

Community Support and Services Committee

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, 30 June 2021 2:19 PM
To: South Brisbane 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 Amy MacMahon 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.

[REDACTED] - I do not want my landlord to find out and continue to cause grief for the remaining of our lease.

I currently have been living out of home now for over four years. During this time, I have had a steady and solid income as an Engineer. I have been living in my third rental now in Highgate Hill for about 8 months. I live at the property at [REDACTED] with another couple who have lived there for over 2 years. After I had moved into this place, I was officially added to the lease as a tenant. On the lease at this stage was a couple, myself and a dog approved part time.

Three months ago, my partner of over two years and his dog had organised to move in with me along with the other couple.

The four of us had decided to move to a more spacious house and so told our real estate we would not continue the lease. We began the search for another rental. After a month of searching, at least 4 rejected applications and over 20 submitted applications we were exhausted with how busy the current rental market was. Real estate agents were suggesting us to offer above the advertised weekly rental price and we were constantly exhausted with trying to get ahead and find a house before our current lease was up.

We decided that we weren't going to be able to find somewhere else in the current market. We asked our real estate agent at [REDACTED] if we could resign another lease and stay on at the property instead. The real estate agreed, on the condition that we signed a 12 month lease and agreed to \$10 a week increased rent.

He had over 4 years of history living in private rentals and worked for himself. Beginning of last year, he began studying full time so was unable to work enough to pay rent and was eligible for AusStudy. We prepared for him to move in by contacting the current real estate and sending his rental application in, which was forwarded to the owner. Originally we thought there would be no issues with him moving in as we already had a dog approved on the lease, so didn't think the owner had any issues with dogs.

After my partner submitted his rental application for review by the owners, we did not hear from them for at least a month. During this period my partner was in a housing limbo, as he had to vacate his previous tenancy. When the real estate agent finally got back to us, they notified us that my partner nor the dog were approved to live at the

property. We tried to negotiate with the owner via the real estate, offering pet bond, high rent and switching the dogs on the lease (even though we only had the one weekend every 2 months). The owners did not budge on their refusal of my partner and his dog and did not give us any explanation why. This left us extremely frustrated and confused.

In the end, we thought the only option was for my partners brother to look after the dog and reapply to the property without the dog. My partner then resubmitted his application to be on the lease without his dog. The real estate then proceeded to tell us that the owner was "reviewing" his application, even though they had previously seen it for over a month. This was extremely frustrating because by this stage, my partner had to move in because he had no where else to go. My partner, also by moving in with my was no longer eligible for AusStudy and we had to register as a defacto couple.

The real estate took 2 weeks to get back to us, after a few follow up emails. We didnt think it would take so long for the owner to approve a partner to move in. My partner was finally approved to the lease but without his dog he has owned for at least 6 years.

We would love this bill to pass so that my partner can finally get his dog back and living with us.

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,

