

Community Support and Services Committee

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, 1 July 2021 12:44 PM
To: Mark Bailey
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 Mark Bailey 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 - I'm no longer a renter, but I rented from the time I was 17 until 32, in a range of different kinds of accommodation.

In one rental, the roof leaked with any amount of rain. The landlord refused to do anything about it, despite repeated requests. This caused damage to our furniture, artworks, and clothing, and, more seriously, caused a mold problem that had a significant health impact on my housemates, who both have asthma. When our lease ended, the owner wanted to raise the rent by \$50/week. We left.

In one rental we were not informed of changes our neighbour was making to the fence, which endangered our pet dogs.

I have never lived in a rental where all the hot plates worked, or where the oven was the right temperature.

I have never lived in a rental that was insulated, or a rental with ceiling fans, or a rental with fly screens - every place baked in summer, was somehow often colder than the outside in winter.

I have lived in rentals where the owner and/or property manager and/or tradespeople came into our home with insufficient or no notice. No, this isn't legal, but we were too afraid of retaliation to complain.

In one rental, we were expected to do heavy gardening (beyond lawn mowing and general maintenance), and, given there was no green bin and we received no green waste vouchers, we had great difficulty disposing of garden waste. We were threatened with our bond being withheld if we did not sort it out.

I never lived in a rental that allowed me to hang a picture, other than on existing nails/hooks (which themselves were not always thoughtfully or safely placed).

In one rental (a very small 1 bed apartment) we could not drain our sink properly, because the whole kitchen was on a slope. In that same rental, there were so many holes in the floor, ceiling, and walls that, despite our best efforts, rodents sometimes scurried across our feet as we cooked in the kitchen. That same place also had no fly screens, ceiling fans, or aircon, so we had to leave the windows open to cool it. We had to contend with wasps nesting inside, and, one strange year, hundreds of moths. Further, on occasion, the asbestos ceiling tiles would fall off, sometimes hitting us on the way down. You can imagine why this made us nervous.

Knowing my neighbours and being part of a community is important to me, but for a time I had to move 4 times in 4 years. I felt so disconnected and out of touch, and it affected my ability to feel a sense of safety and belonging in my home.

In its current form, the Housing Legislation Amendment Bill 2021 will do little to improve the situation of 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]