

Community Support and Services Committee

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, 29 June 2021 1:43 PM
To: South Brisbane Electorate Office
Cc: Community Support and Services Committee; Minister for Communities and Housing
Subject: To Community Support and Services Committee (CC my local MP): Submission on the Housing Legislation Amendment Bill 2021 and the Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation (Tenants' Rights) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2021

Dear Amy MacMahon MP,

Dear the Community Support and Services Committee, cc my local MP -

I'd like to comment on both the Housing Legislation Amendment Bill 2021 and the Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation (Tenants' Rights) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2021.

I'd also like to take this opportunity to share something with you: a snapshot of what it's like to rent in Queensland.

My name is [REDACTED], I currently live at [REDACTED]. I previously lived in a rental property in Highgate Hill – it was rented through a real estate agent.

The balcony at the back of property had rotted and a railing broke about a year into me living at this property. The railing broke on a friend's husband when they were visiting. Luckily he steadied himself and didn't fall four metres to the concrete below.

I raised this repair with my real estate agent, who passed this onto the owners. Months went by and nothing had happened. My housemates and I were too afraid to have friends over during this time in case someone hurt themselves on the balcony. I would regularly remind the real estate agents that this was outstanding and asking for an ETA on repairs.

About five months after I initially raised this with the real estate agent, I decided I had no choice but to put in a Notice of Breach against them and the owner as they had failed to maintain the property to a safe standard. Only then did repairs start progressing on the balcony (which ended up need major structural repairs).

Two months after the balcony was fixed our lease was up for renewal. They didn't offer us another lease, and put the house on the rental market.

I then applied for a new rental property in West End through a private landlord. I included the contact details of my previous real estate agent on the application. When the new owner called the real estate agent, they spent half an hour [REDACTED] about me on the phone, implying that housemates had left because I was hard to live with (we were 23 at the time, they finished uni and moved overseas...)

I was lucky enough that my other referee was the local Councillor (who I worked for at the time) and he gave me a glowing reference. I was also lucky that the new owner was nice enough to meet me for coffee and recounted the story of the real estate agent, and asked if it was true.

I was so lucky I was able to secure another property... all because I asked for safety repairs.

This Bill does absolutely nothing to prevent this exact same thing from happening to renters in Queensland. Nothing to prevent landlords retaliating against tenants who ask for repairs by just not renewing their lease.

In its current form, the Housing Legislation Amendment Bill 2021 will do little to improve my situation as one of the 1.8 million renters in Queensland. While this bill may be palatable to the real estate lobby, it completely disregards my experience as a renter.

While I'm pleased that the Housing Legislation Amendment Bill includes positive provisions for renters experiencing domestic and family violence, it contains little other reforms of substance for renters.

I urge the Queensland Government to take this opportunity to amend this bill and to implement real rental reforms that will make renting in Queensland affordable, secure and fair.

It's crucial that rental reforms in Queensland include:

- A genuine end to 'no grounds' evictions – providing tenants with long-term security in their homes without the risk of an unfair eviction at the end of their lease
- Allowing tenants to make minor modifications, like hanging picture frames or installing furniture safety anchors
- A real ban on rent bidding – banning agents and property owners from accepting amount above the advertised rent for a property
- Expanding minimum standards to include ventilation, cleanliness and insulation
- Stopping unreasonable rent increases by tying rent increases to general inflation (CPI)
- Ensuring prospective tenants have fair and honest information about the property
- Banning inappropriate or discriminatory questions by lessors
- Make it easier for tenants to have pets – by flipping the onus on property owners/agents to demonstrate why it's unreasonable for a tenant to have pet

These provisions are included in the Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation (Tenants' Rights) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2021. I urge the government to either support the Tenants' Rights Bill, or amend its own bill to provide real protections for renters.

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]

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