



Minister for Housing, Local Government and Planning Minister for Public Works

Your Ref: A1185244
Our Ref: MN 14347-2023

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22 December 2023

Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
tableoffice@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Mr Laurie

I refer to Petition No. 3976-23 titled '*Rent Stabilisation – A reasonable limit on how much rent can be increased by at once*', tabled in the Legislative Assembly on 14 November 2024. I note the views of the petitioners and appreciate the interest in the matter.

I acknowledge the unprecedented housing market conditions, including low vacancy rates and higher rents, and the difficulties experienced by many renters in Queensland. The Queensland Government is committed to improving renting in Queensland through rental law reform that better protects renters and rental property owners and improves stability in the rental market.

On 20 October 2021, the *Housing Legislation Amendment Act 2021* (HLA Act) amended Queensland's rental laws to implement Stage 1 rental law reform to:

- end no-grounds evictions
- strengthen renter protections against retaliatory actions
- make it easier for renters to have a pet
- set minimum safety, security and functionality standards for rental properties
- give renters experiencing domestic and family violence the right to end their interest in a tenancy quickly.

On 18 April 2023, the Queensland Government took action to stabilise rents in the private rental market by passing amendments to Queensland's rental laws that limit the frequency of rent increases to once a year from 1 July 2023. The Government released a discussion paper for a four-week public consultation period on 12 July 2023 to seek feedback on a potential reform to attach the rent increase frequency limit to the rental property rather than the tenancy. This potential reform would mean that rents could not be increased more frequently than once every 12 months, even if the lease with the current renter ends and a new renter enters a lease for the same rental property.

The Stage 2 rental law reform priorities build on the foundations laid by the safety, security and certainty reforms implemented in Stage 1 rental law reform to increase transparency, accountability and fairness in Queensland's residential rental sector.

Consultation on the Stage 2 Rental Law Reform Options Paper (Options Paper) was undertaken between 18 April and 29 May 2023. Feedback was sought across five legislative reform priority areas including installing security and safety modifications, making minor personalisation changes, better balancing the renter's right to privacy and the owner's need to access the property, improving the rental bond process, and fairer fees and charges.

We have been working to increase housing supply to bring down the cost of rents, through the thousands and thousands of new homes we are building as part of our Big Housing Build. Where people are experiencing rental stress and are in danger of losing their private tenancies, I encourage them to reach out to their local Housing Service Centre to find out if they are eligible for any products or services, including rental grants and subsidies.

In relation to the suggestion to protect tenants from no-grounds evictions upon lease renewal, Stage 1 rental law reform for ending tenancies aims to support renters to enforce their rights without fear of retaliatory action, provide greater certainty for parties to tenancy agreements about how and when they can be ended, and ensure parties receive reasonable workable notice about when their tenancy will end. The Queensland Government determined, after analysing feedback received through extensive consultation in 2018 and 2019 and learnings from implementing the COVID-19 regulatory response for residential tenancies, that including the end of a fixed term agreement as an approved reason for rental property owners to end a tenancy appropriately balanced the rights and interests of both parties.

Under a fixed term tenancy agreement, parties agree to a specific tenancy term and understand that either party may negotiate a further fixed term or end the tenancy at the end of the fixed term. Allowing owners (through end of a fixed term) and renters (through without grounds) to terminate a fixed term agreement when the agreed term expires is consistent with and upholds the contractual agreement freely made between the parties, provides predictability and certainty for both parties, and upholds both parties' property and human rights.

Rental law reform aims to ensure Queensland has the right regulatory settings to protect consumers and give investors and service providers confidence to participate in Queensland's housing market and systems. The government is progressing rental law reform that appropriately balances the rights and interests of property owners and renters. Petitioners can keep updated on rental reforms by visiting www.housing.qld.gov.au/about/initiative/rental-law-reform.

I thank the petitioners for taking the time to raise their concerns and I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Meaghan Scanlon', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Meaghan Scanlon MP
Minister for Housing, Local Government and Planning
Minister for Public Works