

Community Support and Services Committee

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, 30 June 2021 5:56 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.

After leaving a domestic violence situation I left my beautiful home in Milton and found a house to rent on my own in west end. The real estate agent seemed overly keen to get me to move into the 3 bed house and said it was ok if I got the 2 other flatmates I would find approved later on as I just desperately needed somewhere I could go with a pet and had room for a 5m greenhouse for my work. This was hard as it is nearly impossible to find a rental with a pet so I had no choice but to take it.

There were 2 tiny dwellings under this house I lived in that were technically not even legally habitable in a disgusting state and the ceiling below legal height, the pipes for the toilet above went over the sink and leaked sewage, doors missing and no smoke alarms. The agent said there was an old man in one but lived away and was never there and assured the the second dwelling would not be rented ever so I would have private use of my courtyard and the inner doors from those dwellings entered my lock up garage.

The inspection was very quick and I was rushed through. There were no kitchen benches even in this house but I tried to be positive and resolved to buy some that i brought with me.

The day I moved in and went through the condition report I found it was so so filthy and had not been cleaned even with old toothbrushes in bathroom drawers. There were holes in the roof and the shower only came out a trickle. There was no internet line at all and no tv. I broke down crying.

On the first night there alone- a junky dressed as a pirate tried to enter the property with me there alone and it was so very traumatic. Apparently he had previously squatted here and the house had been broken into 3 times. I was so terrified I called the police who said they couldn't lock up the man as they had nowhere to put him.

I called the agent and the landlord came to meet me. He initially refused to fix the shower even after I told him I'd been squatting in the bath pouring cups over myself to wash. He told me to "not be so precious" about the junky and I should be used to this in west end.

He refused to put security bars on the windows or fix anything but the shower head after weeks. He was very overbearing and would stand over me and raise his voice all the time.

He also told me he will be renting out the dwelling underneath and I had no say and "too bad" if I felt unsafe. He didn't care that I felt unsafe and it meant a stranger would have access to my lock up garage, my laundry and have very close contact to me one on one entering the property- and the nature of the underneath dwelling which was a dilapidated hovel only attracted junkies and very unsavoury characters by nature which the landlord tried to move in there during my lease.

The landlord or his son would enter all the time without written notice and sometimes yell up at me through my window to let him in. This happened for several months. One time he was in his mothers house across the road watching the house and phoned me to tell me to turn some lights out that were in the "shared" area so he didn't have to pay electricity. I felt terrified he was watching me.

When the real estate confronted him he fired them. I was left at his whim with no agent for months and I lived in fear but had no money to move again.

I finally left after my 6 month lease absolutely mortified. I called the rta and they basically said you can't do anything unless you had written breaches for the landlord earlier- which I chose not to do as I felt afraid and had nowhere to go if I was evicted which he threatened when I brought up any issues I needed fixing.

I met locally many others who had been treated terrible by this notorious landlord in this house, they all lost bonds and were treated terribly also.

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,

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