
From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, 13 July 2021 12:01 PM
To: South Brisbane 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 Amy MacMahon 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.

During the first 4 years of my 5 year tenancy, the landlords at our property were quite lovely. They were mostly hands off, but repaired things as was required. But when the first Rona lockdown hit, our incomes dropped dramatically. I was a National Manager for developing and building new entertainment venues, and my housemate worked as a casual in retail.

When the first lockdown hit, we requested a rent reduction in line with our drastically reduced incomes. Our Real Estate was hugely negative at the idea, poisoned our landlords against us with lies and the landlords went ballistic.

We were all but evicted (only due to the ban on evictions). We were placed on a notice to leave once the lockdown ended, bullied weekly by the Real Estate asking us to send them weekly financial updates (screenshots of bank statements).

When the lockdown lifted, we were given 54 days to leave. We learned after that this is lower than the legal amount of days required for a Notice To Leave without Cause. Their bond inspection was militant. At this point, after multiple bullying emails and phone calls, we had no reason to believe they would seek a fair resolution.

We demanded they challenge the Bond Claim through the RTA dispute resolution process.

They backed off completely as they knew what they were doing was completely unreasonable.

Once the period for the dispute resolution process was passed, and we received our bond back, they persued as again demanding that we owe them money. Once again trying to intimidate us into paying money they knew we didn't legally owe them.

We told them they would need to seek resolution through QCAT and we ceased contact with them, and threatened to call the police if they contacted us any further with or without their threats.

As a high income tax payer, this situation has placed considerable stress on me over the last 10 months during an already stressful pandemic. It has significantly reduced my ability to work, earn an income and pay higher taxes to support Australia.

And it has even cost Australia further money through Mental Health Support, Welfare payments and the RTA Dispute Resolution process.

I believe this stems DIRECTLY from the minimal rights that Renters have, and the ability for Landlords and Real Estates to bully renters with little consequences.

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,

[Redacted signature]

[Redacted contact information]