

Community Support and Services Committee

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, 3 July 2021 11:22 AM
To: Mundingburra 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 Leslie Walker 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.

My family and I (2 adults & 3 children under 5) recently (April 2021) moved out of a rental property in which we rented for 2 years through an Agency. In that two years, from the very beginning of our tenancy we experienced a multitude of significant issues that were ignored by the Agency and the owner of the property, despite some of these issues being directly related to our safety and health and well-being. At one stage we issued the Agency/Owner with 5 x Form 11s due to unresolved maintenance issues and were threatened by the Owner that if we were to attempt to break our lease he would take us to court. Now being a low income family with a baby on the way, we could not afford the court fees nor the extraordinary amount of money it costs to break a lease, so we continued to live with the below issues for our entire tenancy.

On the 7/08/19 I emailed the Agency about mould present in the end small room (just after we moved in) and was told that it was just mould staining and there was nothing to be done about it. I cleaned the walls and was able to remove the 'staining' only to find a few weeks later it had returned and much worse. It was then that we started to experience the leak in the hallway ceiling and above the internal stairs from the skylight. We then found mould in the first upstairs bedroom all over the walls and door as well as the hallway wall and linen cupboard. The handy man came and patched up the hallway leak and attempted to fix the skylight leak with duct tape which didn't work and the skylight continued to leak (getting worse). The handy man then came back for a third time to fix the skylight and was advised by one of his men that the skylight was disintegrated and the flutes are exposed which is causing water to literally pour into the house and walls. The handy man advised

us that the owner was not willing to fix this issue (and others) as it will cost him too much money and he doesn't care.

As a result of the leaking roof the dining room ceiling has bowed and the left hand wall there has rotted all the way down stairs, again The handy man said the owner was not worried about fixing this problem. The stairway landing area and walls were riddled with mould and unsafe as it was constantly exposed to water which puddled on the top step and then down onto the stairs below. We lost a bookcase, table, desk, lounge, linen, toys, shoes and personal items from mould and water damage.

The end small bedroom was not used for about 12 months as it was ALWAYS riddled with mould because of a leak in the roof.

The handy man came one day and sprayed bleach on the mould above my sons cove, a \$8000 computer and printer without any care in the world.

The mould only got worse the more the skylight leaked and spread into the lounge room walls and entry walls and ceiling. The hallway ceiling leak that was patched is cracked and leaking again.

Because of all the water and mould issues we had to clean the walls every 3 weeks as my daughter suffers from a heart and lung condition. Due to the water damage some of the paint on the walls is damaged, again, this is from the owner and the handy man not wanting to fix the problem.

The handy man was very unprofessional as he showed up unannounced many of times and even once let himself INTO the house without my knowledge despite me being at home. Not to mention the owner showed up twice unannounced without entry notices. We even asked for entry notices to be given for when The handy man wanted to attend however we never received one.

The back yard had over 80 trees of all different sorts but mainly consisting of palm trees which some were around 20-30 meters tall which were all incredibly overgrown. The washing line was underneath a bunch of these and I was hit by falling palm fronds and seed pods countless times while hanging out the washing. We also had brown snakes in the back yard and in the house. My children were not allowed to play in the back yard as it was not safe. We asked the Agency/owner 5 times to have the trees trimmed and it never got actioned despite being harmed by them.

We paid \$460 a week for a 5 bedroom house where 2 bedrooms could not be used due to mould infestation.

The owner of this property did not care about any of these issues and was happy for us to live in squalor and danger for two years.

This is only part of our story and unfortunately in our new rental, we are being treated just the same with important maintenance issues being ignored for now 3 months.

Something has to change for tenants, we put up with so much, for what? We get nothing.

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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