

Community Support and Services Committee

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, 2 July 2021 9:48 AM
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.

My tenancy comprised of a year and three quarters of merely and happily living in my first ever rental. Apart from my landlord's deferring from connecting all of our smoke alarms in our old wooden units after a scare from an exhausted neighbour leaving their cooker on and burning their pan, and the proper management of the time (by now already a second company and second agent) insisting that our 3 tenancies were responsible for organising the mowing of our common backyard, the tenancy was smooth. It was around the end of 2018 that loud work occurred on our tenancy from 5 am every morning with no prior warning, written or communicated otherwise.

A few weeks of jack-hammering concrete and sawing old structural timber left the house wobbling, with few temporary pilons. The house swayed with every footstep and even during a mild to moderate storm. On advice from QSTAR, I emailed my property manager to complain about the swaying (by now, we remained under the same property manager, but transferred to a new company). She affirmed that "if anything, the builders say that the tenancy is more secure now than it was before work commenced." I had returned home from work that day to find many times more temporary pilons underneath the remaining units. Our tenancies was no longer swaying.

Clearing our belongings from underneath the house was communicated a day before it happened by word-of-mouth from our neighbour in the same residence. He knows the landlord personally. We followed instructions, including labelling and moving what we wanted to keep. Our belongings were thrown out anyway.

Our front exit stairs were demolished with no prior warning on a work day. We ended up using our back door into the next-door neighbour's driveway (after being stunted in the morning stupor most people experience at 7 am).

Our landlord built a car-park and a commercial tenancy in the backyard and underneath the 2 upper level tenancies respectively. With no initial communication. We now had no more clothes line, and we walked past new clients for downstairs' tenancy every day, including at the beginning of CoVid. I am an essential worker, and exposed to children every work-day.

By the end of construction on the lot, I was living under a third tenancy management company and agent.

We were instructed to vacate by October 2020. No reason given.

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]