

Community Support and Services Committee

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, 29 June 2021 5:05 PM
To: Clayfield 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 Timothy Nicholls 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.

I have extensive experience renting in Queensland with my partner. Throughout this time, we have experienced rent increases of 13%, requiring us to move out in the middle of exams; false claims of damage to items (such as curtains) that were actually fair wear and tear as deemed by the RTA, incurring time and energy to protect our bond from unfair and exorbitant charges (over \$600 total for one set of curtains); unfair charges over poor infrastructure design that were a consequence of improper planning; and changes to the pet friendly status of a property as advertised by the rental agency after we began renting. Throughout this time, the definitions provided by the RTA (of what constitutes fair wear and tear, for example), are vague and give opportunity for landlords and agencies to charge exorbitant fees from tenants, typically in partnership with their preferred business. The process of challenging fees or other claims is often frightening and leaves tenants feeling stressed and unprotected.

A sizeable portion of my income goes towards paying rent, as is the case for many in my cohort and broader community. I sometimes struggle to see a positive future as a renter, considering how many times I myself have experienced exploitative practices from those renting out where I live and call home. I truly want a better renting future, as I want to one day purchase a home, but this is far in the future and until then, renting is my only way to have a secure housing.

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]

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