

Community Support and Services Committee

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, 2 July 2021 1:55 PM
To: Mt Ommaney 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 Jessica Pugh MP,

Dear the Community Support and Services Committee, cc my local MP - Jessica Pugh

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 partner and I have been renting our current house, with my two children and two dogs, for three years. Our lease expires at the end of August. We are both professionals, with well-paying jobs. We intended to make an offer to buy our house when the lease expires.

I was contacted three weeks ago by the agent acting on behalf of the owner to sell the property. He was surprised when I indicated we were prepared to make an offer. Given the current market, our offer of mid-\$700k was declined. We were told the seller would rather go to auction to 'see what the market would pay'. We are now living the realities of a house on the market - 24 hours notice of Open Houses and inspections, letter drops from other agents and conveyancers, ongoing inquiries from the agent themselves. Our rental opportunities are restricted with two dogs, two children established in the local secondary school and a reduced rental market. We compete against countless others in our applications on rentals, despite offering to pay up to \$800 per week. Our house deposit, in this market, is almost useless with the competitive, frenzied out-bidding on over-valued properties.

We are currently living in a limbo, where my back up is to move in with my ex-husband and his wife, and my partner to move back in with his parents. If we are in this situation, as two highly paid professionals, I can't help but think how those earning in lower income brackets are suffering.

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]