

Community Support and Services Committee

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, 1 July 2021 5:15 PM
To: Stafford 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 James Sullivan 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.

We moved into our house July last year, and noted some water damage in the ceiling on entry which appeared to be due to gutter damage and patched up leaks. When the rainy season started, we found out that there are currently three sites where the roof leaks, including one where the water actually pours in from a load bearing wooden beam in the ceiling. We reported this to the real estate, who had a plumber come to the property and informed us that nothing could be done to patch the leak until it was dry. We waited, and when a second tradesman inspected the site, we were informed that they could do nothing to patch the roof due to it being asbestos and "too far gone" and needed to be replaced. We then heard nothing from the landlord or agent for months. During this time we actually needed to call the SES to tarp our roof, however it was not structurally safe to do so. The SES informed us approximately 6 months ago that the property is actually deemed unfit to inhabit due t

o this issue, in addition to having to relieve what they estimated to be several YEARS worth of composted leaf matter from the gutters, an issue which is the root cause of the majority of damage to the property. After us chasing up once again and informing the property manager of this information, the owners sent out an insurance assessor to view the damage. They told him it was recent hail damage. We have not had any hail since living here, and it is visibly obvious from the ground what has caused the state of the roof.

Due to this and health concerns that have been compounded whilst living in an "uninhabitable" environment, we had been hesitant to quickly sign a new lease (they started asking us months ago), until we knew what was happening with the roof. This compounded two days ago when we received notification from the property manager that unless we signed the lease within 48 hours, the rent offer would be withdrawn and raised further than they already had. Our rent has increased from \$335 to \$340 per week, whilst the health issues caused by living here are severely impacting our ability to generate income. Both my partner and I live with disabilities and when we moved in

here we were both employed, I have since lost my income due to my health declining whilst living in an unsafe premises. When I expressed my discontent at being threatened with another rent increase whilst our home is still unsafe to reside in and is now developing a mould problem, I was firmly lectured by the agent

that they are in no way there to help or work with us, and that they are paid by the landlord to protect their interests, and that we should be grateful as we were still paying lower than market value for the property.

There are many other issues with the property, severely unsafe plumbing and electric appliances which have posed a direct safety risk, as well as potential damage to the property, which I constantly live in fear that we will be blamed for. I have begun making minor repairs myself due to the fact that ever since we started asking for the roof to be fixed, the real estate office has become increasingly hostile and inconsistent in their communication with both ourselves and the tenant of the adjacent side of the divided house. We are scared to ask for the oven to be repaired as the seals have decomposed over time, and instead we pay over \$300 in electricity bills per quarter due to compensating for the almost unusable cooking appliance.

We have now been forced into agreeing to live here for another 12 months and have no assurance that anything will be done to stop the risk to our health and the safety of our possessions and pets.

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,

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