
From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, 29 June 2021 10:11 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.

The current renting laws have left me homeless twice in the last 6 months. It all started last year during the pandemic when I was living in a sharehouse in Greenslopes. The real estate was always horrific to talk to, they were quick to get angry (they missed an email where I told them about some damage a storm had done and were angry when they saw the damage) and would demean us when they visited talking about dusting and dishes as if we couldn't look after ourselves. The owner/ real estate had offered us a lease renewal and due to the pandemic we had decided that was our only option. Just before we could return the new signed lease they came to the house to do "Routine maintenance" and decided to gut the entire leafy backyard of all of its trees, bushes and privacy. When we questioned this they rescinded their offer to resign. When I contacted my council they said that the property has been declared a construction site despite our current lease on the property. This was bec

ause the owner was exploring the idea of demolishing the house. They were allowed to do what they wanted. We applied to 20+ houses but that was December 2020 and there was a housing pandemic. None of us were approved for other rentals and we were contacted several times about the horrific reference we were getting. Our only option was to lie on applications. There was no support from the RTA and any recourse we could do wouldn't save us before we became homeless. All because we questioned the demolition of our outdoor spaces.

This has had a spiral effect since then. I was homeless, couch surfing and had to find somewhere for me and my cat. Unfortunately not many places were pet friendly. I had to take a private rental with a live in landlord. Once at that property the Landlord abused my cat, would lock her outside if I wasn't around and verbally abuse me often. Again the RTA offered no assistance and I had no legal rights to leave despite a horrific home environment.

After months of arguing and trying to leave without too much of a financial burden (a hit I couldn't take) I managed to get approved for a place after applying to around 15 places. It took so long to find this place I had become homeless again. My partner and I are both financially stable, have been renting in Queensland for 7-10 years and other than having to lie about my previous 2 houses we had great references. The issue this time? My cat. My cat that has never caused any damage to a rental property and has been with me for 3 years. We couldn't be approved for any apartments or townhouses as real estate agent would often say "there's too much paperwork and it causes delays with body corporate" so our applications would never be viewed.

We only got an apartment because I cried about our struggles being approved to a real estate agent and she was empathetic to our situation. We got incredibly lucky to be in an apartment complex owned by one person and therefore without body corporate making my cat difficult to approve.

This is just a glimpse to my horrific story about just how difficult it is not have rights as a renter in Queensland. Anytime I want maintenance done or am talked down to by a real estate agent I feel like I cannot stand up for myself or request anything. They are able to cause so much damage to my life and I'm not allowed to put a nail in the wall. I moved out of the first house on January 10th 2021 and I am still waiting to my court date to get my bond back. A process by the way that is insanely skewed to favour the landlord. That bond would make a meaningful difference to my financial security however I wonder if I will ever see it again.

There needs to be serious and meaningful change to the system. Real Estates and landlords should not be able to deny lease renewals. There needs to be repercussions for lack of maintenance and changing our living conditions like we had experienced. There should be consequences for treating us poorly and speaking to us the way they did. There needs to be a faster system for returning bond and all court expenses should be paid by the real estate as at this point there's no reason why they shouldn't at least try to claim my bond. Pets need to be automatically allowed in all rentals. Rental houses also need to be homes, they need to allow nails in walls and have to have clean paint on walls (most houses I've lived in had serious paint peeling that was never acknowledged as maintenance), dog doors should be allowed and renters should never have to feel like their home could be taken away at any point in time.

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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