



HOUSING, BIG BUILD AND MANUFACTURING COMMITTEE

Members present:

Mr CG Whiting MP—Chair
Mr JJ McDonald MP
Mr DJ Brown MP
Mr RI Katter MP (virtual)
Ms A Leahy MP
Mr TJ Smith MP (virtual)

Staff present:

Ms S Galbraith—Committee Secretary
Dr V Lowik—Assistant Committee Secretary

PUBLIC BRIEFING—INQUIRY INTO THE RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES AND ROOMING ACCOMMODATION AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2024

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

Tuesday, 2 April 2024

Brisbane

TUESDAY, 2 APRIL 2024

The committee met at 10.00 am.

CHAIR: Good morning. I declare open this public briefing for the committee's inquiry into the Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. My name is Chris Whiting. I am the member for Bancroft and chair of the committee. I would like to respectfully acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we meet today and pay our respects to elders past and present. We are very fortunate to live in a country with two of the oldest continuing cultures in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people whose lands, winds and waters we all share. With me today are: Jim McDonald, the member for Lockyer and deputy chair; Don Brown, the member for Capalaba; Robbie Katter, the member for Traeger, who will be joining us later via videoconference; Ann Leahy, the member for Warrego, who is substituting for Michael Hart, the member for Burleigh, and is joining us via videoconference; and Tom Smith, the member for Bundaberg, who is joining us via teleconference.

This briefing is a proceeding of the Queensland parliament and is subject to the parliament's standing rules and orders. Only the committee and invited witnesses may participate in the proceedings. Witnesses are not required to give evidence under oath or affirmation, but I remind witnesses that intentionally misleading the committee is a serious offence. I also remind members of the public that they may be excluded from the briefing at the discretion of the committee. I remind committee members that officials are here to provide factual or technical information. Any questions seeking an opinion about policy should be directed to the minister or left to debate on the floor of the House.

These proceedings are being recorded and broadcast live on the parliament's website. Media may be present and are subject to the committee's media rules and the chair's direction at all times. You may be filmed or photographed during the proceedings and images may also appear on the parliament's website or social media pages. I would ask everyone present to turn off their mobile phones and computers or switch them to silent mode.

I now welcome officers from the Department of Housing, Local Government, Planning and Public Works and the Department of Justice and Attorney-General.

BLAKE, Ms Emily, Acting Principal Policy Officer; Department of Housing, Local Government, Planning and Public Works

MCALLISTER, Ms Danielle, Deputy Director General; Department of Housing, Local Government, Planning and Public Works

MCKARZEL, Mr David, Executive Director, Department of Justice and Attorney-General

PEART, Ms Prue, Acting Director; Department of Housing, Local Government, Planning and Public Works

REARDON, Mr David, Director, Department of Justice and Attorney-General

WATTS, Mr Jordan, Director; Department of Housing, Local Government, Planning and Public Works

WRIGHT, Ms Ange, Executive Director; Department of Housing, Local Government, Planning and Public Works

CHAIR: I invite you to brief the committee, after which we will have some questions for you.

Ms McAllister: Good morning, Chair and committee members. I would also like to start by acknowledging the traditional owners of the land on which we meet today, the Turrbal and Yagara people, and pay my respects to elders past, present and emerging.

Public Briefing—Inquiry into the Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

I would like to thank the committee for the opportunity to provide a briefing on the Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024, hereto referred to as the bill, which amends the Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008, the Property Occupations Act 2014, the Body Corporate and Community Management Act 1997 and the Local Government Act 2009. I am joined by my departmental colleagues, and we will speak to the tenancies and local government amendments. My colleagues from the Department of Justice and Attorney-General will speak to the body corporate and community management and continuing professional development aspects of the bill.

