
From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, 13 July 2021 9:14 AM
To: McConnel 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'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.

Many of us are forced to be homeless because rent is ridiculously high and even if we work 50 hours a week. I had to leave home at 14 due to abuse. CPS did not care and refused to help. I struggled with homelessness for years, either couch surfing or sleeping in parks. Sometimes I'd be able to rent a room in a strangers' house who'd often take advantage of the underage girl who needed help. Any valuables I did manage to get for myself were stolen. My privacy and safety were often violated.

This all happened in your jurisdiction. It was YHP that finally gave me stable housing at around 16/17. If it weren't for them I dread to think if I'd even be alive now.

I am now in a much less ethical housing placement, [REDACTED] charges far more than the 28% they are supposed to. They do not care in the slightest about their tenants. I am the only woman in a building of at least 14 men. I have PTSD and when the men have violent outbursts I am often unable of leaving my unit for fear of being assaulted yet again. It is a major block to my recovery to be living here, and yet there is no other option than homelessness.

We do not have a rental shortage, there enough houses for everyone. The problem is people determined to take the maximum amount of money they can from prospective tenants. The problem is people buying up all the properties, so that we can pay off their mortgage while being left with nothing.

There is no hope for a future for us. We spend our lives paying someone else's mortgage. We have no opportunity to save, and are not paid enough to put any money aside. It is no surprise suicide rates are so high.

The [REDACTED] is my cat. The majority of rental properties do not allow pets. My cat is the only family I have and the only light in my life.

People become more disconnected the more money and power they have. The longer you sit up high in your seats of power the less likely you are to empathize with the people you are supposed to represent.

My best advice for you is to get your head out of your asses. Go out and walk the streets and actually speak to the people you are supposed to represent. Look them in the eye, and remember them when you are voting. Remember what your job is supposed to be.

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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[REDACTED]