

Community Support and Services Committee

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, 29 June 2021 9:12 PM
To: Caloundra 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 Jason Hunt 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.

I rented in Brisbane from 2008 and the Sunshine Coast for one year in 2018 before purchasing my own home. During that time I had only one landlord that updated the property promptly and real estate agents that abided legislation without me reminding them of their obligations.

The first rental in Brisbane I stayed for three years. It was a one bedroom apartment that following annual rental increases of \$10-20 per week they wanted to increase the rent by \$60 per week. It was not sustainable and I chose to end the lease and not renew. The real estate 'lost' the entry report and tried to force me to pay for the pre-existing damage noted on that report. It wasn't until I supplied my copy with their signature, printed photos and declaration I would take it to the tribunal that they 'found' the report. I received my bond back in full. Further, they advertised the rental as an open home without my approval as required by law. It was only cancelled when I quoted the legislation and stated the penalty points associated with it. Unfortunately insurance does not cover theft during an open home and the legislation is our protection.

The second rental I stayed for only a year. The landlord requested a high rental increase which was above market rate. Further, the smoke alarm was not working for months and the real estate/ landlord failed to fix it before we vacated. Again, the real estate advertised the rental as an open home without approval (I kept an eye on their ad) and had to be informed to cancel it or be in breach. On vacating the agent or another person with access left obvious skid marks in the toilet bowl following the clean and requested that it was to be cleaned despite the clean bowl photos. The bond, following a second clean, was returned in full.

The third rental (and final) in Brisbane was managed by a live in manager. It was well looked after and if any repairs were required it was promptly seen to (ie new oven). We had no surprise open home on vacating and bond returned in full without issues.

The one year rental on the coast was another live in manager situation however they did not follow legislation around open homes etc on vacating. We had the bond returned in full.

In none of these houses did I feel like it was my home, a home where a picture of my family could hang or to enjoy the company and positive health effects of pets. Owning my own home, finally at 31, was such a freeing sensation. Whilst I looked after the previous houses just as much, or more so, than my home I never felt like it was my private space.

If one does not have an educated mind or ability to read the legislation and do desktop research, you are at the mercy of the realestate agent who will act only in the interests of the landlord. It is time consuming to argue and assert your rights. You also end up stressed and worried about retaliation. There is little way of avenues for renters to protect their rights and see through penalties to agents who do the wrong thing.

I'm very disappointed in the tax payers bill for private landlords with little in return to ensure against homelessness, and provide safe and liveable homes. It is a natural human right that in Australia we should all enjoy.

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]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

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