

Community Support and Services Committee

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, 30 June 2021 2:10 AM
To: Maiwar 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 Michael Berkman 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.

At the height of Covid in Brisbane in 2020, our property manager sent us emails about us owing hundreds of dollars in arrears. It was a really random number that didn't add up, and when we went through all of the receipts of our payments we found that we were not in arrears whatsoever. We emailed her and called her and the office frequently over the next few months wanting to clarify, and she never responded. If we sent her an email about maintenance issues as well as the arrears, she would respond only to the maintenance and not mention the arrears. She wouldn't even send us a copy of the rental ledger so we could see their side of things. At the time we had reduced rent as both my partner and I had lost our jobs, and after MONTHS of essentially having to harass her for a response, she just said if you start paying the full amount of rent again the arrears will be wiped (what??? how does that add up?) and we complied despite the fact that neither my partner or I had f

ound work yet and couldn't properly pay the full amount without financial stress. She also asked us for multiple screenshots of our bank accounts and savings accounts, which I doubt the legality of, and even if it is legal, is deeply invasive and should be unnecessary. She also attempted to claim our entire bond (1600) for a single spot of pilled carpet, and only stepped down from that once we disputed it and took it to the RTA. When we did take it to the RTA, we were told to have a dispute resolution meeting against either me or my partner, and our property manager. This is obviously unbalanced power, as only one of us could represent ourselves, and we weren't allowed to have any sort of council or help, whereas our property manager is well versed in property law and the rights and rules that they can exploit for profit. The entire process of living at that unit with her as our property manager was filled with stress, considering the months we'd go without contact, es

pecially on urgent topics such as maintenance and the arrears. Then, with two weeks left on the lease, we were having to contact her asking what the landlord was going to do and whether or not we were able to stay there/what their plans were only to be told that they were selling the property and we essentially had two weeks to find a place as well as the funds to move, which is incredibly difficult in the midst of a pandemic, a housing crisis, and no employment.

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]

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