

To: Rental Reforms department

Proposed rental law change: protecting persons of domestic violence in their rental properties

Note: please do not reveal any of my personal contact details (below) as I do not want my perpetrator to see my name being posted for this online as he will know it is me.

To whom it may concern,

I request to make a particularly important rental law reform for the protection of persons subjected to domestic/family violence.

I have recently gone through a domestic violence issue and had to emergency vacate my rental property as I was no longer safe in staying with the other tenant as he was the person that was the perpetrator of the domestic violence.

After I went to stay in emergency accommodation, I was appalled and very disappointed to come to realise that under our current tenancy laws, I was still liable for rent for the property and could not remove myself from the lease, despite emergency vacating the premises due to my safety being extremely jeopardised in continuing to reside there with my perpetrator.

I was advised by the real estate agent that I would need to pay rent for as long as the perpetrator remained living at the property. The perpetrator's intention was to stay at the property for many more years and he threatened me that I would still need to pay for the rent. As my name and his are both legally still on the lease, I could not remove my name off it as we are both considered one legal entity on the contract and therefore I was liable for rent for as long as the other tenant (my perpetrator) was residing there (which is for the duration of many more years).

This made me both extremely sad, angry and depressed knowing the law has imprisoned me with the perpetrator of my domestic violence and did nothing to protect me and instead, put myself back in danger by locking me down into a lease with my perpetrator.

How are women supposed to protect themselves from violence, if we don't have laws to support them to free themselves both physically and/or financially from their perpetrators? If these laws in fact jeopardise their safety and put them into more harm and in fact, entrap them into remaining in a property that puts them into direct danger?

If a person is a victim of violence and in remaining in their rental property is a direct threat to their danger, why do these laws prevent them from vacating it? It is appalling and this is yet another reason how our laws contribute to a woman losing her life every single week in Australia from domestic violence. We as a society are all responsible in both direct and indirect ways in the protection of the safety of victims of violence.

I write this passionate and personal request to change the tenancy laws for the protection of myself, other women and future women who should find their safety jeopardised in staying in their rental property.

Please take this request into the most serious consideration as I do not want to see another woman die or be harmed from violence because of these historical rental laws that do not protect victims of violence.

Kind regards,

Anonymous

[REDACTED]