
From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, 7 July 2021 7:09 PM
To: Anastacia Palaszczuk
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 Anastacia Palaszczuk 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.

Like many people, I rented from the moment I finished high school and left my family home until my partner and I were able to purchase our first home together well into our mid-30s (with significant help from my parents). We were grateful for that opportunity, even though it meant buying in a (comparatively) outer suburb in a low socio-economic area with significant commutes to work where we had never lived before. And while there are many stories from my 18 years of renting, I've chosen just the one that left me at the greatest disadvantage.

During my early career as a young graduate teacher, I moved about the state taking on short-term contracts, the second of which was in the Gympie region. I didn't know the town or a soul in it, so had to rely on real estate websites to try and find something affordable. There seemed to be a real shortage of rentals in the region at the time and I ended up renting a single room (at an inflated price) in an old Queenslander where each room was being leased separately. There was only one door to the property and all areas of the house were shared. The landlord was a lawyer in Brisbane and I trusted that the agreement was above board, although no agent was involved and I didn't receive an entry condition report (or other routine documentation).

The crux is that the landlord breached many of what I have now come to learn are rights of tenancy. He leased rooms to people on short-term bases without consultation, so the population of the space was in constant churn (including one notable ex-prisoner who brought drugs and sex workers into the home and left in the middle of the night with most of my stuff). The landlord would also turn up, frequently, at all hours of the day and night without due notice and criticise - my furniture was ugly; my window had been open too long; someone had left crumbs in the sink. He would leave hand-written "breach notices" when something particularly annoyed him and change the amount of rent he was charging to "cover the breach" (none of these were legitimate). In the end, I tried to move

out - and found myself being held to ransom over a straw broom the landlord claimed had disappeared. He did not deduct the cost of a new broom from my bond, but withheld the entire amount. I bought a new

broom and delivered it to him in his Kangaroo Point penthouse apartment in an effort to regain my bond, and he sneered at me and refused to return it.

This is just one experience in a long line of anecdotes I could share. While I am aware that there are many people in the community (including in my own family) who benefit from negative gearing and leasing rental properties, and there are as many bad tenants as there are landlords, I do not feel my experience as a renter is unique.

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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