

Community Support and Services Committee

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, 29 June 2021 6:38 PM
To: Everton 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 Mander 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.

My father is in his mid 70s and calls a rental home. He has a Home Care Package and has carers come and see him 3 times a week to take him shopping, do the cleaning and cooking. My father recently moved to a rental in North Brisbane. This was a very difficult time due to the increasing rents across the state, particularly considering my father's main source of income is his pension. As his EPOA I found the rental, and signed the lease. At the inspection, I was taken around by a real estate agent. I was not told until my father was accepted for the property that the landlady would deal directly with payment and any other issues around property management. I felt very pressured to sign the lease as this was only one of a few affordable rentals in the area (and if we are being honest, the state). I also signed despite the landlady asking me to consent to her doing "drug tests for methamphetamines" as she saw fit throughout his tenancy.

A few weeks after he moved in, I got a call from the landlady, who let me know that she was in my father's home and needed him to sign the bond form (despite me already signing this). She asked for the contact details of my father's nurses and carers. I thought that this was very inappropriate and asked her why she needed these details. Please note the huge power imbalance here. She said that her block of units were a "caring community" and that she would want these details if "anything went wrong." I hesitantly gave her my father's Care Managers details. After I hung up I also realised that she did not provide my father with a notice to enter the property. She had been there twice that day.

In early June on a Thursday night I received a call from the landlady. She informed me that my father had accidentally locked himself out of the property and she asked if I could go over and let him in. I said that I would call a locksmith and would be over right away as I did not have spare keys (my understanding that this was something that required permission from the property manager to get cut). She became aggressive and told me that she's not

his "minder." She said she would save me money by going over and letting my father in. I told her again that I would sort it with a locksmith. She instead took herself and her husband to my father's house. She opened the door before letting herself and husband INSIDE the home and verbally abused him about not having spare keys. I heard this on the speaker phone. I was scared for my fathers' safety. This was not only unlawful but absolutely unsafe.

I got to my father's house as soon as I could to see if he was ok. He said he was scared and upset. I went to the police station and reported this incident. The police did a welfare check on my father. The police told me to call the RTA for advice which I did. They also suggested a peace and good behaviour order could be an option.

The next afternoon at around 3pm, I decided to go and check on my father to see how he was doing. I could see that the landlady was on the property, talking to another tenant in a different unit at the front of the block, visible from the street. I asked the landlady why she was so aggressive toward me and my father the night before. She again became angry and aggressive and attempted to justify her unlawfully entering his property and verbally abusing him because it was "the coldest night of the year, his life was at risk." I told her she cannot enter the property without an entry notice. Her and her son who was also present kept repeating that they owned the property so this was their right. I was very upset and was crying as I was being yelled at. The landlady recorded this conversation on her phone.

After going inside and seeing my father he informed me that the landlady and her son had been inside his home that morning to "see if he was ok."

I then drove to the police station and saw that the landlady and her son were already there reporting me. I was told to go outside. I called the police to ask someone to come and see me. I was very distressed. I was told that I should call the RTA. I did. However this was an issue of safety and my father had to leave the property immediately for this reason. The police officer told me that the landlady and I both have our own sides of the story. I left without any advice or support. That night I packed my father's essentials and brought him to sleep at my own rental in the spare room on a fold out.

The next morning I got a call from my father's Care Manager. She said she received a call earlier from the landlady, who she described as "aggressive." The landlady wanted information on my father's health and indeed made assumptions about his health to justify her unlawful behaviour. The Care Manager informed me that the landlady threatened to "call the police" and kick him out of the rental if he "disrupts other tenants" again (this was referring to the fact that my father knocked on the next units door after locking himself out).

I signed a lease - a legally binding document - which was supposed to protect my father's right to peace and quiet in his own space. When talking to my father about how he felt he said that's all he wanted. Reasonable enjoyment of the property without disruption. Seems like a pretty simple request.

It also seems like landlords and property owners have been getting away with this obscene behaviour for way too long. They are treated as though the fact that they do own the property grants them all of these other rights over the rights of renters.

There is a huge power imbalance. My father is a pensioner. He was unsafe. I am now in the process of trying to break the lease without landing myself in court against this abusive woman.

In its current form, the Housing Legislation Amendment Bill 2021 will do little to improve my fathers' 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 his 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,



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