
From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, 3 July 2021 11:56 PM
To: Maiwar 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 Michael Berkman 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.

I have been renting in Queensland for the past decade, though I imagine renting is very similar across Australia. Being a tenant is an ordeal. I have experienced real estates and landlords wanting me to bend over backwards for them, but whenever I have an issue with the property I get ignored. This has been infinitely worse in my current rental property. I will tell the real estate and landlord about an issue, and be ignored. Things getting fixed usually take about 6 months. This included when we moved in and I pointed out things to them when I viewed the property, and then when I signed the lease again stated these things needed to be fixed immediately and the real estate marked them as urgent and no one fixed them until we'd lived there for 6 months.

Our roof over our deck leaks, I pointed it out to the real estate multiple times and said if they didn't fix it the wood would rot. Three years later no one even acknowledged my emails about it, no one ever came and looked at it and now the wood is really and truly rotted, but I guess because it's over the deck and not the house it's fine...Even though it is very clear before we moved in the roof over the house had leak in basically every room and it took two years of us being here for someone to go on the roof to look at it and clear the gutters even though we live right next to a pocket of forest and were told when we moved in someone would be by soon to look at the roof and clean the gutters.

In December, I asked again for them to fix my ceiling fan as the light fixture was just sort of hanging on and I had to tape it to the fan which meant I could no longer use it. I told them about the light in the kitchen not working properly and it not being a lightbulb and a couple other issues, which I had emailed them about a month or so before hand. I told them not to ignore me like had done with every other email I had sent in the past year and got back an email saying they were sorry they were ignoring me but were trying to get to all the "important" issues because holidays. It took until we had an inspection in March where I pointed out the issues to another person and mention I had email about these things multiple times and nothing was being done and then nearly two months later someone finally came and fixed everything I pointed out.

In March, the underneath of our house flooded as water was backed up in the pipe out of the property due to tree roots. At this stage, even though I told them water ran out of a door and from under the wall, no one has ever come and looked the damage the water did to flowing freely under our house. I lost items stored down there which I will never be able to get back, but I also worry about the actual damage done to the house itself, as well as issues of mold. At the time I was worked and just started university and didn't have the energy to really chase it, so I have left it and basically not gone under the house since because of the mix of anxiety and very strong smell of mildew. I suspect I need to clean up down there and remove this piece of carpet they I can't work out why it is there as it is in the space that would be to fix a car, but I likely need protective equipment and haven't the time, energy or money to do so.

All of these issues, but they have twice lost important lease forms when we changed a tenant on the lease and also gave us a warning or breach notice or something like that because we had someone we wanted to move in stay here for under 2 weeks (which is allowed) as we had not put them on the lease yet. This person wasn't even in the house at the time as they went to stay with family in Bundaberg and we were threatened with being kicked out. And then when we rapidly tried to get them approved, the real estate would not respond to emails with documents attached, they kept saying they had no received anything from us when it was in the spam folder and they then later lost some of the stuff that they were sent ALL WHILE WE STILL WERE EXPECTED TO MEET SOME DEADLINE THEY HAD SET. I made it very clear to them that the person was not in the house and they could not breach us at the time but still, they were extremely unhelpful over it all and made it much harder all while threatenin g to kick us out even though we always paid rent on time and had been in the house for 2 years at this point. We have very little power over the whims of landlords and real estates and it's extremely annoying as we have no choice but to rent.

My household is all queer, my housemates often find it hard to find employment or rent because of that. I use myself as a shield a lot to protect them because even though I am also trans, people assume I am not and I don't correct them out of safety and to keep my other housemates safe. It would be very easy for us to all end up homeless if a real estate or landlord decided to kick us out.

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,

