




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR SOUTH BRISBANE

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PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENT

Residential Tenancies, Mould

 **Dr MacMAHON** (South Brisbane—Grn) (2.36 pm): I am proud to be sponsoring an e-petition to raise standards for mould prevention and removal in rental homes. This year the housing crisis and the La Nina weather pattern have converged to cause something that no tenant wants to see—mould in their rental home—and this government has done nothing to protect tenants' rights. With an unseasonably long rainy season and floods, many people on the east coast have come across mould in bedrooms, walls, ceilings, carpets and Queensland's rental laws are clearly too weak to deal with the problem. While our rental laws allowed landlords to leave properties filled with mould, we have more and more tenants getting sick, children developing lung issues and homes are becoming unlivable as cases of mould and damp increase.

This week one of my constituents told my office about how she has had mould spreading in the ceiling above her bed for the past eight months. This has caused her breathing issues which are so serious she has had to leave her job. When she asked her landlord about fixing it, he said that she would have to pay for any mould treatment and that 'this is just what happens in Queensland'. Another constituent said—

Our landlord sought a 20 per cent increase in our rent on our lease renewal and we've counteroffered, but they're holding the mould problem over us, saying that they want to make sure we keep the property clean.

Christine Butler, who is spearheading this petition, has been through hell, with multiple types of mould rising through her rental home, turning the property into a toxic bomb. Her family is \$12,000 out of pocket with cleaning, inspections, moving and rent. The Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act requires a lessor to ensure a premises is fit for a tenant to live in, and if the law is not clear enough to spell out that this includes removing mould, it should be.

My private member's bill last year required lessors to actually tell tenants if there had been a breach notice issued about damp or mould within the last three years, but the government fell over itself to toss the bill out of parliament and listen to its real estate lobby mates. Our laws need to clearly state that landlords must keep properties free from mould and damp. We need minimum standards that make it clear it is a landlord's duty to ensure this, and that is why I am sponsoring Christine Butler's petition, with already hundreds of everyday Queenslanders calling for just that.

Our current rental laws are the result of treating housing like an investment vehicle rather than a basic human need. This is what happens when a government consistently puts landlords' profits ahead of the health and wellbeing of everyday people. At the same time that tenants have been getting sick because their landlords will not treat mould, we have seen the steepest rise in rents in this state. Rents are rising faster and more quickly than inflation or interest rates. If a landlord cannot afford to keep a property free from mould and damp, they cannot afford to be a landlord. Sell up.