Renting is an important housing solution in Queensland with around one-third, or about 620,000, households in the state relying on the private rental market. Renting is no longer simply a step on the path to owning a home but a long-term and sometimes lifelong housing option for many Queenslanders. All Queenslanders deserve a safe, affordable and secure home. Queensland's rental market, like housing markets nationally, is under pressure with low vacancy rates, high demand and declining rental affordability. With the February 2024 SQM research showing a 0.91 per cent average rental vacancy rate in Queensland and the ABS December 2023 quarter showing an 8.4 per cent annual increase in rental prices, the bill is a priority response to community concerns about the impact of current housing market conditions and cost-of-living pressures on Queensland's renting households.

The objectives of the bill are: to strengthen renters' rights; ensure it is viable for rental property owners to continue to invest; provide better pathways to resolve issues in tenancies; and stabilise rents in the private rental market. The rental law reforms proposed in the bill have been informed by extensive consultation by the National Cabinet's A Better Deal for Renters and initiatives announced in the recent Homes for Queenslanders plan. Since 2018 the department has engaged and consulted with the rental sector consistently about how to modernise Queensland's rental laws and better protect renters' rights. Between April and May last year the department consulted on the *Stage 2 Rental law reform options paper*. This was followed by consultation between July and August on the *Discussion Paper: Ensuring the annual rent increase frequency limit is effective*. Those consultations received over 5,600 and 1,500 submissions respectively. Targeted consultation was also carried out with key stakeholders across the residential tenancies, rooming accommodation and movable dwelling sectors as well as with peak bodies representing diverse communities.

In August last year, National Cabinet agreed to A Better Deal for Renters to harmonise and strengthen renters' rights across Australia over five reform areas. In February 2024, the Queensland government released Homes for Queenslanders, a long-term plan underpinned by more than 50 initiatives spanning Queensland's entire housing system with a pillar of support for Queensland renters, including further rental reform to strengthen renters' rights.

The bill delivers on election commitments and commitments under National Cabinet's A Better Deal for Renters and Homes for Queenslanders. It fulfils the Queensland Government's election commitment to deliver staged rental law reform, including improving rental bond processes and extending entry notice periods. The bill will deliver reforms not already implemented in Queensland under National Cabinet's A Better Deal for Renters, including: limiting break lease fees; prescribing a rental application form and limiting the number of supporting documents that can be requested; and protecting renters' privacy by prescribing time frames for the destruction of their personal information.

The bill will also progress initiatives under Homes for Queenslanders in the following areas: establishing an authorising environment to develop and consult on a rental sector code of conduct, portable bond scheme and framework for parties to agree on installing modifications in rental properties; banning all forms of rent bidding; protecting renters' privacy by requiring 48 hours entry notice other than for general inspections, which are already at seven days for residential tenancies, or for safety checks or in an emergency; requiring that an approved form be used to apply for a rental home; limiting reletting costs based on how long is left on a fixed-term lease; and ensuring renters have a fee-free option to pay rent, choice about how they submit their application for a rental property and receive utility charges promptly.

The bill delivers reform on priority renting issues identified through the extensive consultation I spoke about previously, including: easing cost-of-living pressures by helping to stabilise rents in the private rental market; making fees and charges fairer; improving the rental bond process; improving the process to agree to changes to rental properties; better balancing a renter's right to privacy with a property owner's need for access to the rental property and information; and strengthening the rules and making the expectations of all parties in the rental sector clearer.

Public Briefing—Inquiry into the Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation and Other
Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

The bill proposes a phased commencement approach, with some amendments—such as banning all forms of rent bidding and applying the rent increase frequency limit to the property—commencing on assent. Most other amendments will commence by proclamation. This approach considers the impacts on new and existing tenancies. It will allow sufficient time for implementation and enable the sector to prepare and transition.

The bill also amends the Local Government Act 2009 and the Local Government Regulation 2012 to provide local government employees with the discretion to change their own contributions to their superannuation accounts. This will provide local government employees with greater flexibility to decide for themselves if they would like to lower their superannuation contributions to respond to cost-of-living pressures. It will further align the superannuation arrangements for local government employees with the equivalent state scheme. The bill also updates relevant legislation to reflect that LGIA super now trades as Brighter Super. No member entitlements will be affected by this change.

