
From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, 13 July 2021 12:19 PM
To: Stirling Hinchliffe
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 Stirling Hinchliffe 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.

We are now renting in [REDACTED] in a house that doesn't fit our needs as it was the only vacancy when we were looking. I also work in community housing specifically with women in a Domestic and Family Violence supported accommodation program and we are seeing first hand that these women have nowhere to go once they are finished with us. Our properties are only transitional and these families can't afford a private rental anywhere in Brisbane on their income and so have no choice but to apply for Dept of Housing on an ever growing waitlist and where income is no longer deemed enough of an eligibility. We are unable to help more families as our properties are full of families who are ready to transition out but have no where to go. Insecure housing means families can't overcome their barriers but also can't plan for their futures with goal setting, jobs, enrolling their kids in school.

Working in housing I see firsthand that without housing, people can't overcome their other issues.

I worked as a property manager for 12 years even owning my own real estate business and the model that the industry is that it is mostly self regulated and agents are supposed to act fairly for the client and the tenant and yet it's the client (the lessor) that pays the bill, well tenants pay the rent. There are a lot of property owners and lessors who want to do the right thing and see the value in treating tenants well but not always and it's up to the tenants to advocate for themselves in a fickle market with agents (who are poorly trained) who don't understand that their role is to act in the best interests of the lessor. But the best interests of the lessor and the tenant are two different things.

We need more affordable housing and we can't have housing (a fundamental right) viewed purely as a wealth creation too. Successive governments have passed their obligations of providing housing to the private sector and its cause a lot of issues.

Don't even get me started on house prices to buy. It's ridiculous. I am concerned every day for other women like me who work full time and are educated but without my husband I wouldn't be able to afford private rentals and so a lot of women who should flee toxic and abusive relationships can't because they have nothing to go to and their signing up to live impoverished. We have done nothing to actually help people.

I wrote to you previously about the lack of housing and also to the Minister for Housing and I did not get a response from either of you. You come to the March 4 Justice and rallies in Sandgate for Domestic and Family Violence but the legislation does not show your support for these causes.

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]

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