
From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, 5 July 2021 10:36 AM
To: Mark Bailey
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 Mark Bailey 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.

Being a renter in 2021 is a constant reminder that I am less than human. Because I was not born at a time where the housing market was fair and, thus, do not own land, my rights, in the eyes of those I pay rent to and to who make the rules about renting, are negotiable, my security is non-essential and my dignity is exchanged for the privilege to be sheltered. Instability, incompetent and self-important real estate agents, and constant price hikes punctuate the rental experience.

While I have not had to bear the truly unforgivable brunt of the rental system, many of my closest friends and loved ones have. In the experience of my partner, every lease renewal included a price hike which was difficult for him to cope with because he worked multiple casual jobs. One of my co-workers has had leaking pipe for weeks that are destroying the roofing in her house, but her real estate agent still hasn't made steps to fix the problem. This is a similar experience I've had at my own house.

The rental experience is even more difficult due to the "casualisation" of the workforce. Unstable work and constant increases in the price of rent make it impossible to pay for life's essential, not to mention trying to establish a saving account, in the hope to one day save enough money to put a deposit on a house that I'll never be able to pay off in my lifetime. Because of this, my only option in both the near and distant future is to rent. Renting, as a concept, is fine, but being treated this way is degrading and makes me scared for the future. My future and my rights are being taken away by greedy and uncompassionate individuals in the business of making lots of money and not caring who they step on. It is unacceptable that property investors, rich boomers and soulless politician are allowed to puppeteer the lives of millions of Australia because they know they can make an extra buck.

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,