I will now hand over to my colleagues from the Department of Justice and Attorney-General to introduce the amendments to the property occupations and body corporate and community management acts. Following that we will be happy to take any questions about the bill.

Mr McKarzel: I would like to briefly outline the amendments the bill makes to the other acts, being the Body Corporate and Community Management Act and the Property Occupations Act. I will just give you a quick overview. There are two main areas: in the BCCM Act, the ending of leases during scheme termination; in the Property Occupations Act, the introduction of continuing professional development for real estate agents, or CPD for short.

As a key outcome of the 2022 Queensland Housing Summit, reforms were made to the termination process for community titles schemes. These reforms, which have already been passed by the parliament, will commence on 1 May 2024. The reforms, that is, those already passed and soon to commence, will effectively allow 75 per cent or more of lot owners in a scheme to decide, based on expert information, to sell a community titles scheme for redevelopment because it is not now, or will not be within the next five years, economically viable to repair or maintain the scheme.

To ensure the termination provisions meet their policy objectives, the bill currently before the committee contains some technical and procedural amendments to the BCCM Act to clarify and improve some of the new provisions that are due to commence on 1 May. The new provisions relate to the ending of certain types of leases as part of the termination process—that includes residential tenancies—as part of terminating the community titles scheme. The amendments will provide for specific notice requirements for the ending of leases under the new termination process. In addition, the amendments will clarify that the District Court can, if needed, consider and make relevant orders relating to the end of a lease and the vacation of a property as part of a termination of the community titles scheme.

In relation to CPD for property agents, the bill amends the Property Occupations Act 2014 to establish the legislative framework for a new mandatory continuing professional development, CPD, scheme for property agents in Queensland. In summary, individual licensees and certificate holders will need to complete annual CPD requirements unless there are exceptional circumstances. Failure to complete CPD will impact on a person's eligibility to have their licence or certificate renewed or restored. Details of what those requirements are, along with the procedural and administrative matters relating to them, will be determined by the chief executive under the Property Occupations Act.

The ability of the chief executive to approve CPD requirements is consistent with existing legislative arrangements that allow the chief executive to administratively determine the initial training, which is already a requirement, a person must complete to be eligible for a licence or a certificate under the Property Occupations Act. The chief executive will be supported by an advisory panel comprised of industry and community stakeholders. This approach is intended to provide a degree of certainty while maintaining sufficient flexibility to ensure that annual CPD requirements are responsive to the issues, the concerns and the trends that emerge in the marketplace from year to year. The bill provides that the CPD amendments will commence 12 months after assent, and this is to allow sufficient time for industry members to understand the new requirements and to implement the necessary changes required for a smooth transition. We are happy to take any questions on either of those two issues.

CHAIR: Thank you very much. Ms McAllister, you talked a bit about consultation. What we have seen in this area from both sides of the sector, if you like, is that there are some very strongly held views about which way is the best to go. You have talked a bit about the consultation. Can you describe how long and intensive these consultations have been for these measures?

Ms McAllister: I might start but then hand over to my colleagues who have been on this journey for a lot longer than I have. As I mentioned, under the *Stage 2 Rental law reform* options paper, there was an options paper and there was a discussion paper further to that. As I mentioned in my opening statement, there was really extensive community feedback and input into that consultation with over 5,600 responses on the *Stage 2 Rental law reform options paper* and 1,500 responses on the discussion paper specifically about the annual rent increase frequency limit in terms of making sure that that amendment was effective.

