
From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, 30 June 2021 12:37 PM
To: Nicklin 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 Robert Skelton 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.

Having been homeless for two years with a child I know how difficult it is to get a rental. We are now only in temporary transitional housing due to my son's disability but have been told that there is nowhere to transition to.

I help in housing groups that now have over 1500 women, mostly over 40, many with children, who are desperate for safe, long term and affordable housing between the Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast. There just isn't anywhere affordable for them. Low income earners qualify for 0% of private rentals according to the last three Anglicare Rental Snapshots.

I have dealt with the public housing office and FACs and am told the same, they are not able to find any spare housing either. Families are living in vehicles, in tents, in overpriced caravan parks.. They are the hidden homeless but with schooling, family and medical needs often can not move far from local areas.

People are using the last of their life savings just to pay rent in temporary situations like motels, caravan parks or airbnbs as the last step before they run out of options. Many people used their superannuation last year to pay for rentals 6-12 months in advance. In many cases these people are paying DOUBLE their actual income. They don't qualify for private rentals based on the 30% rule so they have to take the more expensive, but totally unsustainable, options.

I recently analysed the housing situation from 2008 to the present and am APPALLED at the extent to which housing needs have been utterly neglected, public housing and land sold off and schemes such as NRAS discontinued since 2013.

This failure to build public housing has created a rental shortage and pushed prices up significantly.

Homelessness was on target to be halved by 2020 under Rudds 2008 housing plan. Instead, through neglect, short term profit seeking and totally inadequate planning, we now have hundreds of thousands of people in absolutely urgent need of housing.

This is a total disgrace and does nothing for Australia's human rights reputation except to further erode it.

Australia needs to look at what works internationally to ensure people are housed adequately and affordably.

- * Strict rent caps, indexed to CPI. In some countries this is currently 0%.
- * Rent caps to consider local area average wages - renters are not approved unless their income is at least 3x the rent so rents need to be realistically set based on people's income.
- * Secure, long term lease options 5-10 years. Families with children need this security while children go through school. The elderly need it while they age.
- * Proof from landlord if the property is to be sold. Too many people are being told this then seeing the same property rented for a significant higher amount after they move out.

Government needs to realise that communities are being destroyed as long term locals are priced out of housing. Families are being driven to breaking point. Valuable social and cultural networks are being lost.

What good is an economy if you have destroyed the society?

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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