

Community Support and Services Committee

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, 30 June 2021 8:22 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.

I've rented my whole life. I've lived in around 17 different places in 32 years.

In my first sharehouse, renting as an 18 year old out of home for the first time, we lived in this run down Queenslander. The landlord rented out underneath the house to a total stranger so he could park his car - he would drive in at 7am with the radio blaring. The entire backyard was also a gravel pit that the landlord used as a car park for strangers. The front stairs were so broken it's a wonder no one fell down and injured themselves. We had a sewage leak downstairs, a broken window in winter and problems with the hot water tank. Eventually we had to leave that house because I fell through the floorboards one day and we broke lease. I was lucky not to be injured. The real estate admittedly they were powerless to get the real estate to do anything, or to stop the car park situation. And we had no choice except 1) put up with all of it or 2) not put up with it and move out. They still charged us \$20 for a missing shower curtain.

A couple of years later I lived in a different sharehouse. A property manager at the office disparagingly called it a "singles party house" because we were three independent adults living there, and also told my housemate who is Aboriginal to "get a job" (he was studying at the time and receiving a study allowance.) It seemed totally normal for them to speak to renters like they were nothing.

A few years ago I lived in another run down sharehouse, this time managed privately. The landlord was easy to get along with, but he was a huge cheapskate. Towards the end of my time there the floors were rotten and sagging. We were told "never use the bath" as it could fall through the floor. He never undertook the external floor repairs

that could have alleviated the situation. What were we supposed to do, force him to fix it? He would have kicked us out. We moved when he sold the house and he made 1.2 million dollars.

In my last apartment there was mould and damp in a wall that was never properly addressed. A housemate had to throw out a bunch of his stuff because of the mould growing on it. We also had major hot water problems and spent an entire day trying to call the real estate but no one answered their phones in the office. But we just felt like we had no recourse to sort out any of these problems without being evicted. When we moved the real estate agents tried to get our bond through either malice or incompetence (I'm not sure) - the person who did the exit report didn't even look at our original entry report, and they had never been in the unit. So we got given a long list of things to fix or clean that were just pre-existing marks and stains and I spent hours going through our original entry report and refuting each one. It was stressful and such a waste of my time. We got our full bond back but only because I knew to apply for it first thanks to support groups like Brisbane R

enters Alliance on Facebook.

I have never felt like I have any mechanisms for protecting myself from unscrupulous landlords and dodgy real estate agents. It's either put up with horrible and unsafe conditions or be prepared to leave, do the whole stressful moving thing again, and take my chances with another dodgy landlord.

I feel like I deserve to live somewhere safe, in peace, and I should have the right to fairly challenge landlords and real estates doing the wrong thing without losing my home. I should be treated like a long term customer. My current real estate agent speaks to me like I'm a naughty child. I have a great rental history, have never ever in my life missed or delayed a rent payment and have always left a property in great condition after moving.

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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