

Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

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To:

Committee Secretary
Housing, Big Build and Manufacturing Committee
Parliament House

Email: hbbmc@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Madam/Sir

I am writing to you to have my say in response to the Queensland Government recently introducing the Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024 to Parliament.

I am the owner of one rental property which is an investment for my future that I have worked more than 30 years to afford.

I have some grave concerns with some of the proposed changes, that, if implemented, would force me to reconsider being a landlord and redirect my capital to other less risky sources of income.

And there seems to be little acknowledgement of the inflationary pressures I am also under as an investor, that have me under financial duress.

I am a big believer in diversity in suburbs and providing rental housing is one way to support this diversity. Reducing the number of rental properties will only contribute to higher rents.

Specifically, my concerns include:

1. *Better rent protections – banning all forms of rent bidding and limiting rent increases to 12-months, attached to the property instead of the tenancy*

When governments interfere with market forces, it very seldomly results in better outcomes for anyone. If I have a tenant with a six month lease and at the end of that lease the tenant decides to leave and I have to go back to market, I should be able to reassess the rent I offer to candidates. Attaching a 12 month restriction to my property does not take into consideration the ongoing increased costs of ownership in all aspects. Especially in insurance and maintenance.

This risk of the government making decisions about my capital investment is an unacceptable risk to me that I am not willing to accept.

2. *Fairer fees and charges – offering tenants a fee-free option to pay rent, ensuring any financial benefits received by rental property owners/managers are disclosed, capping re-letting costs and defining a timeframe that a tenant must receive utility bills within*

Tenants getting a timeframe for receiving utility bills seems like a very good administrative function-provided the accountability sits with the utility provider.

For fee-free option to pay rent – how on earth would this work? Having an independent manager of the property who has access to trades to get maintenance done quickly is a benefit for tenants.

For disclosure of property managers fees - I fail to understand how this is any business of the tenants to have this disclosure. I don't understand how this would not be considered anti-competitive as it would normalise fees and reduce competition.

3. *Making it easier for renters to modify and personalise their home*

If renters get increased rights to modify other peoples property, liability for anything going wrong would then also need to transfer to those renters. If it impacted negatively the value of the property, or if modifications were not performed by qualified trades, then there would need to be an ability for investors to have recourse on lost of value or costs, or risks from the tenant.

If tenants can easily modify my investment property then it would not be a risk I would be prepared to take, and I would need to re-assess what other options I have to get out of the rental market and invest in less riskier assets.

4. *Protecting renter's privacy – extending entry notice periods from 24 to 48 hours, limiting frequent entry to a property at the end of a tenancy, offering a choice about how rental applications are submitted, creation of a prescribed application form, limiting the personal information that can be requested and collected*

I don't think 24 to 48 hours can be a blanket ruling; I think it is fair and reasonable in most circumstances to give 48 hours notice; however, if 24 hours is required there should be the ability to do so.

Australia has some of the best privacy legislation in the world. There are already very good laws to protect individuals data and privacy. Information to assess the suitability of a prospective tenant needs to be broad enough to assess their ability to pay, their ability to not damage the property. There is no need to broaden protections further from the excellent legislation already in place.

5. *Improving the rental bond process – any claim on a bond will be required to be supported by evidence, a portable bond scheme will be established, maximum bond requested will be no more than four weeks rent*

Four weeks rent is already the cap I understood. I am not opposed to ensuring appropriate evidence is required. And a portable scheme would most likely be very helpful for tenants.

6. *Code of conduct – a Rental Sector Code of Conduct will be developed*

A code of conduct as a heading seems fair. But it will depend on how balanced this is. If consultation true consultation, and is open and transparent, then this could work.

I have many years of experience as a tenant myself; I have always found landlords appreciate tenants who do the right thing and treat their property with respect.

I have a very good tenant, and the last rent increase was well below market. I am not trying to take advantage of anyone, I am trying to help the shortage in rental properties, which in turn will take the pressure out of rental increases.

However, if the proposed changes are introduced, I will be forced to review selling my property – or taking it out of the rental market. And I would not every considering purchasing another newly built property to rent it out either.

My life savings and investment are too important for me to take on risks that were not in place when I purchased the property.

I hope you will seriously consider how upset and stressed I am at the proposed changes.

Best regards
Kylie Sowden