

Community Support and Services Committee

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, 3 July 2021 11:14 AM
To: Glenn Butcher
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 Glenn Butcher 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.

I am a 47 year old woman. I am very responsible and even though I am low income (Disability Pension) I always pay my rent first, then my bills, and IF there is anything left over then I can buy food or whatever else I want out of the dregs.

I take very good care of properties I rent. I spend the first year cleaning them up, gardening, decorating with decor to hide unsightly aspects of the house.

I think because I care about my home and want it to be nice, the landlords take advantage of this. What keeps happening to me is now that it looks nice, they put it on the market, and because I am a decent person I make sure it's clean and tidy for open houses, and they sell in about two weeks.

Then I have to move again. :(Moving is expensive, and as I said I am on Disability and have no means to save thousands in preparation for having to move, three out of four weeks I don't even have grocery money.

I moved to Gladstone two and a half years ago. When I moved here it was ONLY because this was the only town in all of Australia (believe me I searched) where I could afford the rent. There were literally hundreds of houses to rent in my price range. Now there are none.

I've never been happy in this property, the landlords do not do repairs, there is flooding when it rains, tv aerial isn't connected, and plenty of other things, and desperately want to move. But I am stuck The current legislation says the agent can not raise the rent more than once in four months. I have had four rent increases every six months to the day in the last two years. I have never had a rent increase of more than \$20 a year before in any of the places I have rented. Here my rent increases have been \$50-70 a time. My rent has gone from being the recommended 30% of my income to very close to 75%.

My agents know I am on Disability, they know my income doesn't go up when they charge more, they know full well I can't afford these massive increases, they know I'm not happy about it. They also know there is absolutely no where available for me to move to so it's either pay up or go be homeless.

It's nothing short of extortionate.

But they can do it because there is nothing to stop them.

Please use your position to help renters like me.

I am so scared of becoming homeless and losing all my possessions.

I have no family to help. I am on my own in life, and this is a very scary unstable way to have to live.

There should be limits on how much they can raise rent.

The Centrelink housing supplement is inadequate.

I have a hunch if they can't raise rent as much as they want, they'll tell tenants to leave, and start a new lease with someone else at the higher rate they want. The rental situation in QLD is unscrupulous. There is a complete lack of affordable housing for people with low income. We've got to live somewhere!
It's really terrifying to be in this situation.

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.