



Shifting Power

Improving Choice and Control through Energy Efficiency Minimum Standards for Rental Housing in Queensland

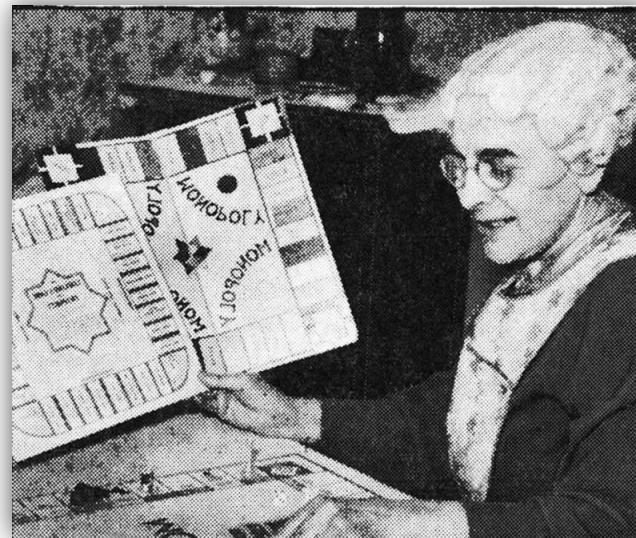
Luke Reade
ECA Board Stakeholder Forum
Brisbane 10th July 2019





BRAND

- Who is Elizabeth Magie?
- Invented The Landlords Game!



qcooss

Background

- With the recent changes to the ***Residential Tenancy and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008 (RTRAA)***, rental properties may need to meet defined minimum standards before being listed for rent.
- The following is in reference to both private rentals and social housing.

Background

What we know about renters:

- High and growing proportion of households - 36% of households in Queensland
- Increasing proportion of seniors and families with children
- Mostly private rental accommodation - 82% in private market
- Insecure tenure - 83% have no fixed term lease or lease of 12 months or less
- Short tenure - average tenancy length in Queensland is 13.5 months



Background

Key Themes:

- 1. Control:** Lack of control over energy use and costs
- 2. Choice:** Ability to make informed choices about energy use and costs
- 3. Safeguards:** Equitable access to energy consumer safeguards

qcooss

Exclusion from products and services

Renters often don't ask landlords for fear of eviction or rent increase

- More than 30% did not ask their landlord for permission as they do not want to seem difficult or put their tenancy at risk

Most renters who do ask their landlords are not successful

- 70% who had asked for permission to make improvements had not been successful

Landlords don't give permission – even for improvements where there is no cost to them

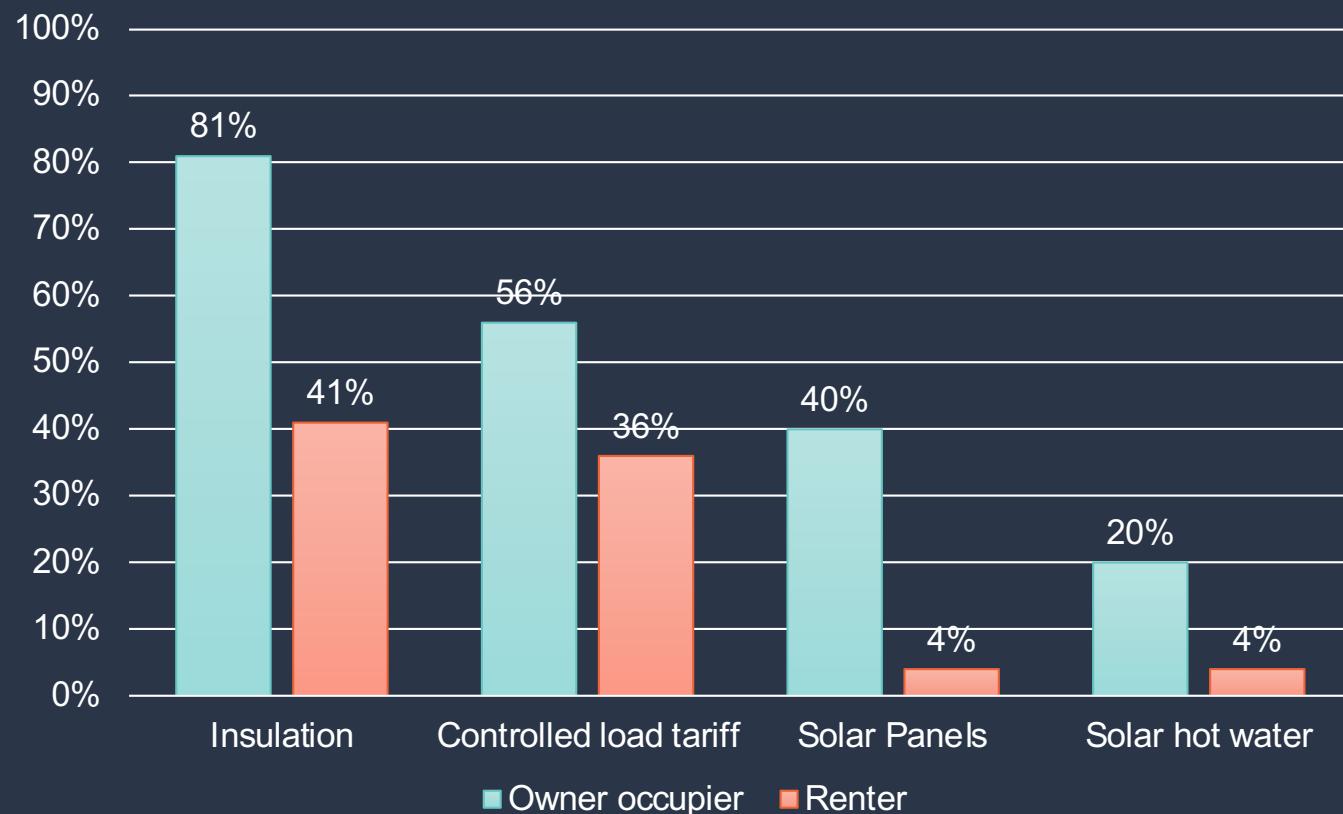
- Only 10% of landlords in NSW gave permission for free installation of efficient showerheads and draught strips

