

Community Support and Services Committee

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, 30 June 2021 6:46 PM
To: McConnel 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 Grace Grace 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.

Summarised in bullet points for ease:

- When moving in, we could not adequately lock our back door due to the locks having rusted significantly and making our property not secure. We requested emergency repairs or replacement and were told to simply put a broom behind the door until they could get someone to fix it.
- We had a garage door that broke (only entrance to the garage was through the garage door), and the real estate told us that it was not an emergency repair. When we advised that we could not access part of our property that included our car, washing machine and various tools - they still did not accept it as an emergency repair. We kept pushing and advised we would be contacting someone to have it fixed if they did not, they sent their preferred contractor - who then spent a good deal of the time complaining to us the renters for making him come out and do the job.
- A previous real estate agency told me I must keep my power and utilities connected for 3 days after my lease ended or they would fine me \$50. All final cleaning had been completed and the keys returned - I refused to keep paying for these utilities after my lease ended and the agents argued with me about it. My point of view was that there would be nothing stopping them blasting A/C for 3 days and ramping up a large power bill under my name. The agents mocked me for being concerned.
- On moving into a property there was significant water damage to a wall, due to what appeared to be a leak. A plumber was supposedly sent and no leak was found. It continued to get worse the entire time we were there (3 years) and the agents did not act on it any further despite us raising it as a concern at each inspection.

- The rent was raised by \$20 per week, despite the value of the property appearing to be declining while we were there - i.e repairs were not seen to, the paint was falling off everywhere, and the carpet desperately needed replacing ... why do we have to live with this sub standard of living? And then be expected to pay MORE rent because of “changes in the market”
- Being told we cannot hang curtains, despite being willing to pay for it ourselves. Instead we had to deal with very old blinds which frequently got tangled and were next to impossible to clean.
- After living in a place for 3 years, and always paying rent on time and maintaining the property well, we decided to look for a new suburb to live in (KG). When our lease expired we went into the rolling agreement as allowed by the RTA and as soon as this happened, we were given our 3 month notice to leave. The rental market was incredibly tight and this was very stressful that they could just evict us for no reason other than that we didn't want to be trapped in the same rental property for another fixed lease period. We were more than happy to provide the owner with a months notice or more on our intent to move out - but the agency/ gone owners wouldn't have it.

I'd like to mention that all these experiences have been from earlier landlords and my current landlord has been very good. However this is the first time we have been able to afford to live in apartment that were built in the last 10 years - which likely helps this matter.

I'd also like to say that in attempting to find somewhere to live in Kg, we had to deal with a lot of rental bidding. Real estate agents told us “to make our application as desirable as possible”, clearly alluding to offering higher rental payments. To secure a property, we had to offer to pay rent 4-6 weeks in advance. A friend of mine in Everton Park had to offer \$50 extra per week to finally secure a rental town house.

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]