

Community Support and Services Committee

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, 1 July 2021 4:43 PM
To: Burleigh 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 Michael Hart 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.

It took 8 weeks to find a house to rent this time around (previously it took six months as a newly separated single mother). A basic two bedder is costing me \$520 per week on the Gold Coast - a place that relies on seasonal work, education, healthcare and trades - it's no Sydney or Melbourne with their financial centres and big salaries yet our rents are reflecting the rents of those big cities.

My rental has poor security - fly screens (not security screens) and slider windows with locks that don't work - I use wooden dowling to stay secure. My car was broken into the other night, whilst parked in the car port (which incidentally is open to the elements - \$520 doesn't afford a garage to go with the house - the landlord keeps that for his own use - whenever he likes, disregarding the legislation that states the tenant should have 'quiet and peaceful enjoyment of the property').

I am a registered nurse - a frontline worker, regarded as a professional. I work in acute hospital settings, I work bloody hard, my body aches at the end of shifts from helping people who are in need. I expose myself to risk in the course of my work and potentially expose my children as well. I guess you could say I am a contributor and you would think in a just and fair society I would be able to afford a rent where we are secure and safe.

Something needs to be done to make rental properties more available and rents more affordable. Landlords need to be accountable to the legislation guiding the industry, to provide security and repairs and not able to charge whatever they want for rent.

Also the application process of using faceless online third party websites/data collection sites to submit details brings privacy rights into question. I had to provide copies of my drivers license, my passport, bank statements, work details - it is invasive and begs the question 'how secure is our information on these sites? how at risk of being hacked are these sites? and where does our information go?'

A good rental history should be viable proof of ability to maintain a mortgage - especially when rent costs more than mortgage repayments so we can get out of the rental 'dead money' hellhole.

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 address]

I would like my name and address redacted from this email in the event it is shared or used.