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Submission to Renting in Queensland Regulatory Impact Statement

1. Ending Tenancies Fairly

We strongly support the recommended option and the withdrawal of without ground notices to leave. We support the addition of the following reasonable grounds to end tenancies:

- when the lessor or their immediate family will move in;
- the premises will need to be vacant for at least six weeks to undertake significant repair or renovation; and,
- for renters experiencing domestic or family violence.

We do not support any other additional grounds for lessors to end tenancies.

We do not support any reduction of notice periods for termination by lessors

We strongly support all the additional grounds recommended for renters to end tenancies.

We believe there should be penalties applied for lessors' misuse of lawful grounds to end tenancies, and the potential for renters to claim compensation.

2. Minimum Standards

We strongly support the recommended option, the inclusion of minimum standards for rental properties and the strengthened repair and maintenance proposals outlined in the Regulatory Impact Statement. In particular we support the new repair orders so they will:

- apply to a premises not a tenancy;
- stop a rental property being rented out and/or rent capped until a repair order is complied with;
- allow the Residential Tenancies Authority to enforce the order; and,
- for advocates to be able to seek repair orders on behalf of renters.

3. Renting with Pets

We strongly support the recommended option that would require lessors to have a reasonable ground (prescribed by law) to deny a tenant's request for a pet when it complies with other laws and by-laws prohibiting the pet/pet type.

In stage two, these reforms should go further to better support renters with pets during the application process.

We do not support a pet bond, because tenants already pay bonds. Any requirement for tenants to undertake carpet cleaning or pest control should only be related to the pet type. For example, flea control should be applicable for dogs and cats, but not goldfish.

4. Minor Modifications

We support the recommended option with some variation. Renters should have the ability to undertake health and safety or amenity minor modifications by providing prior notification to, but not agreement from, the lessor. A definition of minor modifications should be included in the changes; and qualified tradesperson used (only) when appropriate. If the lessor opposes the tenant's minor modifications, it should be the responsibility of the lessor to use the dispute resolution process within a prescribed timeframe to challenge the issue.

A government fund should be established for low income renters who require health and safety modifications (e.g. grab rails) if they are required to restore the property on exit.

5. Domestic and Family Violence

We strongly support the recommended option which allows a tenant or co-tenant experiencing domestic and family violence to end their tenancy more easily with evidence from specialist worker. We also support processes to help them get their bond back more quickly and to install safety and security devices.

