

Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

Submission No: 47
Submitted by: Audrey Cetois
Publication: Making the submission and your name public
Attachments: See attachment
Submitter Comments:

Rent increase:

The rent for my current place has gone from \$450 in 2021 to \$650 in 2024. Same place. No major maintenance. It only went up once a year. More than 40% increase. In that time, interest rate went up, but this place is already owned outright. There is no justification for this. This is simply greed. The argument that it is what the value is on the rental market is a self-fulfilling prophecy. Rental agents and landlords put the rent up every time they can thus increase market value. They decide the market value not the market.

Rents should be frozen for at least 5 years to compensate for the last 3 years frenzy of greed. And then rent increase should be limited to CPI.

Renters privacy:

My home is being inspected every quarter. The inspection consist of someone walking through the house with their phone camera on. It is done in 5 minutes but our lives, belongings, circumstances are recorded every three months. For how long? We don't know. How is it used? We don't know. Who uses it? We don't know. Is ther any limits how it can be used? We don't know.

Why the continuous invasion of privacy with no safeguards? Most likely for the rental agent to justify their fee to the landlord who then pass it on to the renters.

Limiting rental inspections to once a year and establishing a good relationship with the tenants that makes it clear that maintenance requests will not translate to punishment such as an eviction or a rent increase would save both tenant and landlord money.

Changes in occupants:

Renters have no visibility on the process and cost involved to change residents on the lease.

Occupants of share houses do change, sometimes often and having a clear, free process to do update the lease and bond is needed.

Modifications to make homes liveable:

This last summer was hotter and more humid than ever. According to Better Renting's [Cruel Summer report](#), rental homes in Queensland saw the hottest conditions of all states and "*averaged 50% of the time above 28.2°C, also experiencing high average humidity (64.4%). Daily, about 6 hours were above 30°C, and night-time temperatures exceeded 25°C for 86% of the time. Indoor temperatures exceeded outdoor temperatures over 60% of the time, during these times it was 3.9°C hotter indoors*". Renters' home are ovens and simply not safe for habitation. Additionally, the acute cost of living crisis meant that renters were less likely to turn on air-conditioning for fear of the cost and they more likely to be stuck at home.

Temperature and humidity conditions will only get worse in the years to come. And our rental markets is looking more and more like early 19th century England, extremely exploitative and costly to society as a whole.

It is highly unfortunate that Queensland's housing stock is so dangerous for its residents. This is a state policy problem. It is within the Queensland government power and duty to make sure that renters are paying for homes that will not endanger their health. Limiting extreme conditions (temperature and humidity) within rental homes would go a long way to renters being safe at home. To that effect, introducing minimum energy performance standard for rental homes making mandatory outside shading of windows, insulation and drought-proofing, combined with mandatory energy efficient cooling such fans and reverse cycle air-conditioning, would give renters a chance to have liveable and healthy homes.

This is expensive but at the moment, landlords and rental agents are increasingly wealthy at the expense of renter's health and money. Landlords and rental agents can keep on contributing to inflation, whilst renters count every penny and have to make choices between paying rent and power bills and going to the doctor.

We could do away with both landlords and rental agents. Housing does not have to be for profit. We could have liveable homes that we either own or rent from the state. That is entirely possible. It is a political choice.

As a renter, if there was a rent freeze and a guarantee that I would not be evicted because it is end of lease, instead of building a nest egg for the next astronomic rent increase, I would be in conversation with my landlord to share cost for ceiling insulation right now. With permission from the landlord, I shaded the windows with my own money and skills (second hand shade cloth and a few screws). Ceiling insulation is the next step. But why would I? Why would I share cost with someone that is only seeking to exploit? Before any one suggests I should move. In our current housing crisis, I already had a few months of homelessness, unfortunately the trauma is strong and recent enough that I cannot imagine putting myself in the extremely precarious position of looking for home again.

Greed is endless, only policies can limit it.