

Community Support and Services Committee

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, 29 June 2021 5:27 PM
To: Greenslopes 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 Joseph Kelly 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.

I have never felt like my housing situation is safe while renting. And I have always felt that I had to bend over backwards to appease the real estate agent or landlord for fear of them making my renting life difficult. Whether that be spacing out the timing of repair requests to not seem bothersome, or paying for bond cleaners in order cover myself from having to argue whether something as insignificant as the light switch being as clean as it was when I moved in. I'm lucky enough to be able to afford this option, others may not.

I lived in a rental property that shared a driveway with the neighbouring property and the landlord owned both lots. During our lease, the landlord decided, with little notice and no consultation, to put up a wall down the middle of it. However our side of the driveway was then unusable because it wasn't wide enough to drive on. I then had to park on the street for the remainder of that tenancy. There was no reduction in rent for the car park I could no longer use and no communication from the landlord as to when it might be fixed. It stayed like that for months until I moved out in frustration.

In several of the properties I have rented and lived in, the real estate agent would come in with no entry notice. I never felt I couldn't escalate it to a proper complaint and strike, as they could decide to end my lease "with no reason" as retaliation.

The common practice of real estate agents to send the offer of lease renewal with a notice to leave at 2-3 months before the end of a lease is threatening and coercive. When the lease renewal comes with a rental increase, the clear message is: "agree to this now, or get out".

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]

[Redacted]

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