

A better renting future Reform Roadmap

*Creating fair and workable
rental laws for Queensland*



**Queensland
Government**



Minister's message

All Queenslanders deserve a safe, secure and sustainable place to call home and the Queensland Government is committed to reform the renting system to ensure this.

The unprecedented response to last year's Open Doors to Renting Reform consultation demonstrated the importance of tenancy law reform to the community.

Thousands of Queenslanders had their say with more than 135,000 responses received in nine weeks.

It allowed us to have an authentic conversation with the community about their renting experiences to understand what issues really matter and identify priorities for the road ahead.

This roadmap to reform shows how we will deliver new fair and workable renting laws to create a better balance where tenants are able to make a home in their rental property while ensuring effective safeguards are in place to protect investments.

Stage one will focus on immediate actions and priorities to ensure all Queenslanders are living in a safe environment, have protections if they are experiencing domestic and family violence and can enjoy their home without fear of retaliation.

These reforms will create a fair and balanced system and ensure a better renting future for Queensland.

Mick de Brenni MP

Minister for Housing and Public Works
Minister for Digital Technology
and Minister for Sport

Fair and balanced rental reform

The Queensland Government is committed to ensuring all Queenslanders have access to safe, secure and sustainable housing. The *Queensland Housing Strategy 2017-2027* and *Action Plan 2017-2020* includes actions to reform tenancy laws to create a contemporary legislative framework that better protects tenants and property owners and improves housing stability in the rental market.

With more Queenslanders renting, and renting for longer, it is important that tenancy laws support individuals and families to find a safe and stable home in rental accommodation.

These laws also need to protect the investments of the many property owners who contribute much needed supply to the housing market.

The Reform Roadmap outlines the Queensland Government's response to the Open Doors Consultation to deliver the fair and workable tenancy laws that Queenslanders expect.



Consultation (Open Doors to Renting Reform)



Reform Roadmap (we are here)



Stage 2: more substantial reforms



Analysis and findings



Stage 1: immediate actions



Modern renting laws



A better renting future for all Queenslanders

A roadmap for reform

Consultation identified a common set of renting issues that are important to tenants, owners and managers.

The two-staged reform approach will prioritise actions to support tenants enforce their existing rights and ensure rental accommodation is safe, secure and functional.

As reforms are identified and developed, there will continue to be opportunities for the community to have their say, particularly where views are divided about reform options.

The Residential Tenancies Authority (RTA) will continue to improve services to offer more channels to do business that are fast, convenient and targeted to meet customer needs.

Together these stages will deliver workable solutions on the issues that matter and improve renting in Queensland.

Stage 1 – Safety, security and certainty:

- ensure rental accommodation is safe, secure and functional
- improve liveability of rental accommodation
- protect vulnerable people in the rental market
- prohibit retaliatory evictions
- introduce an information disclosure power.

Stage 2 – modern tenancy laws and accountability:

- balance privacy and quiet enjoyment with reasonable entry rights
- support accessible and sustainable rental accommodation through effective bond, rent and tenure settings
- improve property manager accountability and conduct
- improve access to timely, consistent and effective dispute resolution mechanisms.

Optimise RTA services and tenancy support



For tenants

Better protections, more secure and safer homes and simpler processes to manage disagreements. Clear rights and responsibilities will create a pathway to better tenancy experiences.

For managers

Simpler rental laws and modern legislation will help clarify their role. Service improvements will help improve processes and strengthen relationships between tenants, owners and managers.

For owners

Laws designed to encourage longer leases, create greater security and stability in the rental market, and bring certainty with effective safeguards that help protect your investment.

A strong foundation

Through staged reform, laws will be strengthened to build a foundation of safety, security and certainty and improve liveability through modern, workable tenancy laws.

