
From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, 13 July 2021 11:09 AM
To: Cairns 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 Michael Healy 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.

Firstly, as you probably know Mr Healy, the rental situation is dire in Cairns, overly competitive with often very low standards of housing. But this is a different story I wish to share here, dating to when I was a Brisbane resident. My most recent rental experience in Brisbane was mostly excellent, we got lucky. Prior to that I had experienced a mixed bag of unpleasant experiences ranging from having to basically petition landlords just to install a hook to hang a painting, to landlords attending uninvited on site and demanding I get on my knees to clean a rust stain on a tile on the balcony (not, I might add, caused by me). And even landlords attending on site, pretending to be trades (we didn't ask for) and then later bizarrely admitting they were in fact the landlord! I have experienced disputes with landlords that included public abuse and slander that left myself and my wife distressed and scarred.

Renting in this state makes you feel like a criminal. You have to beg for permission for even basic alterations to the property and frequently repair requests, even in an emergency and even with the best property managers, end up being inadequate, late and cheaply done. With property becoming unaffordable in big cities, and even in some parts of regional centres, renting is becoming the only option for many workers. It is time the government stepped up and changed the rental laws to be fairer to tenants. We are paying their mortgages, and lining their pockets, and we deserve dignity.

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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