

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Residential Tenancy](#)
Subject: Anonymous Submission: Improving NSW Renting Laws
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Anonymous Submission: Improving NSW Renting Laws

My name is [REDACTED], and I am a renter in [REDACTED], New South Wales. I have rented my whole life. I moved out of home and relocated to [REDACTED] over 10 years ago and I have seen the steady decline in care for renters ever since. I live with my partner and our cat in an [REDACTED].

All renters need and deserve homes that are affordable, secure, safe, and feel like home. NSW renting laws should be reformed in order to make renting fair for the 1 in 3 people in NSW who rent our homes.

Ending unfair evictions

Renters need homes that are stable and secure. Renters deserve to live without fear of unfair 'no grounds' evictions from our homes. All renters should be provided with a valid reason for ending a tenancy. Landlords should be required to provide a reason to end a rolling (periodic) lease, and a fixed term lease after the end date.

'The property will soon be sold' should not be added as a ground for eviction. There have been instances of this being used to terminate a lease, only for the property to be relisted with a higher rental price.

Many renters fear that they will receive a no grounds eviction notice if they request repairs to the property that they are renting. This power imbalance is huge and leaves many renters living in poor and unsafe conditions.

Keeping pets in rental homes

Renters need homes that feel like home. Renters should be allowed to make simple choices to make the houses we live in homes, including whether or not to keep pets. Pets bring so much joy to the lives of owners, and it is not fair that a landlord can dictate the quality of a renter's life.

Landlords should only be able to refuse a pet by obtaining a Tribunal order allowing them to do so. This is a model similar to those that apply in Victoria, the ACT and the NT.

Originally when I moved to Newcastle, I was unable to keep my cat with me. She had to stay living with my mum which was heartbreaking, she pulled her fur out and overcleaned as protest. After 2 years, I was finally able to find a pet friendly rental AND be approved for it. In this property, we were told that our cat would need to stay outside. She was [REDACTED] this type of change she wouldn't understand. Although I wanted to be honest, I had no choice but to agree to the conditions knowing that I would be keeping her inside. This was extremely anxiety

provoking for someone like me, who just wanted to do the right thing and live a normal life with a pet in their rental.

Rental affordability

Renters need homes that are affordable. Renters need to be able to afford to pay our rent without worrying that it will mean we go without other life essentials. There should be fair limits on rent increases in NSW tenancy law.

Housing is an essential service. Having a secure, safe, affordable home is vital to ensure a decent life. There are other essential services – energy, health, education and more – where cost is regulated to ensure the service is accessible for everyone. Fair limits on rent increases and rent setting should apply in rental housing too.

Part of the reason that many renters cop poor conditions is because they fear they won't be able to find anything else suitable within their budget. Moving is so expensive, plus needing to have thousands spare to put forward as a bond. We have seen how unfair rent increases have been playing out, we now not only have a housing crisis, we also have a homelessness crisis too.

My renting story and other considerations

As mentioned earlier, I live in an [REDACTED]. I have lived here for almost three years. I am fortunate as my house doesn't overheat too badly in the summer. This was one of the many reasons I moved out of my previous rental, made worse by windows that were painted shut and a real estate agent that wouldn't reply to emails or return phone calls when I repeatedly sought to address this defect.

My home, however, is very cold. It has big gaps in the floorboards and walls. [REDACTED] A bare minimum of insulation in half of the house was a very big win as a renter. In the renovations, however, [REDACTED] also replaced the old windows with shutters, removing the glass from the windows in the process. This means that when it rains, we cannot open the windows. My partner and I were left to live with minimal natural light for most of the recent La Nina. As there was no sunlight and lots of moisture, mould grew on many of our possessions, forcing us to throw them away.

This also means that in winter, if we want access to natural light, cold air also comes in. It is a double-edged sword. My mum has complex health conditions and struggles to regulate her body temperature, she has stopped visiting in the colder months because she shivers too much. I have recently purchased clear plastic tablecloths so that I can pin them up over the fly screen. This only work around, which comes at my own financial expense, is the only option available to me.

I reached out to the real estate agent and landlord, a former councillor known best for erecting a dangerous modification on the boarding houses he operates without approval and that don't meet minimum fire standards. I was told that the [REDACTED] – a statement that I find very hard to believe – and shamed by my agent for not keeping the windowsills free of dust to reduce the potential of mould. My request for glass in the windows was deemed to be unreasonable. The real estate agent suggested I use vinegar to treat the mould. [REDACTED] offered me a gas heater to try and satisfy my concerns. I turned down this band-aid offer as there are no gas outlets in the rooms that have no glass in the windows, nor did I want to pay for the cost of running the heater in the middle of record gas price rises. I did contact NSW fair Trading

but reconsidered furthering my complaint due to fears of an unreasonable rental increase or a no grounds eviction. These concerns were exacerbated by the terrible housing crisis in [REDACTED]

I saw a call for renters to take part in a temperature study with [REDACTED] and expressed my interest. I am [REDACTED] from all states and territories in Australia with cold houses tracking the temperatures throughout winter. My house has reached [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] I will take this opportunity to remind you that the World Health Organisation recommends an indoor temperature of at least 18°C to protect residents from the harmful health effects of the cold.

I am not the exception to the rule though, this is the experience of many renters who have been long neglected by politicians and policy reforms. I am, however, one of the lucky ones. I do not have complex health concerns such as asthma or Raynaud's disease; I am able to pay for heating when it gets so cold that I can't sleep at night without a jumper, beanie, and gloves; I am able to afford a quality puffer jacket which I wear most days when I am at home.

Renting isn't a choice; it is a necessity. Housing isn't a privilege; it is a human right.

Please consider giving renters some dignity by changing policies to include minimum energy efficiency standards for heating, insulation, ventilation, moisture and drainage, and draught stopping. This will ensure healthy homes for renters. This needs to be legally enforced or landlords won't be held accountable. We also need to even out the playing field and ensure that real estate agents are working to meet the needs of both landlord and tenants.

Minimum housing standards isn't just a matter of dignity, it is also preventative health care action. We know that poor housing conditions lead to poor health outcomes, including respiratory illness, mental ill-health, and feelings of shame isolation and loneliness. There has also been research into the relationship between poor thermal efficiency and increased risks of mortality.