

Community Support and Services Committee

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, 29 June 2021 2:12 PM
To: McConnell 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 Grace Grace MP,

& the Community Support and Services Committee,

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.

After growing up in a rental home (which my single mother was kicked out of as a no grounds eviction when I was 13), I have been a renter for the past 10 years of my life. As a young person without family money, I have very little hope of owning my own home and am resigned to renting forever.

For me, what that means is I will never truly have a home that feels like my own, where I know I can continue to live safely and securely.

I cannot hang a picture, put up a shelf, or plant a garden. I am in constant fear that simply by living in my home the landlord will decide I don't get my bond back.

I currently spend more than a third of my income on rent. My lease ends in October and, if the landlord decides to increase the rent, I will no longer be able to afford to live there. They could also simply refuse to renew the lease for no reason. My home for the last three years could be taken from me even though I've done nothing wrong - in fact I've maintained it well.

Anticipating this, I've looked at other rentals and applied for a couple. Finding something suitable that I could afford is incredibly difficult, and when I have applied, I've been unsuccessful. For all I know, this is because another tenant offered more money than the advertised rent - a practice not currently prohibited in Queensland.

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 signature]

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