
From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, 10 July 2021 7:53 PM
To: McConnell 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 Grace Grace MP,

Dear the Community Support and Services Committee, cc my local MP -

I'm responding to 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.

For almost three years I have rented a studio apartment in New Farm. Half way through my third (pet approved) lease, the owner is trying to stop me from having a pet (cat) that has significantly helped me to manage my PTSD.

Their excuse is "property damage" which I rectified immediately, because I am a decent human being who takes responsibility. To use what is literally "a mistake" (dog wee on the carpet) as justification for doing something inhumane to me is deplorable and distressing.

The owner's whimsical attempt to dishonour my third lease comes after a period in which I attempted to improve the functionality and liveability of the property (ie repairs) to a standard that met my basic needs. The succession of these events easily highlights that money (even money that improves the owner's property) comes before human dignity. This is deplorable.

To hear I am suddenly not allowed a pet is tantamount to someone telling me I am not allowed something that helps keep me alive and helps me manage my mental health. To me, it is like a parent being told they can't have their human baby with them - it is absurd and inhumane.

I am a member of the LGBTIQ+ community, and I also live with life-long PTSD. The situation has in fact triggered my PTSD and caused me to feel unsafe, insecure and under attack. On top of this the real estate has manipulated me and exploited my personal qualities of honesty, transparency and good will.

Housing stability is what I need to be well and make every other part of my life function properly. I now am disputing the decision at QCAT (more stress), but I anticipate being kicked out of my home at the end of my lease for no reason other than the owner's ego trumps my right to safety and security.

If you don't make vital changes to tenants rights (the right to have a pet, an end to no grounds evictions) you are putting money above human dignity and sometimes you are endangering lives, especially of marginalised groups.

Stop exploiting renters, start giving us the basic rights and decency to live good lives and make society less divisive and brutal. If you don't, you will be harming people like me.

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 black rectangular redaction box covering the signature of the sender.