
From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, 12 July 2021 10:38 AM
To: Lytton 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 Joan Pease 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.

While at university studying journalism I produced a story about insecure housing and rental stress amongst Brisbane residents.

I interviewed one household with eight renters, who were squeezed into four single rooms with bunk beds, sharing one bathroom between them. The landlord rented his property like a hostel, per bed. This was the only housing they could afford as university students who could only work part-time. Then, 6 months into their lease, their much older, male landlord moved into the house unannounced.

I interviewed one household where two of the tenants couldn't afford a rent increase at their house, so they were forced to move into a tree house and tent in the backyard, while they sublet their rooms waiting for their financial situation to improve.

I interviewed another household who had not only people sharing rooms, but they also had someone living in the garage and in a storage area only accessible by a ladder. So the rent would be more affordable for everyone in the house.

Finally, I spoke to a couple who after two years of being well-behaved tenants, who always paid their rent ontime, were contacted by their landlord and told there would be a huge increase to their rent. They looked online at similar properties in the area and they were already paying more than the market rate. Only after sending their landlord screen shots of these properties, did the landlord agree to not increase the rent.

Rent is increasing dramatically faster than wages. It's not uncommon for people to be using more than half of their wages on rent. This is not a sustainable way to live.

In its current form, the Housing Legislation Amendment Bill 2021 will do little to improve these situations for the 1.8 million renters in Queensland. While this bill may be palatable to the real estate lobby, it completely disregards the experiences of renters.

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.