

Community Support and Services Committee

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, 1 July 2021 8:54 PM
To: Cooper 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 Jonty Bush 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.

At the start of the year it took us over a month after moving in before our real estate agent provided us with a signed lease. This had a significant impact on our household because I live with students - all of who rely on centrelink which requires up to date rental information. A few months later, we received our first water bill. When I pointed out to the agent that water was expressly excluded from the lease agreement, the agent promptly replied saying that was a mistake and requesting that we sign the new lease they had prepared by the next day. When we refused and explained that excluded water was a significant selling factor for us when we first signed the lease, our agent stopped responding to our emails for several weeks. When we got back in touch for some maintenance requests and to express that we do still love the property and would love to stay next year if it's available, the agent said that there would be new rental prices, and new conditions in the lease, in

cluding a clause stipulating that we would have to pay our agent for the water bills they paid over the duration of this tenancy.

We had finally found a home that we loved and the hidden costs and insecurity of tenancy is terrifying. If we hadn't had the confidence to question our agent changing the lease we would have been charged around \$1500 for bills that our lease agreement expressly states that we are not liable for.

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 signature]

[Redacted contact information]