

Community Support and Services Committee

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, 2 July 2021 10:51 AM
To: Moggill 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 Christian Rowan MP,

Dear the Community Support and Services Committee, cc my local MP Christian Rowan

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 family and I have been renting our current house in Kenmore for three and a half years. We are good tenants who keep the house in excellent condition, rarely ask for repairs or maintenance (even when needed...more on that later), and have never missed a rental payment.

The current rent is a steep \$570 a week, and has gone up by \$5-10 every time we renew the contract. There is nothing stopping the owner from continuing to increase it, either, even though our middle-income salaries are not increasing to keep pace with this.

The owner does not fulfil his obligations to us regarding the maintenance of the garden, which is technically included in the rental contract and should be completed at least quarterly. Instead, he arrives once a year at Christmas time, often on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day, while our family is having our Christmas celebration, to "maintain" the garden with his elderly parents. Last Christmas, he arrived with a pressure washer as a "gift" to us and suggested we pressure wash the driveway and paths of the house. The gift remains in its box, and we shall be leaving it behind when we move out.

Further to this, the owner insists on doing repair and maintenance work himself, rather than hiring professionals. This has resulted in, among other things:

- poorly-constructed steps in the back garden which are not level and are a severe hazard to our children
- plumbing that screams and whines when a toilet flushes, and provides only lukewarm water rather than hot water
- large spreading water stains on the ceiling of the lower level
- the noise and stench of a large colony of possums in the ceiling that he refuses to do anything about, but which we can't as renters legally do anything about ourselves
- ceiling fans that spin at breakneck speed and are very unstable and therefore unusable
- an air conditioner that has gone unrepaired over two stinking hot Brisbane summers, and
- kitchen cupboards that are barely hanging on.

We have notified the owner many times over the years of repairs that need attending to, but inevitably he avoids getting them seen to until he can come and do them himself at Christmas every year. We are afraid to insist on our rights because we do not want to be given a bad rental reference, have our rent hiked up even further, or be evicted.

We would dearly love to move to Bellbowrie to be closer to my aging parents and away from the owner of this property, but there is very little in our price range on the market, and every house that comes up has dozens of applicants. We are trapped in this house, and there does not seem to be any way we can move. If we could afford to buy a house, we would, but this option is impossible for us at this stage in our life - house are priced far far out of our range.

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.

I would like my name and address redacted in my submission, please. I fear reprisals from the owner of my property.

Yours sincerely,

[Redacted signature]

[Redacted address]