

Community Support and Services Committee

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, 2 July 2021 11:04 AM
To: Cooper 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 Jonty Bush 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.

Firstly, last year during the lockdown our hot water system broke and was constantly leaking and reheating the water. It took a week to fix and we were stung with a \$650 water bill and a \$1300 electricity bill where our usual bills were \$95 and \$350 respectively. Both my partner and myself were unable to work during the lockdown as we were hospitality workers and we also were waiting on income support from the government. We requested that the landlord compensate for the extra bills placed upon us, also citing that we had continued paying rent even when we were entitled not to. We had to go through a rental tenancy advocacy for the outcome to be negotiated, with us still having to pay half of both bills at a time where we were scraping by. We had similar issues with repairs done throughout our tenancy at that residence.

We then decided to move from this house as we were told they would be selling but gave us no indication of when and what would happen to us. This was really scary as the rental market at the time was quite precarious. We applied to many houses and realised that we would have to pay far above what our ideal budget was to get a house. We now have a beautiful home that we love and would have liked to buy if it wasn't so overpriced. Unfortunately we are again left scared about our future as rental price increases within Brisbane have been exorbitant. If our rent increase was to go up by \$50 a week we would be paying \$500 a week on 2 student hospitality wages. Therefore, we would likely have to find a new home within our price range that would also accommodate us having a dog.

I do not think we should face the stress of homelessness because of the terrible way renters are treated and our limited rights. I hope this email will encourage you to advocate on my and other rentals behalves.

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,

