

## Community Support and Services Committee

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, 1 July 2021 6:21 PM  
**To:** Logan 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 Linus Power 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 pay \$550 per week for our rental property and yet since the Halloween hailstorm on 31 October 2020, we have had NO solar panels, our tile roof is still full of holes, there is now water damage to the ceilings in almost every room of the house, the main living area air con has stopped working, we have mould forming on water damaged ceilings throughout the house and the owners asked us to lie to the insurance assessor because the solar panels had stopped working at some point around a year before the hailstorm even happened despite us requesting that they be repaired, which was never done. It is now seven months later and not even our property manager can apparently "force" the owners to fix the extensive damage and yet they still demand their full rent each week. We eventually sent breach notices for the laundry list of maintenance that this house requires (some of it as far back as when we moved in, which the property manager was well aware of) and only a quarter of those things have been attended to (and none relating to the roof damage). We still have a yard full of toxic broken solar panels still sitting here. We have to endure 3 monthly inspections to ensure we are keeping the property in good condition when the owner refuses to even conduct basic necessary maintenance on the house. We have had to ensure the house being put on the market 3 times since we moved in less than three years ago so having to have the house "inspection clean" with only 24 hours' notice each time (as that's all the legislation currently requires), sometimes having up to 3-4 separate entries in a week from prospective buyers. The owner refuses to reduce the rent for the woeful lack of maintenance that it seems they don't have any intention of actually conducting. Our only recourse through all of this? Referring the matter to QCAT for a hearing, which the property manager keeps trying to talk me out of because she's "between a rock and a hard place too" as the owners are the ones who pay her, not us, so she has to comply with what they do or don't want to do. We have been warned about the possibility of retaliatory eviction if we do progress to QCAT and so we can't even risk that right now as we will be buying a house outright in the next year after selling my father's deceased estate but because there have been delays, we have to renew for another 6 months at the end of August whether we want to or not if we'd like to avoid moving twice in six months. Right now, owners seem to have all the power and renters have very little, meaning that we have to base major life decisions upon whether we need to renew our lease or not, all because the owners refuse to do basic maintenance, and yet we're expected to not push the issue, keep paying full rent of \$550 a week (even though I lost 80% of my income during COVID last year, we still scraped rent together as a somewhere to live is a priority as we have children and pets) and not escalate these maintenance matters further even though we are entitled to because at the end of the day, the owners ultimately hold more power in this situation than we do, despite their inaction and refusal to meet their legal requirements as landlords. We are living in substandard conditions, paying full rent for amenities that we do not have and there's nothing we can do about it without risking our lease not being renewed in August. We have no power in this situation and it's frustrating to say the least.

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 black rectangular redaction box covering the signature of the sender.