

WE HAVE LISTENED

Thank you for your email to the Premier and Minister for Trade in relation to the protections for property owners and tenants in Queensland during the COVID-19 crisis. As this matter falls within my responsibilities as Housing Minister, the Premier has asked that I respond on her behalf.

As you would be aware, millions of Australians in the last few weeks, through no fault of their own, have lost their job or experienced significant income loss because of COVID-19.

As a result of this crisis, a temporary Moratorium on Evictions was announced by Prime Minister Scott Morrison. Each State and Territory is required to implement this through their own laws.

The Premier has asked me to work with the industry to implement this temporary moratorium and ensure that Queensland property owners make it through this pandemic with tenancies in place to pay their mortgages and tenants continuing to have a roof over their heads.

We recognise that many property owners are making significant sacrifices to meet the needs of tenants. We thank you for doing this and we have been working with the Real Estate Institute of Queensland and other stakeholders on the concerns that you have raised.

As a result of your feedback, the following temporary and targeted measures will apply for six months to properties where the tenant is impacted by COVID-19 (all other tenancies not impacted by COVID-19 will continue to operate under usual arrangements):

- The six-month **moratorium on evictions will only apply to tenancies where the tenant's income has been reduced as result of COVID-19** and the tenant is at risk of eviction. Tenants can still be evicted for doing the wrong thing and on other grounds.
- **We are asking property owners and tenants to work together** where a tenant is experiencing COVID-19 related financial challenges to negotiate a new temporary and sensible rent amount. Guidelines are being developed to support reaching agreement including duration and whether repayments

are required. While we expect most tenants and property owners to come to an agreement, where this is not possible, we will provide a compulsory, free, fair and independent conciliation service to resolve issues.

- **Tenants will need to demonstrate genuine financial distress from COVID-19 that meets an established standard.** Tenants will need to have had a 25 per cent reduction in income or show that rent exceeds 30 per cent of the tenant's income. This can be substantiated by providing the same financial information they do at the start of a tenancy.
- **Enabling virtual inspections** to protect tenants and property managers from getting COVID-19 and ensuring essential access for repairs and maintenance continues where safe.
- Tenants will be able to have **break lease fees capped only where there has been a 75% loss of income** and they have less than \$5,000 in cash.
- Tenancies that expire during this crisis **will only roll over to September 30 2020 at the latest** and they have been impacted by COVID-19.
- In cases where the owner and tenant are both experiencing financial distress, we have established a [\\$20 million-dollar rental grant fund to complement existing Centrelink support.](#)

We will continue to listen and act to ensure property owners and tenants get through this crisis.

You may also be aware that we have announced a \$400 million dollar land tax relief package for property owners who are providing support to residential and business tenants in this difficult time. You can find out more at www.qld.gov.au/landtax.

Additionally, our household relief package will give Queensland households [\\$200 off their utility bills](#), building on the \$50 asset dividend we have already announced.

Through the National Cabinet, the Premier is also working with banks to ensure they step up to provide appropriate relief to property owners.

As a Government that listens, we appreciate the feedback you have provided and I hope my email provides some assurances to you in this difficult time.

If you need any further information, please visit the Residential Rental Hub on www.covid19.qld.gov.au/the-hub or text "hi" to 0480 000 782.