

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, 4 July 2021 6:34 PM
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.

I didn't realise how bad the rental crisis had gotten in Queensland before I started looking for a place to move with my partner in January/February this year. I was working full time and had a stable job as a lawyer, and my partner worked two part time jobs while studying. We both had impeccable rental history, and thought that we would be in a good position to find a place.

Although we got in early to look for rentals, at the beginning we held off applying immediately because we wanted to inspect the places first. We soon realised that this was a mistake, as places were clearly being rented sight unseen, and were removed from the market prior to the first inspection. We upped our game and started applying before inspecting, but even this wasn't enough. I started calling real estates after submitting applications only to be told 'someone else has already offered more'. We couldn't afford to pay more rent, so we started offering 3 months upfront when we sent through our applications - keeping in mind we still had not inspected these places.

In a stroke of luck, after 4 weeks of looking, we were finally offered a place, that we were able to inspect. The move in date was 2 weeks after my partner had to be out of his place, and luckily he was able to move in with me for a period before we moved out together. We were just grateful to have found somewhere.

Unfortunately, once we moved to our new rental, the challenges persisted. A bond clean had clearly not been undertaken at our new rental, and allergens including dog hair and dust were so thick on the floor that we could see our footprints. There was human waste on the toilet seat. When we alerted our real estate on the Friday we moved in, they told us to put it on the entry report and they would deal with it on Monday. We were obviously unable to

Housing Legislation Amendment Bill 2021

live in our new place over the weekend. Although the real estate eventually organised for the place to be cleaned (around all the furniture we had moved in), they refused our request for the rent to be reduced for that week to reflect the three days that we were unable to occupy the unit. Despite photographs being provided evidencing the state of the unit, the real estate said that they 'disagreed' that the place was not in a habitable state. To that, I challenge you to find a real estate agent who is willing to use a toilet with

someone else's waste on the seat.

Despite being well-educated on my rights as a tenant, and willing and able to challenge this decision through the RTA process, I felt completely helpless in the face of a system that, again and again, favours landlords over tenants. How could I risk the imperfect unit that it took me countless applications, and a month to find, over three days rent? Even if I wanted to leave and find a new rental, I'm relying on my landlord/real estate to provide a reference for my next place. I was forced, and will continue to be forced to endure these conditions that are unhealthy and unfair because my future accommodation depends on it.

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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