

Community Support and Services Committee

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, 1 July 2021 11:11 AM
To: Bonney 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 Samuel O'Connor 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.

I have rented 5 properties on the Gold Coast over the past 20 years and had some terrible experiences.

The first place looked like a cheap two storey so we grabbed it quick. The neighbour then told us that the owner was going to bulldoze it in 6 months. The agent knew that but never told us. We had to leave when he bulldozed it 6 months later. We didn't get our full bond back because the owner complained the windowsills were dusty!

Second place had mould downstairs. Agent kept blaming us for not keeping it clean. Turns out it was a structural problem with water seeping through a wall. Owner promised to fix it but did nothing till we refused to keep paying full rent. Then he sent some cheapie tradies who pulled off architraves and went away. That night blacksnakes from under the house came inside through the architraves. When we left a few months later, the agent demanded we pay back the partial rent we withheld because downstairs was mouldy and dangerous. We had to go to court but the agent didn't even show up! We still had to pay our court costs!

Another place had a huge gumtree out back that dropped dangerously big branches in the yard. We complained to the owner who got tradies to cut off the branches near the fences, but left big branches above the roof and clothes line. A few months after we left, new renters told us the mouldy lounge/dining roof collapsed. There was also a dirty hole in the kitchen wall where an old fan had not been fixed or replaced. Agent would not fix so I had to board it up.

These places were not cheap. But the agents don't care. When we asked for help we were told laws did not give us any rights. Not fair on my wife and kids that we had to keep moving. FIX it NOW!

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 area.