In Stage 1, priority reforms focus on protecting people in the rental market including:

- prescribing minimum housing standards, and specifically the structural integrity, cleanliness and functionality of rental properties
- strengthening repairs and maintenance processes
- better protections to support vulnerable people, such as those experiencing domestic and family violence
- improving renting experiences and outcomes, including those of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and people with disability
- allowing minor modifications around health, safety, security and accessibility
- Prohibiting retaliatory evictions and establishing additional approved grounds to end a tenancy fairly
- encouraging pets in rental properties, with safeguards for owners
- requiring information disclosure about rental properties.

Building workable solutions

Stage 2 reform will establish modern tenancy laws through consultation with tenants, property owners and managers to develop workable solutions that drive positive change in:

- entry and privacy practices, such as inspections
- the basics of leasing including rental bonds and rent
- security of tenure, including longer term leases and negotiable terms in tenancy agreements
- property management practices, considering options such as a Code of Conduct and training.

Making renting easier

The RTA is developing and implementing new channels to do business that are fast and convenient.

A new secure online bond lodgment system has recently been rolled out, which provides automatic updates about the progress of bond refund applications.

The RTA will continue to improve its services to provide customers more channels to complete their tenancy transactions securely.

The Queensland rental market is changing

More Queenslanders than ever are renting their home and staying in rental accommodation for longer. We know that more people are renting as they enter their retirement years, and families are the biggest growth area in the rental market.

34.2%

of households in Queensland rent¹

\$365

Queensland median weekly rent²

17.5

months is the median length of tenancy (house)³

76%

of Queensland tenants have been renting 5+ years⁴



Queensland has the highest proportion of people renting in Australian states

Queenslanders also invest in rental properties as a way of securing their financial future, and the private market relies on this investment to provide much-needed housing in Queensland.



14% of Queensland taxpayers have an interest in rental property⁵



72% of Queensland investors own one property only⁶



1. Australian Bureau of Statistics, Quickstats, 2016.
2. Residential Tenancies Authority, 'Weekly median rents', RTA Annual Report 2018-19, 2019, p.11.
3. Residential Tenancies Authority, 'Median length of tenancies (months)', RTA Annual Report 2018-19, 2019, p.9.
4. Queensland respondents to an online survey, Choice (National Shelter and the National Association of Tenant Organisations), Unsettled: Life in Australia's private rental market, 2017, p.7.
5. Australian Taxation Office: Taxation statistics 2016-17.
6. Australian Taxation Office: Taxation statistics 2016-17, Individuals Table 27.

What matters to Queenslanders

Open Doors to Renting Reform was a grassroots consultation to understand what renting issues matter to tenants, rental property owners and managers and their ideas about how to improve renting in Queensland.

The Queensland community embraced this opportunity with over 135,000 responses sharing rental experiences and ideas about how renting can be improved.

This feedback identified that Queenslanders want:

- to feel safe and secure with their rental accommodation, either as a home for a tenant, or as an investment for a property owner.
- tenants to be able to make a home in their rental accommodation with effective safeguards in place to protect the owner's investment.
- action to ensure rental accommodation is well-maintained to protect tenant health and safety.
- tenancy rights and obligations that are clear and workable for all parties.



125,200+
users to engagement website



19,900+
online surveys completed



41,100+
reactions, comments and shares on social media



14,100+
hard copy surveys completed






4,800+
written responses



96,600+
responses to online polls

Overall experience of Renting in Queensland

			
TENANTS	39%	30%	31%
PROPERTY OWNERS	47%	29%	24%
PROPERTY MANAGERS	48%	39%	13%

Responses came from





How to stay involved

At each stage of the reform process we will seek input from the community on proposed legislation before it becomes law.

Connect with us for updates so you can stay involved.



qld.gov.au/rentinginqld



13 QGOV (13 74 68)



#rentinginqld

If you need help with interpreting or translation because English is not your first language, call 13 QGOV (13 74 68).

If you require tenancy information or support, contact the Residential Tenancies Authority on 1300 366 311.

If you are in a domestic and family violence situation and need help, call DVConnect Womensline 1800 811 811 or DVConnect Mensline 1800 600 636.