

Community Support and Services Committee

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, 2 July 2021 12:16 AM
To: South Brisbane 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 Amy MacMahon 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.

In 2013 I was renting a modern, unfurnished apartment at the [REDACTED]. We were the second tenants to lease the property, according to the leasing agent. After a few months residing there and regular monthly inspections from our property manager, we were informed that someone new would be taking on the property management role for the apartment complex. Upon the first inspection, she accuses us of installing a TV mount in the wall of the master bedroom and instructed us to have this removed and the wall re-plastered immediately. We never installed a TV in the main bedroom, nor did we make any modifications to any of the fixed furnishings of the apartment in any way.

After several back and forth emails and a face to face meeting, we questioned why this had not been raised in any prior inspections, to which she responded with something along the lines of, "that doesn't matter, the TV mount is not on the entry condition report so you are liable to fix it". She paid no attention to the fact that the TV mount was not even being used at the time. To us it was as much a fixed feature of the apartment as light fittings, ceiling fans, and kitchen appliances were.

So regardless of the fact that it was already installed when we started renting the property, the only solution she gave us was to pay our own money to fix the wall or face eviction. I was twenty years old at the time and was definitely taken advantage of, given I had only two years prior history renting and experience dealing with agents/landlords in the rental market.

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.