




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR SOUTH BRISBANE

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**RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES AND ROOMING ACCOMMODATION AND OTHER
LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL; MANUFACTURED HOMES (RESIDENTIAL
PARKS) AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Dr MacMAHON** (South Brisbane—Grn) (4.02 pm): I want to start by talking about what Queensland renters are currently going through. In the last three years there has been a 47 per cent increase in asking rents according to SQM Research—a 47 per cent increase. Even those renters who are managing to keep up with rent hikes can still be evicted, kicked out of their homes, for next to no reason. Are these bills stopping unlimited rent increases? No. Are these bills giving renters safety and security with a guaranteed right to a lease renewal? They are not. What is there in here for those tenants who are having their rent jacked up by 20 per cent, 30 per cent or 40 per cent or who are being evicted without grounds in retaliation for speaking up about maintenance or minimum standards? We will be supporting these bills, but I would like to table amendments to the residential tenancies amendment bill that we have drafted that will offer real protection for renters.

Tabled paper: Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024, amendments to be moved by Dr Amy MacMahon MP [847](#).

Tabled paper: Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024, explanatory notes to Dr Amy MacMahon's amendments [848](#).

Tabled paper: Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024, statement of compatibility with human rights contained in Dr Amy MacMahon's amendments [849](#).

What is in these amendments? Queensland needs a rent freeze. Labor's own Treasury department has estimated that in 2021 more than half a million Queenslanders were in rental stress, being pushed financially to the limit. That is half a million Queenslanders whose families were weighing up every week whether they could afford groceries, school supplies or a visit to the dentist alongside having to cover increased rent. That was three years ago. In 2021 the Greens first introduced legislation for a cap on rent increases and since then things have only gotten worse. Since then rents have gone up three times faster than wages. More and more renters' income is going into the pockets of investors instead of going towards things like health care, basic necessities or even allowing renters to save up for a deposit on a home of their own. How many more Queenslanders are going to be forced into rental stress? How many more families are going to be sleeping in cars or tents? How much worse do things need to get before Labor and the LNP back the Greens and take action to protect renters with a rent freeze and a guaranteed right to a lease renewal?

Renters need a guaranteed right to a lease renewal. Right now renters can be evicted at the end of their lease for no good reason. In fact, the end of a lease is reason enough. The Greens' amendments would ensure that every tenant will have to be offered a lease renewal unless there is a valid reason not to, such as failure to pay rent or because the owner wants to make significant renovations to the property. So long as Labor and the LNP support renters being kicked out of their homes without grounds, there will be no such thing as housing security in Queensland. Every renter knows that, if they

try to enforce any of their rights—if they raise concerns about maintenance, apply for a pet, complain about agent conduct—they risk retaliatory action and not having their lease renewed. Without a guaranteed right to a lease renewal, all other renters' rights are undermined.

Many of the organisations that made submissions to this bill also called for limits on rent increases. In their submission to the bill, Tenants Queensland said of Labor's weak housing reforms—
... they do not stabilise rents. Rents have continued to rise unabated ...

The Queensland Council of Social Service said in their submission—

Rapidly rising rents have significantly damaged housing affordability. Current rental data confirms rent increased more than 45 per cent in Queensland in the four years to December 2023 ...

Queenslanders with Disability Network also called for limits on rent increases, writing that 'most people with disability live in private rentals and lack a flexible income to accommodate significant rent increases'. DVConnect, which support victims of domestic violence, argued that the power imbalance in the rental market is driving up rent and forcing victims of domestic violence into insecure housing and homelessness. DVConnect wrote—

Women and children impacted by DFV are at increased risk of homeless and DVConnect considers lack of renter rights as a contributing factor.

These are the kinds of people who Labor and the LNP are sticking the boot into when they continue to side with investors and the real estate lobby. Just last week the Labor Prime Minister gave his tenant an eviction notice. Anthony Albanese, like the rest of the millionaire property investors in the Labor Party, is so out of touch with ordinary people he did not see anything wrong with evicting his tenant in the middle of a housing crisis. Why did he evict his tenant? He was selling the property. For most investors, this means they are going to get more money from selling their property if it is sold vacant. This is why our amendments will also remove the planned sale of an investment property as a valid reason to evict a tenant. We are getting rid of the so-called Anthony Albanese rule to stop Labor prime ministers, premiers and other MPs from evicting tenants just because they want to increase the sale value of their investment property.

Mr Brown interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Lui): Order, member for Capalaba.

Dr MacMAHON: Most of the good things that these reforms do and the reason we will be supporting these bills is that they were changes previously introduced by the Greens, and in some cases it was years ago. These were changes that could have been made years ago if Labor and the LNP had chosen to support our proposals at the time. I speak of proposals like—

Mr Brown interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, member for Capalaba. Cease your interjections.

Dr MacMAHON: They are proposals like allowing renters to make reasonable modifications to their homes including disability accommodations, something for which we have been calling for years, or outlawing rent bidding and processing fees that agents and landlords have been using to coerce thousands of dollars in extra rental payments. The Greens introduced proposals in 2021 that would have outlawed these practices. How many thousands of dollars would renters have saved if Labor had backed in our changes instead of waiting till now? The government has finally been forced to backtrack on the changes it made around 12-month rent increase limits. At the time we warned the government that the way they had set up those changes was going to backfire, and what did we see? We saw people being evicted from their properties so that landlords could continue to put up the rent faster than once every 12 months.

We heard from people who had been asked to put in fraudulent tenancy agreements to get around the rules so the rents could still be put up. Exactly as we had warned, people were evicted from their homes. At the time, Labor had not talked to a single renter about those changes. Just as we warned, those changes—

Mr Power interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, member for Logan!

Dr MacMAHON: I take the member's interjection. The member might remember that the explanatory notes for those changes said that there had been no consultation.

Mr Power interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Logan, you are now warned under the standing orders.

Dr MacMAHON: The member can read the explanatory notes. The government said, in black and white, that they had done no consultation on the amendments around 12-month rent increase limits. I welcome Labor adopting the Greens housing policy. Renters would like to see more of it. First home buyers who are getting outbid at every auction by wealthy investors receiving billions in tax incentives from Labor governments would like to see more of it.

I am sure that there are many members of parliament in marginal seats, which the Greens could win in October, who would love to see Labor adopt more of the Greens housing policy. There are Labor and LNP members of parliament who are going to lose their seats unless they stop siding with property investors, the banks and property developers. We should not forget that many Labor and LNP members of parliament are themselves property investors and many will benefit from rapidly rising rents and rising property values. Even if they lose their seats to the Greens, in the end they will all have a cushy retirement funded out of the wages of their tenants.

The point is that if those members of parliament could put self-interest aside and put themselves in the shoes of renters, first home buyers or the majority of people who do not have a property portfolio then they are welcome at any time to copy the Greens homework. They do not have to wait another three years to support these measures. We have amendments before the House now that the government could support. If you are going to copy our homework, do it properly.

I would like to move an amendment in relation to the Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. I move that the words 'now read a second time' be deleted and the following words inserted: 'be considered once the government commits to legislating a freeze on rent increases'—

(Time expired)