

Community Support and Services Committee

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, 2 July 2021 10:23 AM
To: Maryborough 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 Bruce Saunders 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.

I have never moved into a clean rental, yet at the end of the lease was forced to jump through multiple hoops to ensure our bond was refunded. We have been forced to deep clean all properties prior to moving in due to how dirty they are. I have had real estate agents claim damages were caused by us despite being clearly stated on the entry report. Had one house covered in mould when we moved in. When concerns were raised the estate agent said 'there's no point in cleaning it as it will only grow back'. I expressed how bad it is for your health and they did not care. Unfortunately due to the lack of available rentals we had to take whatever we could get despite the terrible state of the dwelling.

We have waited for long periods of time to get basic things such as showers, ovens etc fixed. We were forced to pay for a carpet clean despite being told the carpet was to be removed and replaced when we moved out.

When we attended University we had to move on 3 different occasions due to the owners selling the property. All this during a 4 year period. During this time work was very scarce due to study, and the costs associated with moving, not to mention the time and effort required to find a new rental was overwhelming. We often went without food to be able to afford to keep a roof over our heads. Whilst selling those properties the owners would have near weekly inspections. This meant strangers coming through inspecting the property some times 3 times a week. It felt very invasive. And also very disruptive as the real estate requested we not be present during inspections.

We were given very little government help with paying rent. And in the space of 4 years the price we were paying for a rental had doubled. My partner had to drop his university course and get a labouring job to ensure I could finish my study. We originally had to relocate to attend university.

The prices of rentals are ridiculous, especially given the poor conditions of the properties. The real estate agents do not serve your interests as a renter at all. We were harassed about being behind on rent for months whilst trying to convince the agent that we were up to date. Upon moving we were actually given a refund as we were in front in rent. So months of constant harassment and threats of eviction really affected us mentally, knowing we had nowhere to go. We literally had no spare money and struggled to make ends meet for those 4 years. I will add we had no dependents so I cannot imagine how families in the same predicament can cope.

Once my study was completed we instantly relocated and I was forced to move back home as I could not afford to rent on my own. My partner and I have lived in separate towns for 3 years now, as we both had to go where the work was. Neither of us can afford to rent alone so have moved back with family.

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,

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature and name of the sender.