
From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, 13 July 2021 12:17 PM
To: Dianne Farmer
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 Dianne Farmer 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.

When living in [REDACTED] for 2020, I rented from a company that is VERY prominent there. During inspections and application process, they were very kind and welcoming, however the second they had their names on the dotted line everything changed. During the tenancy, our property manager was completely uncontactable. They would not answer emails, and if you called the office you would be met with an automated system that would only take you through to their receptionist if you identified yourself as:

- a landlord
- a prospective seller
- a prospective buyer

This real estate also used an automated system for rental payments that was consistently faulty. At least once a month we would be wrongfully accused of being behind on rent, because their system had not registered our payments that were made 1-2 weeks in advance, due to this, we received COUNTLESS harassing emails accusing us of being behind on rent, in these emails they would threaten to list us in the TICA blacklist database, if they followed through on these threats it would be an illegal listing - it is worth noting at the end of the lease we were hundreds of dollars overplayed on our lease.

Maintenance was a nightmare, we went 6 months without a working dishwasher, and when we finally started to successfully push for action on our maintenance request their only response was "if it is not a factory fault we will have to bill you for the plumber".

The worst example of their incompetence came at the end of the lease. Our lease was due to conclude in February 2021, in December, they contacted us asking about our intentions. 2 of 3 of the housemates wanted to move out, and 1 wanted to resign with two new housemates. They told us this would be fine as long as we re-applied with the two new people.

In January, they asked us to formally reiterate our intentions, and if we did not the new lease end date would be 4 weeks after the original date placing it in March. I reiterated to them my intentions to find two new housemates, having successfully found two friends to join the lease.

TWO WEEKS LATER they replied, completely revising their original advice regarding this. This time, they said that before we could apply to the landlord, the landlord would have to first approve the mere IDEA of two new people taking over two spots on the lease, THEN we would be allowed to apply for them to be added to the lease.

A day later, they advised us that the landlord has declined the two new tenants that I had already lined up - to make matters worse they treated this as us affirmatively expressing our intentions to leave and informed us that we had two weeks to vacate by the original end date in February.

Thankfully, we managed to argue our way into forcing them to revert back to the March end date.

Once we had moved out, they continued to falsely accuse us of being behind on rent, with more illegal TICA threats. However we were not able to get our bond refunded until JUNE.

If you look at this real estates google reviews, you will see MANY stories like this from tenants. Further to that, these are the kind of real estates that lobby's like the REIQ like to endorse and celebrate, as they proudly display many awards and accolades from REIQ in their office and on their website.

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,