Renters are not guaranteed to live in the home long enough to recoup the upfront cost

- Average length of tenure in Queensland is 13.5 months – leases of more than 12 months are uncommon

Uptake of technology

Proportion of Queensland households with
energy management features



qcooss

Background

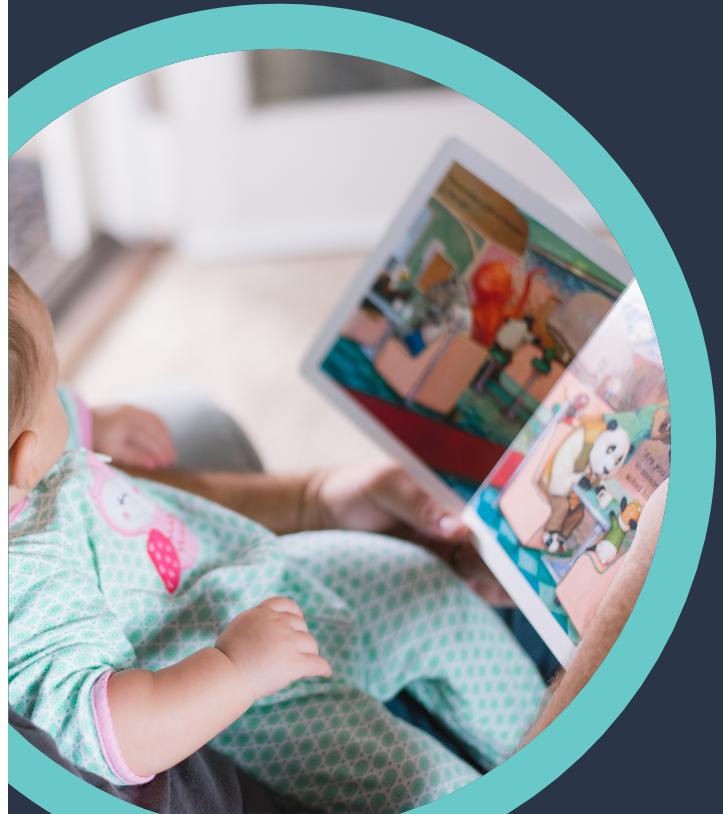
It's about power imbalance!

- More often than not, tenant will not pursue repairs so as not to 'rock the boat', resulting in problems being inherited by consecutive tenants.

Rationale for Energy Efficiency Minimum Standards for Rentals

- Renters are without power to change
- Renters often live in poorer quality housing
- Renters often face higher relative energy costs to run their homes
- Rentals often offer poorer amenity
 - difficult for households to regulate temperature and can be uncomfortable to live in and lead to adverse health effects particularly amongst the elderly, children and people with chronic illnesses
- Renters and GHG emissions and a Just Transition





Five recommendations regarding minimum standards

qcoss

Recommendation 1: Minimum standard for a Home Energy Rating Scheme

- achieve through any number of energy efficiency options



qcooss

Recommendation 2: Minimum standard for ceiling insulation

- Target older rental properties or properties with a low home energy rating
- Applies across all climate zones.



qcooss

Recommendation 3: Minimum standard for LED light fittings

- LED lightbulb ready fittings so that all light fittings can accommodate generally available LED lights
- Tenants are unable able to fit LED light bulbs where fittings need to be changed or where it is difficult to gain access to light fittings



Recommendation 4: Compliance framework

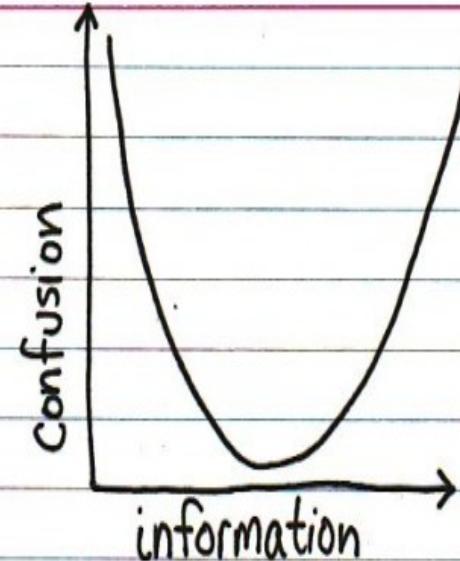
- Mandatory disclosure based on a third-party assessment of the energy efficiency rating of the home.
- Home owners and real estate agents should be given a reasonable amount of time to comply with the new home energy rating scheme



qcooss

Recommendation 5: Information to help people comply

- So all parties (renters, lessors, property agents and third-party exempt sellers) clearly understand the features of the regime, their rights and obligations



Thank you

qcooss