

My name is [REDACTED], I am [REDACTED], live in Sydney and am a renter. My best friend and I live together and it is time to renew our lease. We have lived in this current property for a over year together, but my best friend lived in the apartment for [REDACTED].

We are terrified of broaching the subject of lease renewal. Our rent was raised by \$50 at the beginning of the year so by law they cannot raise our rent twice in a twelve month period but we are scared that if we ask for a lease renewal, the landlord would prefer to kick us out and raise the rental price for the next tenant as a way of making more money.

We are wary of broaching any subject, no matter how justifiable, to our real estate agent and landlords because we are scared they would prefer to kick us out and start with a new renter from scratch with a higher rent. Our intercom doesn't work and air conditioning has been malfunctioning but we have the attitude of "just put up with it and stay under the radar because anything could give them a reason to kick us out".

We have been good tenants but I have come to believe that no matter how reasonable you may be as a renter, landlords wield all the power and will ignore what is just and reasonable in favour of getting their tenants to pay them more.

It isn't right or fair that an individual has the power to terrify others into submission and paying beyond what is reasonable for fear of literal homelessness.

The government MUST introduce stronger rental laws that protect tenants and keep landlords in check.

I urge the NSW & federal government to think about introducing the below into legislation:

- **Introduce a rental cap.** An increase in rent should only be allowed within a percentage (e.g. no more than 3% increase in a calendar year) and the landlord MUST provide proof and legal reasoning as to why they are increasing the rent. Renters should be allowed to contest the raise without fear of being kicked out.

- **If the landlord has not responded to any of the tenants requests about issues within the home and fixed them, they should not be allowed to raise the rent.** At my old apartment, we had multiple issues – the apartment above us had a leak, resulting in severe water damage and mold in our laundry. The stovetop was malfunctional and only one ring out of the four could be used at any one time. The range hood was broken. We contacted our real estate agent (who was our point of contact with the landlord) multiple times for more than a year. They raised our rent and when we requested they hold on the rental raise until they fixed these issues, they refused. I moved out of this apartment but my [REDACTED] remained. My friend has just informed me that they have raised the rent again, this time by \$50, and have refused to fix any of these issues. So just to be clear: For almost two years, this apartment has struggled with water damage, mold and broken major kitchen appliances. Yet the landlord still thought it was appropriate to raise the rent and not fix these issues.
- **There needs to be laws introduced that regulate how many properties one individual can own at any one time.** I recently read about a landlord that owned NINETEEN properties and did not work, all they did was collect rent and live off the money that his tenants made. THIS. IS. WRONG. No one individual should ever be allowed to own that many properties, especially during a cost of living crisis.
- **Landlords must be required to provide references from previous tenants in the same way tenants must provide their own background checks and references.** I don't think it's fair that tenants must bend over backwards to prove themselves to landlords/real estate agents but landlords are not required to do the same. There should be a database where landlords provide their own details and property history, a history that includes things like how much and how often they have raised rent and most importantly – **renters should provide a reference that future tenants can access when looking for somewhere to rent.** If I am denied the opportunity to live somewhere because someone has reviewed me, shouldn't a landlord be denied the opportunity to rent out a property because past tenants have reviewed them?

As a millennial, I honestly don't think I will ever own my own property. The generations before me that have made that impossible and unless the housing

market is seriously reformed, I fully anticipate being a renter for the rest of my life.

Regulate landlords. Regulate the housing market. Introduce laws that protect renters and future home owners.

Thank you.

