

Community Support and Services Committee

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, 3 July 2021 10:51 AM
To: Glenn Butcher
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 Glenn Butcher 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.

In Gladstone, most people live in anticipation that a boom might happen. They see opportunity and wealth. But that's only for some.

I am the daughter of a disabled single mother of 4. She often physically could not work, to take advantage of the opportunities the boom offered. The last boom impacted my childhood in very negative ways.

The stress of constantly being evicted so that owners could get in richer tenants dominated my life. Other kids worried about school work and their friends. We worried that we'd be homeless. We worried that if we didn't have money to hire removalists and cleaners that our Mum would injure herself again and be unable to function and care for us. We always helped with the packing, moving and cleaning but every single time it would destroy her body further.

We worried about missing assignments and having our grades impacted because our computers and books we're packed away in boxes during the end of term when everything was due. Every lunch break was spent trying to catch up in the library, since the computer at home was not available and we'd be spending that time packing or cleaning anyway. It happened every 6 months. Like clockwork. If we're really lucky we'd get a year. I didn't spend longer than a year in a property until I was 25.

I was 28 before I bothered to ever decorate my room. You have no idea how much I dreaded moving. How a real estate agent could fabricate any reason to evict us, with no evidence. How we didn't feel like people. How we're forced to move to Rockhampton in the end because the prices in this city were simply not possible for us to pay.

And then, when the work is gone and the money dries up, all those people left this city. We could finally come home again, to our ravaged little town and pick up the scraps.

Im almost 30 now. I had my own physical limitations that impact my ability to work but now I have full time employment. Another boom is on the horizon and I am only filled with dread. Will the rents go up again? Will I have to leave my city, my job and my friends in order to just survive? Will I lose everything again because someone out there thinks that it's reasonable to charge \$600 a week for a home that was once advertised to me as \$280?

How can I get through this again? How can I get by when real estates and owners demand a rent increase every 6 months? When they refuse to acknowledge the difference between fare, ware and tare and demand to keep the entire bond and I risk being black listed if I challenge it?

There is no possible way to have hope in these conditions.

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 black rectangular redaction box covering the signature of the sender.