

3/8/23

Submission to the Real Estate and Housing Policy Team,

I've been a renter my entire adult life (I am 37 years old) and before that, I lived most of my childhood in rented apartments with my mum.

As renters, we're all used to (long before the current crisis), the nightmare that is poor housing conditions, not "making a fuss" in case you get a rental increase or end of lease notice.

And yet since 2018, there is absolutely a crisis.

Between 2009-2018, I lived in 2 apartments with fairly stable rent increases and the standard amount of poor conditions that you have to live with (as referenced above).

I felt stable - as much as you ever can as a renter and also like there are also more options should we need them.

In January 2022, my partner, our 2 dogs and I received the required 90 days notice that our rolling lease would be ending because the landlord had sold their apartment to capitalise on the housing prices and now had nowhere to live.

It took us 75 days and more inspections, applications, emails, phone calls and pleading to find a new home. We had to pay more than asking to 'be competitive and our rent increased in this move by \$120/week. Our income did not and the place was inferior where we moved to by comparison though that's "market prices" for you. The number of humans at each inspection we went to was remarkable. Our glowing 20 year rental history did not matter. We were told that seeing the box marked "has pets" will always put you to the bottom of the list.

The stress and instability of this period caused my autoimmune disease to flare up and my mental health suffered as a direct consequence. Despite both having businesses in Sydney, we were considering air BnB properties to rent short-term or moving out of Sydney and commuting. That is wildly unacceptable.

This move was April 2022. The property was a decrease in quality, we moved locations and had to rebuild community after 13 years in the same area.

In December 2022, 1 week prior to the holiday period, we received a notice of intention to sell from our landlord so they could pursue a house purchase. And again the stress returns 8 months into our fixed term lease. The concept, the currently legal concept, of strangers coming through your home several times a week - through a pandemic - combined with the realistic limits on securing housing over the holiday break was unbearable. We decided we could not accept the open home inspections and vacated promptly - with yet another need to 'be competitive' and offer more money - paying another \$20/week for new housing - now \$140/week overall of an increase in 1 year and 3 properties and without an income increase. We again faced hoards of people at inspections for inadequate housing, the possibility of being unhoused? We were rejected for the properties we applied for and again reminded that living with animals places you at the bottom of an unfair pile of applications. We relied upon our current property manager vouching for us.

In June 2023, 5 months into our fixed term lease at the new property, we were advised of an intention to sell - again so the landlord could leverage the property and buy a house for themselves. With weeks until open inspections and very little available - barely anything in the same price range - we decided to stay put. The impact to our stability and security, to our peace - of 2 inspections + a photography/staging visit also - was significant. And we negotiated a measly rent reduction \$120 total for that huge, adverse impact to our lives. We're now unsure what this new landlord will do when our fixed term is up and are again unstable and unsure.

In summary, none of this is acceptable for anyone to navigate. And from our end systemic change and less incentivising for landlords to own multiple properties - that we consider a home - is part of that. Housing is a human right and this country has a shameful history of capitalising from that. From your end as the state, I implore you to consider removing pets from applications as the only way I see to make it fair and non-discriminatory. Our history and references are enough. We live with animals and they are family - how outrageous this prevents us from housing!

Thank you,

