
From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, 7 July 2021 4:49 PM
To: Mt Ommaney 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 Jessica Pugh 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 have owned my own home for close to 5 years now. Before that I rented for decades. I grew up in rental properties. And, despite being a full-time teacher for the last 20 years, I couldn't afford to own in Brisbane until recently. In so many years of renting, I have stories.

There was the house in Toowoomba where the landlord let a friend of his live illegally in the property's granny flat, six months into our lease. Then he doubled down when we asked to break the lease as a result - he tried to charge ongoing rent while he repaired the property because it wasn't fit for rental anymore. The front stairs had fallen down, the oven no longer worked and his friend was still living there, in the granny flat.

There was the house in Mansfield where we were given 2 weeks notice to leave when the owners defaulted on their mortgage. We found out when a representative of the bank knocked on the door and served us eviction papers.

There was the property that tried to charge us a full bond clean, even though we'd already done one and submitted receipts. The reason? There was dust and dead flies on the windowsills from our pest control because they didn't do the final property check for over 2 weeks.

There was the house in Tarragindi that we were being over-charged for by \$150 a week. We chose not to renew the lease when the owner refused to address the costs (despite their agent telling them it was too expensive for the market). When we left, they charged us to repaint the entire living space because we had moved some of their existing picture hooks.

Then there was the house in Middle Park that was badly in need of repairs to the pergola. We requested repairs from the agent. They made it clear that the owner wasn't interested in maintaining the property at all - "but if you want to paint it, I won't tell the owner". It was still falling down but at least it looked a little better.

After years of renting, I've come to understand that ending a lease is like ending a relationship. The property owner will almost always be petty and petulant, and they use the full extent of the law to make your life difficult. My husband and I are both teaching professionals who give back to our communities but when we were renting we were made to feel like the bottom of the social order, like we were deserving of nothing short of disdain from property owners and property managers alike - despite being the very source of their income.

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 large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature and name of the sender.