As you mentioned, there are strong and polarised views across the community and across the sector in relation to renting issues. Rental property owners suggested that a range of further regulation would potentially cause some concerns for them while renters supported even further substantive changes than what was being consulted upon. We did see some really clear agreement across the sector—across renters, property owners and property managers—about the need for guidance to help the parties to communicate and agree to changes to a rental property as well as some quite clear agreement in terms of the notice periods for inspections being extended and those time frames for also passing on utility bills. While there are some very divergent views in a whole range of areas, there are also some areas where the sector does come together and has some shared views. Ange, would you like to extend on that?

Ms Wright: Thanks, Danielle; I think that is a really great summary. The consultation on rental law reforms really kicked off in 2018 with the Open Doors to Renting Reform process that received over 136,000 responses. The feedback that we received through that consultation has really informed the staged rental law reform process that has been undertaken by government. This latest stage of reforms, as Danielle mentioned, has been subject to further detailed consultation on a range of options that were outlined in both the options paper and the discussion paper that were both released last year. A lot of that has informed the reforms that have been brought forward in the bill and has resulted in the reforms that have been put forward by government.

CHAIR: I will focus on just one issue now—that is, banning rent bidding. I understand that it is already not allowed, but how is this bill going to strengthen those prohibitions around rent bidding?

Ms Peart: Under the existing act, a property must be advertised at a fixed price, but what the bill will do is also ensure that not only must the property be advertised at a fixed price but also there must be no solicitation of rent bidding and also that a person must not accept rent higher than the advertised price or more than four weeks rent in advance.

CHAIR: Just clarifying, so the current legislation is that it is advertised at a certain price and this bill goes further in that there is to be no solicitation by the person offering the property for lease. Are there any provisions about prohibitions on the person wanting the lease actively trying to put themselves ahead of the pack by offering more, even though there may not be solicitation in that case?

Ms Peart: Someone might want to do that—for example, they might want to obtain a property close to a school or something like that—and what will be banned in that instance is the actual acceptance of that higher amount.

CHAIR: Thank you very much for that.

Mr McDONALD: Thank you all for being here. With regard to some concerns that the industry have spoken to me about in terms of protection for renters and balancing investment decisions for private industry to stimulate housing supply, have you considered both of those aspects? Whilst I see that renters' rights are protected in this, how is this bill going to stimulate private investment in providing housing supply?

Ms McAllister: I might start off, Deputy Chair, and then pass over to my colleagues. As I mentioned, there are a range of areas in here for which there is broad support across the sector. Where we also see this being of benefit is that encouragement of the longer term rentals, and that is to the benefit of the whole market because you create that stability for the renters—for the families that are renting—but it also means that you do not have that turnover in your rental property and all of the issues and the costs that that entails when you have to turn that over, so there are really a range of positives in here across the sector. I might pass over to either Ange or Prue.

Ms Wright: If I may just add to that, what the bill really aims to do is to clarify the rights, responsibilities and obligations between the parties which will benefit everybody in the sector. What we find is that a lot of effort goes into negotiating issues between the parties and a lot of fractious, I guess, communication as a result of that. The more able we are to, through regulatory guidance or through legislation, make clear to parties what the expectations or their rights and obligations are then

the easier it is for all parties to operate. Obviously this is a piece of consumer protection legislation and its purpose is really to strengthen renters' rights and to ensure that the market operates in a way that is beneficial for all parties whilst stimulating that supply. There is a range of other initiatives in the Homes for Queenslanders plan that goes towards stimulating the supply and ensuring that there is sufficient housing supply in the rental market. We would say that mostly people do the right thing in the private rental market and people want to do the right thing in the private rental market. The reforms in this bill will assist people to understand what their rights and obligations are when they are operating in the private rental market.

Mr McDONALD: Whenever we put a bill through parliament there is change, and change is challenging for people. I am concerned that this change will cause confusion to the private sector, because it is the private sector that we rely upon to build the housing supply, in my mind, as opposed to government, and government has a place in that to stimulate that private investment. I am concerned that this change is not going to assist the private sector with the confidence to invest in the private supply. I note that you mentioned Homes for Queenslanders, but how will private investors looking at this bill have confidence in private investment for rentals?

