

Dear Premier,

As a property owner, I oppose the proposed changes to the Queensland Residential Tenancy and Rooming Accommodation Act in their current form as they will unfairly impact stakeholders – both landlords and tenants.

As a consequence of such changes, there is a significantly increased risk to property owners including substantial added costs to continue to provide rental accommodation. I will have little choice but to pass these onto both my current and future tenants, resulting in higher weekly rents.

Also based on this new legislation the selection process I will apply to tenants will be far more rigorous, as control over who will continue to reside in my investment will be substantially curbed by these amendments.

Here are the changes I oppose:

1. Ending Tenancies Fairly

I do not support the proposed changes that require property owners to only end tenancy agreements for approved reasons. As a property owner, I will lose the ability to end a tenancy and regain possession at the end of a fixed term, unless an approved reason applies.

In the event that a tenancy is to end outside of the approved reasons, there will be an increase in administrative costs associated with providing evidence to substantiate the newly proposed grounds to end a tenancy. In addition, there will be an increased administrative burden and cost associated with obtaining QCAT orders where required to end a tenancy.

The purpose of the proposed changes is to provide tenants with greater protections and ensure there are no retaliatory evictions. Under the existing arrangement, Tenants can apply to the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal (QCAT) about a notice to leave without grounds if they reasonably believe it was retaliatory. I believe this has been a suitable arrangement with balanced results.

It's imperative for property owners to be able to retain a reasonable amount of control over their expensive asset to ensure future financial security and harmony in the tenant/landlord relationship.

In view of the above, I would support Option 1 (Remain Status Quo) and at the same time, start a more balanced conversation between tenants and property owners.

2. Renting with Pets

I have concerns about the proposed changes that forces property owners to allow tenants to have pets with limited exceptions.

Damage to property and pest infestation caused by pets has a material impact on a home's value and rentability. In addition, not all properties are suitable accommodation for pets.

I do not believe a pet-specific bond will not be sufficient to cater for the damage that a pet can cause to a property either, while the ability to enforce the cost of repairs to the property on an offending tenant appears difficult and costly.

The introduction of this recommendation would result in increased risk of pet-related damage or disruption for tenancies that currently do not have a pet.

Property owners may face costs associated with defending a refusal to allow a tenant to keep a pet, including QCAT costs.

At present, property owners that do not allow pets in their rental property accept they have a reduced applicant pool to select from and assess their rental appropriately within the market.

Under current tenancy laws it's at the property owner's discretion to allow pets and I propose that this continue. Hence, I would support Option 1 (Remain Status Quo and no change) and at the same time, start a more balanced conversation between tenants and property owners.

3. Minor Modifications

I disagree that tenants should have the right to make prescribed modifications to a property without a property owners consent.

Under the existing arrangement, modifications are able to be made to a property in consultation with the property owner.

Many of these changes require a skilled person to perform correctly and, if done poorly, may result in damage to my property or added costs that a rental bond may not cover.

I support the current act that ensures tenants seek consent before such modifications are undertaken. Hence, I would support Option 1 (Remain Status Quo and no change) and at the same time, start a more balanced conversation between tenants and property owners.

4. Minimum Standards for Housing

I support the concept of minimum housing standards and agree that tenants have a right to safe and secure housing. However, it is important to recognise that properties come in a wide variety of shapes and sizes, and this must be taken into consideration

The proposed reforms appear to extend beyond the scope of health and safety. The prescribed changes may result in unreasonable costs to property owners.

Consideration should be given to factors such as age, location and the market for the property.

Minimum housing standards should not extend beyond basic health and safety matters and should include some flexibility to account for the wide variety of rental dwellings.

In view of the above, I would support Option 1 (Status Quo) and at the same time, start a more balanced conversation between tenants and property owners.

Consequences of proposals

The proposed changes will substantially increase the costs of owning and operating a rental property. In addition, the loss of control of my expensive asset will be onerous and unviable.

The outcome of these changes proceeding will include more rigour around tenant selection and increased rental as there will be little option than to pass some of costs on to tenants.

I hope these points will be given due consideration, as the direct and indirect consequences will impact the property and rental property markets.

I urge your government to reconsider these reforms, in favour of laws that offer safety, security and a fair balance for all stakeholders.

Kind regards,

A Concerned Queensland Property Investor.