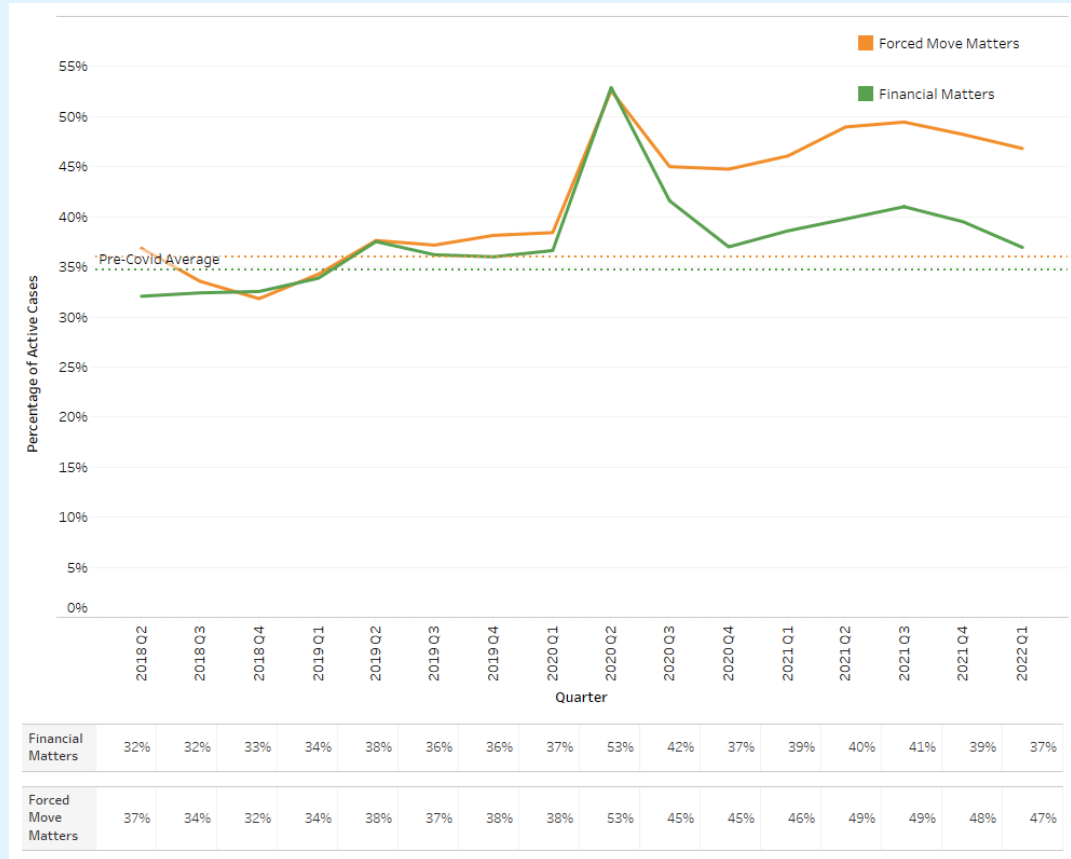


Table 2. Showing the projected total advices and the year on year change in Tenants Advice and Advocacy Service advices regarding financial matters.

# RENTERS FORCED TO LEAVE



## **KEY FINDINGS OF *EVICTION, HARDSHIP & THE HOUSING CRISIS***

### Private renters move more often than owner occupiers

- Over 80% of private renters have moved in the last 5 years; a third have moved between 2 - 3 times; and 10% have moved 5 times or more.

### A significant number of these moves are as a result of eviction

- Up to 30% of these moves are forced moves (generally landlord initiated evictions)



## It is incredibly costly to evict a household

- Immediate costs to the household: TUNSW report estimates **direct 'core' costs of \$2,520** when a renting household moves; direct **'average' costs of \$4,075** when a renting household moves.
- Landlords also face a number of costs when they evict a renter, including a reletting and advertising fee. We estimate **costs for the landlord at between \$1,100 - 1,400**.

## Costs are not just financial, and they are not just short term

- **Eviction is a driver of poverty.** Previous research finds eviction associated with long term impacts on employment, health and education outcomes, and an increased demand on health and housing services.
- **Eviction into homelessness.** AHURI research estimates the additional costs for Australian governments of supporting an individual experiencing homelessness are **around \$29,450 each year**.

## MAIN TAKE-AWAY

We need to have an engaged and inclusive conversation about eviction and our current renting system to ask:

- How can we better ensure renters aren't forced to move *unnecessarily*?
- How can we better support renters impacted by crises & experiencing hardship to sustain their tenancies, and stay safely housed?

Shifting *when* we intervene in crisis;  
Shifting *how* we intervene in crisis.

## **SUPPORTING RENTERS THROUGH CRISIS & INTO RECOVERY**

- Introduce a stronger permanent hardship framework into NSW tenancy laws
- Implement appropriate mitigation strategy to offset or minimise additional costs for landlords resulting from any new legal obligations regarding hardship and/or relocation.
- Scoping and development of a business case assessing feasibility of:
  - Mandatory landlord insurance scheme; and/or
  - Landlord rental bond scheme