Ms Wright: That is a really great question. Private investors tend to invest in the private rental market for personal financial security or housing security. Research has tended to find that that is the primary driver of investment decisions within the private rental market. Tenancy laws certainly do factor into that and will always be a consideration in those investment decisions, but primarily what the research suggests is that whilst those factors are taken into consideration it is really around the financial benefits or risk of operating within the private rental market.

Mr McDONALD: You mentioned in your statement earlier, Ms Wright, that mostly people do the right thing in the rental market—that is, each of the different players. Is now the right time to be bringing in a bill that is focused on the rights of renters as opposed to stimulating housing?

CHAIR: Deputy Chair, you are asking for a broad opinion in that question. Did you want to focus your question a bit more? You have asked whether now is the right time. That is asking for a very broad opinion. Do you want to focus that particularly?

Mr McDONALD: Maybe I will move on. The other bill that we are looking at has the figure of 3.5 per cent in it in terms of rent increases. Is there any proposed cap for rent increases in this bill?

Ms McAllister: No.

Mr McDONALD: Right, because the 3.5 per cent is very low considering CPI. Anyway, we will get to that later, but there is no intention of having private rental caps in this bill?

Ms McAllister: No. If I may just extend a little further on a couple of specific aspects in this bill that do support and benefit rental property owners and managers. Under Homes for Queenslanders there is the proposed head of power for a rental sector code of conduct. While this bill creates the head of power, that will be something that we will consult across the sector on and exactly what it includes. Queensland previously had a code of conduct, so it will be something that is being reinstated and it really does go to what Ange was talking about before in setting really clear expectations. It is for property managers as well as for the property owners as well as for the renters, so it is really supporting that improved behaviour across the whole sector. There is also the modifications aspect that is included in the bill which, again, is about improving that process for the owners, managers and renters to agree on those modifications. Again, this bill will create a head of power to develop that framework which will be done in consultation with the sector. There are also a number of hardship provisions in the bill which create a support for owners if they are in any financial distress.

Mr McDONALD: I understand. In terms of training—and this is to DJAG—and the CPD, continuing professional development, what does the sector have to do now and how will this change for it?

Mr Reardon: In terms of current requirements, to be eligible for most types of licence or registration certificate people need to undergo a series of training courses that are approved by the chief executive. They are typically taken from the nationally recognised Property Services Training Package, but what is not in place at the moment is the mandatory obligation for agents to continue to keep their skills up to date. That is what CPD is really trying to address. Just one slight qualifier with that—not so much a qualifier, but I think it is important to recognise that a lot of agents currently do undertake CPD as a condition of their membership of a professional association, but from a legislative and government perspective there is no mandatory CPD scheme at the moment.

Mr McDONALD: Is this, in effect, mandating in legislation what REIQ require now?

Mr Reardon: I would not put it in those terms. I think what the bill will do is establish a legislative framework for the CPD scheme. In broad terms, the way it will work is that the chief executive will prescribe annual CPD requirements for agents. A really critical part of this model though is that in making those decisions the chief executive will be supported and advised by an advisory panel which will include industry and community stakeholders. We certainly see REIQ as a really important part of that process and that discussion going forward. I would not put it in terms that this model mandates what REIQ currently does, but certainly the department is looking forward to working with REIQ and the other stakeholders going forward to find a good balance with mandatory CPD requirements for agents.

Mr McDONALD: Ms Wright said mostly people in the sector do the right thing; that there are not too many bad actors—those are my words. Coming back to that, are these the right priorities to see improved housing supply for our community?

CHAIR: That is going towards government policy.

Mr McDONALD: Are there any other things that should be a priority that are not included in the bill that you would like to see?

CHAIR: That is the same question, Deputy Chair. I remind you that policy is best left to debate on the floor of the House.

Mr McDONALD: I will do that, thank you, Chair.

