
From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, 8 July 2021 10:40 PM
To: Toohey 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 Peter Russo 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 Brisbane.

I've been renting properties for the past 30 years in Brisbane. It's rare that I've had a completely positive experience despite being a respectful, working member of the community. There's far too many stories to mention. The list is endless....

There are two rental stories I will elaborate on as both are due to health & safety breaches. One is the mold issue at my last rental property, of which I was a tenant with my family for 4 years. It was supposed to be a family home but had a massive black mold issue due to a leak in the ceiling (from the asbestos roof that was aged & deteriorated). It became an ongoing issue that was due to a structural issue & I asked the Real Estate countless times over the 4 years to attend to the issue to no avail. We even tried removing the mold ourselves but it kept returning due to the leak. We had a small child with asthma and it became very stressful to live in our home! In the end, I became really unwell due to the long-term mold exposure & with a letter from my GP confirming this, I gave notice to terminate my lease on health grounds due to an ongoing & unattended maintenance issue. Not to mention the other ongoing maintenance issues at this property that were also left unfixed. Dealing with

the Real Estate became unbearable, they were unsympathetic, rude & tried to charge me a massive exit fee. Only when I got a letter from a lawyer stating our rights were we able to exit the property swiftly without extra charges. The fight for our rights was a stressful battle at a time when I was already so physically unwell. They wasted no time moving a new 'family' into the house once we left, after repainting the ceiling to cover the mold issue, knowing full well it would return over time. A fine example of how Real Estate Agents can be completely unethical & work in the interest of the property owner and the dollar signs, not the tenants. The RTA was absolutely no help in this situation!

Several properties prior to this, I had a landlord refuse to renew my lease because I asked for some broken asbestos to be removed 'safely' from the entrance & rear exit of the property I was renting. When I overheard his conversation with his handyman saying they'd remove it themselves, I asked if they could please go through the correct & safe channels & use an asbestos removal professional. The owner became angry & said he wanted us out of his property with minimal notice as he felt I was accusing him of unsafe practices. That's the thing, he was technically breaking the law & he did! Despite remaining respectful in my dealings with both him & the Real Estate, we were issued a notice to leave as soon as our lease was due to expire. We had a baby at the time & became homeless, as we couldn't get a rental reference from that particular Real Estate, to get a new rental property in time. I can't express how distressing this was to be homeless with a small baby!

Just another example of the lack of rights for tenants when it comes to property compliance with basic health & safety. It's unjust & unfair that renters be subjected to this poor treatment by landlords & Real Estate Agents. We pay good hard earned money to live in these properties & all we ask for in return is that the property is safe & free of health hazards to ourselves & our children. This shouldn't be too much to ask!

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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