

Community Support and Services Committee

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, 30 June 2021 1:38 PM
To: Toohey 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 Peter Russo 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.

A real estate agency once refused to return my full bond because, two weeks after vacating premises, "there are spiderwebs all over the landing and hedges". Another, private, land lord did not supply curtains as per law, or the security bars he advertised, but I was too intimidated (as a disability pensioner with very few options for housing) to take him to task about it. When I needed to leave that residence for health reasons (for which I had GP and specialist supporting documentation) I was expected to pay out the entire remainder of my lease- there is no legal maximum amount the landlord can recoup from me- and eventually had to threaten the landlord with legal action for my reasonable early termination because I ran out of savings completely.

My current lease won't allow my support animal to live with me because the rental agency doesn't wish to petition the body corporate on my behalf.

It's hard enough to find appropriate housing for my needs, let alone in my price range, before the threat of rent increase (which will not be reflected in my pension amount), and other predatory or incompetent leasing agents and landlords is taken into account.

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]

[Redacted contact information]