

9th April 2024

Housing, Big Build and Manufacturing Committee

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Dear Committee,

Make renting fair for Queenslanders

We commend the Queensland government for introducing the *Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024 (the Bill)* seeking to implement new legislation to make renting fairer, safer, and easier for renters.

Changes to make renting fairer are extremely important to our organisation. The current rental market lacks adequate protection for renters and is insecure, unaffordable, and unfair. For example, renters are required to provide excessive amounts of personal information when applying for rentals; rental costs continue to increase to unaffordable levels with rent bidding also occurring; renters can be directed to leave at the end of fixed term lease without cause; and bond refund processes are challenging, often with the burden placed on renters to pursue withheld bonds.

Queensland Advocacy for Inclusion supports the proposed legislative changes which include:

- establishing a portable bond scheme
- setting professional practice expectations through a rental sector Code of Conduct
- banning all forms of rent bidding
- applying the annual rent increase frequency limit to the property not the tenancy
- making it easier for renters to install modifications required to live safely and securely
- requiring 48 hours for most entries by landlords and agents
- requiring a prescribed form for tenancy applications and choice about how to apply
- limiting re-letting costs based on how long is left on a fixed-term lease
- ensuring renters have a fee-free option to pay rent

These changes are good but we need to do more to make renting fair. In addition to the proposed changes, we wish to advocate for two additional measures to provide greater security and protection for renters:

- we need a limit to annual rent increases to the level of the Consumer Price Index. We refer you to the approach adopted in the Australian Capital Territory as an example of this that has already been implemented in Australia.
- we need to end no-cause evictions, including at the end of a fixed-term leases.

Without safe, secure, and affordable place to call home it is impossible for people and communities to thrive. We believe the implementation of the proposed changes as well as the ones proposed will help to ensure renters have access to safer and more secure and affordable housing.

Yours sincerely,

Queensland Advocacy for Inclusion