



## ADAM BANDT MP

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The Hon Scott Morrison  
Prime Minister  
Commonwealth of Australia

By email

25 March 2020

Dear Prime Minister, Premiers and Chief Ministers

Everyone needs a home.

The impacts of COVID-19 are set to cause a housing crisis as people around the country struggle to pay rent or mortgages and make ends meet. We need urgent government action to ensure that people are not evicted into homelessness in this crisis.

In the coming months millions of workers who rely on wages from casual work in arts, retail, hospitality and many low income workers in other sectors or the gig economy will be at risk of falling behind on their rent or mortgages and risk losing their homes.

**The Government should not be leaving people behind as they deal with the consequences of the coronavirus. If you can't pay rent or your mortgage, you should not be forced out onto the street. It's that simple.**

Preventing evictions and mortgage foreclosures is a health response as well as an economic support measure for people who rent. People facing eviction or foreclosure are less able to take actions required to minimise transmission of COVID-19, particularly where they become homeless, and will become more vulnerable to exposure and illness.

Community organisations are telling us that an eviction into homelessness, especially at this time, puts great pressure on families and communities in overcrowded homes, crisis accommodation and people sleeping rough. Support services will already be struggling to deal with increased demand and as a community we cannot afford to make it worse.

Whilst we were disappointed that there was no housing-related legislation put before the Federal Parliament during the recent sittings, we are pleased to note that leaders have publicly noted the importance of addressing the issue of housing through the National Cabinet.

We also note that on Tuesday, March 24 the NSW Parliament supported legislative amendments moved by Greens members that addressed the eviction issue.

We call on National Cabinet, the Commonwealth and all states and territories to put a stop to evictions and address the homelessness and housing crisis associated with COVID-19 by agreeing on, and if necessary legislating to give effect to, the following:

- There should be no rental evictions or mortgage foreclosures during the COVID-19 pandemic

**ADAM BANDT MP** Leader of the Australian Greens • Federal Member for Melbourne

📍 GF1 296 Brunswick St, Fitzroy VIC 3065 📞 (03) 9417 0759 ✉ adam.bandt.mp@aph.gov.au

🐦 @AdamBandt 🌐 /Adam.Bandt.MP 📷 @AdamBandt [greens.org.au](https://www.greens.org.au)



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- Rent holidays, or at least a nationwide rent freeze with no increase in rent for the duration of the health crisis
- Mortgage holidays provided for vulnerable homeowners
- Increasing rent assistance payments and expanding access to rent assistance if necessary
- Directing police and court officers not to carry out or allow any evictions
- Requiring public and community housing providers to immediately cease eviction proceedings against their tenants - unless they relate to perpetrators of violence
- Ensuring that housing departments and councils are working with shared accommodation providers, including boarding and rooming house operators, so that residents are not evicted into more severe homelessness and that their accommodation is healthy
- Urgently funding crisis housing.

We provide these proposals in good faith and just as the Federal government has agreed to the Greens' calls for increasing unemployment benefits, suspending mutual obligation requirements, extending the stimulus package to the not-for-profit sector and making the coronavirus supplement available to students receiving Youth Allowance, we hope you will adopt these proposals as well.

To get through this crisis we must work together to support each other, and find ways to ensure everyone has a roof over their head.

We can't leave anyone behind.

Yours faithfully,

Adam Bandt MP

Leader of the Australian Greens and Member for Melbourne

Mehreen Faruqi

Senator for NSW and Australian Greens Spokesperson on Housing



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