Mr BROWN: You talked about communication between the parties. It seems a lot of times the agent and the landlord are getting lumped in together in regard to bidding for rentals. Did it come through in the consultation that there have been practices where the agent acted alone, without the knowledge of the landlord themselves, to increase the bids by having bidding auctions, but also going out on their own to do rent increases to boost up their rent roll? If they have hundreds on the rent roll and they get an extra couple of per cent, obviously it is an incentive to act that way.

Ms Peart: I was going to explain that if there was rent bidding, if rent bidding was occurring, it would be the RTA's responsibility to investigate and know whether an offence has occurred. As part of that they would be looking at whether or not the property manager was operating under instruction of the property owner or the property manager was just acting off their own bat to increase their rolls, as you say. I think that that is how it would be implemented.

Mr BROWN: To become licensed in this area, what is the requirement? A house is one of the biggest purchases in your life. Do agents have to be a fit and proper person to be in control of rental rolls?

Mr Reardon: Essentially, property agents are regulated under the Property Occupations Act. What that act primarily does is establish an occupational licensing system for people working in those industries. Those licensing requirements cover real estate agents, resident letting agents, real property auctioneers and also real estate salespeople. They do not have a licence as such, they have a registration certificate. As part of deciding whether someone is eligible for a licence under that act, there certainly is a suitability and an eligibility element to it. People's criminal histories will be considered. There are certain disqualifying offences that would prevent you from being eligible to be a property agent if you have been convicted of those offences. There are the suitability and eligibility elements, but as well as that, as I mentioned a little earlier, there is also some initial training requirements someone has to complete in order to be eligible for most types of licence or registration certificates. I think the act recognises that property agents hold a really important position of trust in relation to their clients, whether you are talking about selling property on behalf of a client or auctioning or, indeed, operating as a property manager in the rental sector.

Mr BROWN: You can be convicted of an indictable offence and still hold these licences under the act?

Mr Reardon: There are certain types of offences where you would not be eligible and that would be automatic disqualifiers. I do not have those in front of me at the moment. I apologise for that. The chief executive, when deciding whether to issue a licence, can have regard to broader considerations, including other types of offences that the person may have committed, including criminal offences, but also offences against the Property Occupations Act itself. The other important one is the Agents Financial Administration Act, which establishes trust account requirements that agents have to comply with.

Mr BROWN: Are those trust requirements similar to legal trust accounts? Is it the same set of standards? You are struck off the roll if you touch a trust account on the legal side of things. Is it the same sort of standard in the property space?

Mr Reardon: Certainly broadly I would say yes. I am not an expert in how solicitors' trust accounts work, but my understanding is that there are some very similar characteristics. What I can say about property agents' trust accounts is that there are requirements around auditing of those trust accounts. The other key thing is that the OFT, Office of Fair Trading, has an active compliance program in relation to property agents that will typically include trust account compliance. Certainly the department sees that trust account compliance as really important. It is one of the fundamental conduct requirements for property agents because sometimes they will be managing large amounts of money on behalf of their clients so it is really important. In response to your question, my understanding is that at a broad level it is somewhat similar to solicitors' trust accounts, but I probably do need to qualify that by saying that I am not an expert on that side of things.

Ms LEAHY: Does the department have any mechanism to monitor the impact of these legislative reforms on rental supply? Do they have any mechanism to monitor whether the supply of rental properties increases or decreases? Do they have any methodology of doing that?

Ms Wright: We will be looking to develop a monitoring and evaluation framework to support monitoring and, I guess, understanding of how the reforms are impacting the sector, as well as whether they are delivering their policy intent. That would involve looking at whether there is data, what data is available to assist us to do that, monitoring impacts on supply and looking at whether the policy intent is being delivered by the reforms.

Ms McAllister: The other piece is, as Prue was mentioning before, the RTA undertakes the compliance function in this space. We will be working closely with them to create that monitoring framework that Ange mentioned as well so that we can ensure and analyse the impact and the effectiveness of the amendments.

