

Community Support and Services Committee

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, 30 June 2021 7:18 PM
To: Greenslopes 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 Joseph Kelly 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.

- In Indooroopilly I had a landlord who carried out his own repairs to save money. He was not a handyman and caused damage to his own property by trying to fix it. This included causing leaking behind walls in the shower. He eventually had to call in a plumber who sighed and said this was a classic example of the owner.
- In Woolloongabba a real estate agent bullied us as tenants, and threatened to report us to an agency and give us what he called a 'black mark' against us when we left (my next landlord then told me this wasn't correct and that he was lying to us, but it was scary and intimidating nonetheless). They opted to not renew our lease as the owner was selling, and only after we had left did they fix things that we had requested to be fixed during our tenancy.
- In Greenslopes I was told after I'd signed a lease that our owner lived next door to the rental property. If I had known this, I would not have signed on. The owner openly spied on us during the tenancy. Within the first six weeks he incorrectly claimed an extra tenant was living with us because he had been illegally and inaccurately logging the whereabouts of us and our guests. The owner then tried for a whole year to illegally raise our rent because of this, even after we explained he was wrong and we'd just moved in, and that he shouldn't be monitoring us. The real estate backed him on this and allowed him to try to raise the rent illegally, and we have it in writing. Once they checked with the RTA and realised it was illegal, they didn't proceed further. They then increased the rent by a large amount when we renewed the lease. Additionally the real estate made multiple errors in their paperwork including the lease, and set inspections before the legal period of 3 months multiple times. The owner has also entered our property without prior warning or permission as he was the one fixing things.
- In Holland Park there were chunks of asbestos laying around the yard and being mowed over. When I alerted the owner/landlord to this, he picked it up with his bare hands and put it in the bin.
- There are huge power imbalances. It is terrifying to ask for repairs or support from a real estate, to point out if the law is being broken or defend your right as a tenant as it feels like it will mark you as a troublemaker and make it difficult to rent again.
- I would ask that my name and details be redacted if my examples are used as I fear speaking up.

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,

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature and name of the sender.