
From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, 11 July 2021 12:26 AM
To: Greenslopes 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 Joseph Kelly 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 rented a room in [REDACTED] in 2015. It was me and two other renters that occupied the Queenslander, and in no time at all we became friends. It was harmonious, we were all studying and working and once a month, we hosted a 'family dinner'. This was an event where we would invite a handful of friends over for dinner. We didn't have family in Brisbane, so we tried to create one. Unfortunately, this was put to a stop quite rapidly, along with birthdays and having over any visitors equalling more than two. Our landlord vehemently opposed more than this as he said "you can't control what they do, they might scratch the paint or damage the house". In multiple occasions, we experienced our landlord in the house or on the property without any prior notice to us, one of the more surprising occurrences being as I stepped out of the bathroom in only a towel thinking, I was the only one in the house, but there was my landlord in the kitchen, showing his family around the house. Every

complaint was met and shrugged off and living there became frustrating especially under the threat that neighbours, we were told, were spying on us to ensure we didn't invite more than two visitors. Thankfully, it was the end of year holiday period and we all went away for holidays. My lease was about to expire, but we had agreed among us that in spite of the difficulties we would all like to remain living together, so I applied to renew our lease. I signed the contract and sent it away and went on a week long trip. 3 days before the end of the holiday, a week from the end of my lease I received another document that stated my rent would be increased from \$180 a week to \$260 a week as it was noted by my neighbours that my boyfriend would stay overnight 1-2 nights a week. Considering the short time frame, it is clear that this was an attempt to either extort more money or force my hand in terminating the agreement. As a woman who had recently suffered a divorce and was new to

renting and the city, I didn't know what my options or rights were as a renter, nor did I have the financial resources to save myself in this situation. If I had not the friendship of a kind landlord who happened to have a room open up, I might have found myself homeless or paying an exorbitant amount of money that was likely an illegal increase, and living a lifestyle that reduced my quality of life, limiting my ability to engage socially and rebuild my support network, not to mention the loss of privacy due to the countless unannounced intrusions. My experience shows just

how easily landlords can prey on the inexperienced and vulnerable, feeding off of fear produced from bullying pressure tactics to secure obedience. (Kindly redact my contact details and name)

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,

