

Community Support and Services Committee

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, 3 July 2021 11:05 AM
To: Ipswich West 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 James Madden 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 partner and I began renting in QLD roughly 10 years ago. I'd like to say we've had a run of bad luck but sadly considering the stories I've heard I think we've been rather fortunate.

Our first property in 2012 was a flood property which within 3 months of us moving in developed a serious black mold problem. The owners refused to do anything and eventually tried to blame us for not keeping the screenless bathroom window open at all times to help properly vent the property. When we chose not to renew our lease the real-estate began scheduling last minute showings of the property which were so poorly managed we had items stolen. When we moved out we had a 3 month battle over our rental bond. We eventually received the entire amount back but only many long emails and two meetings with the RTA.

Our second property was a private rental and was fantastic until the owner sold and the new owner placed the property with [REDACTED]. Suddenly repair requests were ignored, invoices were never passed along to us, rent payments were used to cover other property invoices and rental payments also went missing. Again when we chose not to renew our lease what followed were 8 hellish weeks of showings, inspections and complaints about our packing boxes not allowing people to properly inspect the house. Thankfully we did not have any property go missing. Again though we had to go to court in order to receive our full bond back. Our property manager was actually reprimanded during the proceedings both for her documented behavior and for her behavior in the court room.

The next property we moved to was owned by an elderly gentlemen who didn't really wish to rent it out I think. For our year long lease we had frequent issues with his entering the yard (and potentially the house itself) our property manager would receive several emails from him weekly regarding the state of the yard (he was always just driving past and noted...) He decided not to renew our lease and whilst our bond was returned to us without much hassle

he personally had a laundry list of complains which our property manager explained to him weren't end of lease issues.

Our current rental is a bit of a mixed bag. The property has a lot going for it and given the opportunity and the funds (my partner and I both work full time in early education so the chance of us ever being able to buy a house is laughable) I'd purchase it in a heartbeat. However it is a Queenslander and needs the upkeep of one which I don't think the owners were prepared for when they purchased it as a rental. Arranging any sort of repairs is a fight and whenever a 'second opinion' is sought we cringe because it typically means a slightly shady contractor will attend the property and suddenly we somehow be responsible for the needed repair. We have paid many a bill we were not responsible for simply because it takes too much time, energy and money to fight with them. We also live next to some sort of temporary rehab rental (I'm not sure exactly what it is just that it has a revolving door of tenants with mental health and drug issues). This wasn't disclosed to us before we

decided to live here and our property manager has refused to help with security around the property. We have had items go missing from the yard and my wife has felt so unsafe in the property at times that we have had to put up security lighting, privacy fencing and security cameras. Because the owner refused to okay anything permanent (even when we offered to pay fully) we have had to pay significantly more for wireless battery powered cameras and security lighting. The only item the owner would okay was a dog, though this too has become a bone of contention because now maintenance and inspections cannot occur last minute with little notice to us. Currently my wife and I are debating whether or not to pay 300 dollars to repair the oven because despite that it has had heating element issues since we moved in, now that the oven is out of warranty and the owners will need to pay suddenly these element issues are because the oven is never cleaned. Gotta love those random contrac

tors. So to the obvious why don't we just move... well on average it costs about \$2000 to move, more if you count wages lost. Not to mention we might find ourselves in a worse situation with the next property. Also it's difficult to move with animals and our dog unfortunately has anxiety issues. I'd be lying though to not admit that my wife and I discuss moving nearly weekly.

Renting is awful, stressful and expensive. In my experience owners want to spend as little as possible (typically by passing on expenses to renters) and if you complain about the shabby treatment the treatment becomes borderline abusive. Property managers are by and large only interested in keeping owners happy and renters have no real legal rights around negotiating access to and from the property they are paying for. By my last rough calculation I have lost about 5,000 dollars in all the time I have had to take off for maintenance and inspections due to zero flexibility on the real estates part.

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,

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