Ms LEAHY: We have had a series of rental reforms. Is there currently any mechanism whereby the department can monitor the supply of rental properties?

Ms McAllister: I suppose the vacancy data is one input and one data point that we clearly are focused on. That also then goes to the broader supply questions and the availability and the extent of housing actually available in the market.

Ms Peart: We also monitor ABS data on the consumer price index which monitors investment into housing in different states. Queensland's rate is quite high in comparison to the other jurisdictions. It had increased since March 2019 by 141 per cent, as at December 2023.

Mr McDONALD: In terms of that percentage, 141, what was the quantum, do you know?

Ms Peart: It is quarterly data and I understand it is data that ABS gets from the banking sector and it is distinguished between whether it is investment loans or principal places of residence. It has increased 141 per cent since March 2019.

Mr McDONALD: Could we get the quantum of that? That would be interesting.

CHAIR: I note also lot approvals and building approvals come out of that data. They are very good indicators. They are available through the ABS, I understand, quarterly. In relation to regulating annual rent increases for the tenancy, you have talked about the role of the RTA in regulation, but how would you go about monitoring or enforcing only one annual increase in rent on a property? Is that something where awareness needs to be spread? Do you have to wait for the tenant to respond or bring that up if there has been a breach? Is that the way that it works?

Ms McAllister: That would be correct. Under the current arrangements the rent can be increased once a year. What this bill will do, and the amendments to really close a loophole that exists there, is that on the rental agreement it will have the date that the rent can increase. There is also the provision in the bill that will allow renters to be able to request evidence if there is a concern or if there is any question about the last date when that increase occurred. They can request that evidence. It might be a rental payment receipt or another form of evidence, ensuring that any private information of individuals on those documents is removed. That provides that safeguard. If there was any concern about that, it would be an individual or someone going to the RTA and raising a concern with that and it would be the RTA's role, with the compliance and enforcement roles and functions that they have, to then follow that up.

Mr McDONALD: In terms of the proposed changes to QCAT being part of the appeal process, has DJAG done any modelling on how the proposed changes will strike the right balance in terms of getting outcomes for renters given the delays that QCAT is already experiencing?

Mr Reardon: QCAT is certainly within the DJAG portfolio, but that may be a question that the department of housing may be better placed to respond to.

Ms Wright: We have consulted with QCAT as part of developing the reforms and taken advice from them. They progress their matters in accordance with their procedures, and that is part of how the rental sector operates.

Ms Peart: QCAT has been involved in the development of the bill and is preparing for implementation and looking at what will need to change if the bill passes. We will continue to engage with them and they will also be part of our monitoring and evaluation of the reforms as well. We will also be looking at the number of matters going to QCAT and that sort of thing.

Mr McDONALD: It is well reported that QCAT has quite a lengthy time delay in terms of resolving matters. With this additional responsibility, will QCAT receive any additional budget?

CHAIR: That might be a question that we send off to DJAG. That is an interesting question for the next bill as well. We can write to QCAT. It is a can of worms to open anyway.

Mr Reardon: Unfortunately, QCAT is in a quite distinct area from where David and I are at. We are not in a position to comment on budgetary issues or time frames for QCAT unfortunately.

Mr McDONALD: But in terms of budget allocation, have you made any representation to see a budget increase so they can deal with these additional responsibilities?

CHAIR: That is a broad question. As we have noted before, if you ask a government department if they need more money we know what the answer will be. We need to follow that up if need be.

Mr McDONALD: Just in terms of it is part of this bill and so I was wondering if any of the departments had made representation for that increase.

CHAIR: That may come down to government policy. That concludes the briefing. No questions were taken on notice. I thank everyone who has participated today. A transcript of these proceedings will be available on the committee's webpage in due course. I declare this public briefing closed.

The committee adjourned at 10.47 am.