
From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, 30 June 2021 2:53 PM
To: South Brisbane 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 Amy MacMahon 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.

In 2015 when I moved out of my first share house, the real estate agent refused to release our bond for 4 months. After they did (with a fee withdrawn), I learned later that I have a permanent mark on my rental history because they determined we had left two buckets of leaves under the house and that therefore our bond clean wasn't up to scratch. The buckets (along with a heap of other junk that we had cleaned out since) had actually been there since before we moved in, and we had paid a bond cleaner to clean the entire house. I learned later that due to this note on my rental history I'd been turned away from two future rentals. At no point did they try and speak to us to remedy the extremely minor problem.

In 2017 I moved into a new home in East Brisbane. After loading everything into the house we discovered that since we had inspected the property, fleas had completely overtaken the entire house. The infestation was so bad that my legs still have scars. We couldn't access 50% of the house and the top level was only barely liveable. Our agent refused to do anything about it, stating that we should just let off some flea bombs. He was largely uncontactable and took no steps to help us. With the help of Tenants Queensland we were able to eventually get out of the lease without penalty, but received no compensation to cover our rent or moving costs.

Since then I've lived in 3 more share houses in West End. Despite living with the same housemates, reliably paying rent, and caring for our homes to an extremely high standard, we have had to move each time after the owner's circumstances have changed and they've decided to renovate or move family into our home. On one occasion this happened just 2 weeks after signing a new 1 year lease. Our current lease ends in 3 months and the dread that the same thing will happen is anxiety inducing and makes long term planning impossible.

My housemates and I are all in our late twenties, have reasonably reliable and secure work, and want to live together in a share house long term. We know it's unlikely we'll ever be able to afford to own a home, but the fact it isn't even simple to live in a long term rental (with enormously high rent) is unacceptable and ridiculous.

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,

