

Community Support and Services Committee

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, 3 July 2021 12:43 PM
To: Mark Bailey
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 Mark Bailey MP,

Dear the Community Support and Services Committee, cc my local MP (Mark Bailey)

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.

The owner of our house uses the backyard as a storage facility for their trucking business. We have a decommissioned blood donation van in our backyard. There is an attic in our house, but its nailed shut from the other side. When the air conditioner broke in the middle of summer, the real estate agency tried to get us to sign a new lease with a rent increase before agreeing to repairs.

The landlord handles all repairs by themselves instead of ever calling a tradie. The house shifts from time to time: this meant that two columns of tiles in the shower came loose. When our landlord heard about this, they brought round a huge ream of glad wrap, and suggested we put this over the tiles to prevent the water from getting in. This is still one of the nicer places we've lived in: the old place had holes in the bathroom floor, no curtains anywhere, we went three years without seeing repairs. That landlord once put up a sign announcing a planned development to demolish the house and convert it into units, but the rental agency claimed ignorance when we asked them about it.

Right now, we have one child and a second on the way. If we continue renting, those two kids might never have a chance to own a cat or a dog. I am also vaguely concerned that if we don't shore up rental rights, real estate agents will try to specify 'no pets, no kids either' on their listings.

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.