

I have had a relatively unstable renting experience in the last 23 years of being a tenant. I have lived in sharehouses for the majority of time, but have also had long periods of being houseless and unable to find affordable housing.

In February 2023, I was evicted from my one bedroom rental unit 7 months into a 12-month lease. It was an affordable apartment (\$300/week), in [REDACTED]. It was close to public transport, work, partner and family. I moved there in June 2022.

All 6 units and 8 tenants were evicted with no grounds terminations. This occurred 2 weeks after one unit received a \$200/week rent increase. Two weeks later, the increase was withdrawn and replaced with eviction notices for all tenants.

During my tenancy, a number of issues were never resolved, including mould in the bedroom causing a persistent cough. Despite investing in a dehumidifier and running it for long periods, resulting in a \$600 electricity bill for one quarter, the mould was still there.

My electricity company compared this electricity use to a house of five people, despite living alone. The other contributor to the high electricity cost was the hot water heater constantly being at boiling temperature, it came out of the tap scalding and dangerous. Everytime I requested this to be repaired, I was met with no response.

I moved all my possessions to storage and have been unhoused since April 2023, moving between the homes of family and friends until I can find another affordable and suitable apartment to rent.

I have worked as a casual educator in a [REDACTED] for ten years. My income there has halved since Covid-19. I am also a freelance educator and practicing visual artist, sole trader. As I earn my income in a variety of ways, it's difficult to meet the standard requirements when applying for rental properties. In my 23 years as a tenant, I always manage to pay my rent on time.

Prior to this tenancy, I was living in a sharehouse with one other tenant. From 2014 - 2022, we shared a two bedroom apartment in [REDACTED]. During this time, the rent for the whole property gradually increased from \$400 per week to \$510 per week.

In April 2022, the head tenant gave me a no grounds eviction notice of 4 weeks. When I tried to assert my rights as a tenant and request a 90 day notice, she contested my status as a tenant, stating we did not have a written agreement.

The NSW Residential Tenants Act previously recognised subtenants as tenants even if there was no written agreement. This law changed in 2010, without my knowledge, leaving me with no legal rights. This protection for subtenants needs to be reinstated. In the meantime, there needs to be better education around the rights of subtenants in sharehouses. Especially as this form of tenancy is increasing with the current rental crisis.

I vacated the premises within four weeks and was homeless for another four weeks until I found my new apartment. During this time, I had to pay for all of my belongings to be stored, along with two removalist fees. I also got covid from a family member I was staying with at the time.

I have never been able to afford to buy my own home and I do not see this as a possibility in the near future. I have been on a waiting list for a housing co-operative since 2012 and I am still waiting for an apartment.

There needs to be urgent action taken to support tenants in the current housing and rental crisis. Rents need to be frozen as a temporary solution. Almost every single tenant I know has had an unreasonable rent increase in the last 12 months. Most between \$100 - \$300 per week. The number of rent increases need to be capped and the amount by which rents can increase should be no more than CPI.

No grounds evictions should end. They are clearly being used as a way for landlords to increase rents. There should be minimum standards for all rental properties that ensure they are safe for tenants, do not cause health problems and are fit to live in.

The NSW Government needs to urgently increase social and public housing. They should be encouraging and supporting the creation of co-operative housing models too, as these empower tenants to manage and maintain their own homes.

Housing is a right for all and should not be something that individuals and companies make a profit from. It is absolutely criminal that tenants rights are disregarded in the interest of profit-making property owners.

Housing stress leads to many other problems for people. Even if we are not made homeless by unaffordable rent increases or no ground evictions, constantly living with the threat of this happening puts a lot of stress on us. We deserve to be able to live in our homes and feel safe and secure. Changes need to be made urgently. It is inevitable that this crisis is going to have a broader impact on the lives and wellbeing of individuals, families and communities. The government is in a position to make the changes now.