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MORE SUPPORT FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIMS TO END TENANCIES

A wider range of professionals, including counsellors, social workers, and psychologists will be able to support victims of domestic violence terminating their lease immediately and without penalty under NSW Government reforms.

Minister for Better Regulation Kevin Anderson said the changes will make it easier for tenants to escape domestic violence, without worrying about breaking a lease.

“Breaking a lease early can be complicated as there are notice periods and break fees. We don’t want anything to prevent a victim of abuse being able to remove themselves from a dangerous situation,” Mr Anderson said.

“That’s precisely why we’re now allowing more professionals - that victims are likely to interact with - to sign off on a no cost and immediate lease termination.”

Prior to these reforms, only medical practitioners could sign off on a lease termination. Now, any registered health practitioner, social workers, child protection agents, domestic violence specialists and approved counsellors will be authorised to make a domestic violence declaration to end a tenancy.

“Leaving a violent relationship can be one of the most difficult and dangerous decisions a victim has to make. Under these changes we are increasing the options people have to get help safely,” Mr Anderson said.

Attorney General and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence Mark Speakman said this was another important way the Government was supporting domestic violence victims.

“More domestic violence victims have been seeking support during COVID-19, and this reform will give them an easier pathway to escape abuse safely,” Mr Speakman said.

“Despite community perceptions, the time when a victim flees a violent home can actually be the *most* dangerous. Having the freedom to escape a lease without penalty is crucial.

“These trusted professionals already deal with the terrible physical and emotional impacts of domestic violence, so it makes sense that they will now be able to provide declarations.”

A domestic violence declaration can be made using the form [here](#).