
From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, 3 July 2021 11:58 PM
To: Noosa 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 Sandra Bolton 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 & I (both in our 40s & with 2 children each from previous relationships), rented a property in the Noosa Hinterland for 2.5yrs. In this time, our rent increased by about \$200 per week. We both worked at a local Health Retreat that was closed suddenly during Covid, & our income was slashed in the space of 24hrs. For almost 4 months, we survived on Jobkeeper, never missing a payment on our rent, yet even though our landlords & real estate agents knew that we had both suddenly & through no fault of our own, lost our income - when we asked them for support or leeway (as we were told we were entitled to!), they offered a reduction of rent of \$20 per fortnight. We said don't even bother. And continued to pay our ever-increasing rent, at the cost of providing food for our kids at times. At the end of 2.5yrs (\$56000 paid off our landlords mortgage), I informed our landlords and agents that my partner & I were separating, & so one of us would be leaving the house. At this time, we had been sent an electronic lease renewal via email, but had not yet signed it. Within 24hrs, the lease renewal was deemed null & void, DESPITE the fact we had never missed a rental payment, & the house was always immaculate at our 3 monthly inspections. Our landlords had told us that they were planning on doing total renovations and painting of the property when the lease was renewed. Instead, they took our entire bond to pay for these "renovations" & painting, claiming it was "wear & tear" to the premises I was so stunned & stressed, there was no point fighting this obvious and disgraceful behaviour. Once our lease was cancelled, landlords & agents promptly increased the rent by another \$100pw, & moved someone else in as soon as we were out.

I moved out, with my daughters, & spent the next 6 weeks at a local airbnb trying to find a rental anywhere between gympie & noosa. I was repeatedly told that as a single mother with dependants, DESPITE the fact I had paid \$550pw rent for the last 6 months, & had stable employment & a comfortable income - I stood a very slim chance of finding anything as people were paying 6 months in advance and offering hundreds of dollars more in rent per week. Every single private rental I followed up was now an airbnb (suggestions made by my local networks, friends & clients), and my only option in the end was a tiny house on my friends property, where my eldest daughter now lives in the main house & not with me, & I share one room with my 11yo daughter.

I pay almost \$500pw I'm rent now - & work 6 days a week just to keep a roof over our heads, & food on the table. I am a 43yo professional woman, university educated from a good family who has owned my own home, & loves animals hence I have 2 dogs, which put me waaay down on the priority list for the greedy & inhuman real estate agents of this area. When I first moved here 5yrs ago - I offered agents 6 months rent in advance to help secure a rental, & was told by SEVERAL of them that this was "totally against their policy & impossible to do". Fast forward post-covid times and apparently greed overrules policy every single time.

At the present time, I still pay for my daughters to go to private school, still work 6 days a week, pay my rent on time every single week, still put food on the table. But I am not sure what my future looks like. This is not bad planning or bad luck on my behalf, but the end result of a series of unforeseen circumstances that have led to a state of almost

total despair. That and the inordinate greed and disregard of both the landlords and agents in the area- who will do anything to make a dollar, even if that means throwing a mother & 2 small girls out on the streets.

I am not the only one in this situation, & I am lucky when compared to some. However - the rental situation here & elsewhere in our country, has to be revised. When so many dwellings are empty during the week to be rented by holidaymakers as airbnb properties leaving little for local people & workers to rent, when landlords threaten and hold their rights above the tenants who are paying their mortgages, & can find any reason to throw these tenants out on the streets, when agents abuse their power and the lack of housing in the area...our community suffers.

This is only our story. Tonight my 13yo sleeps at a friend's place because "they have a real home", & my 11yo sleeps restlessly on the bunk bed above me, constantly asking me "if we have to move soon" - this is not what I planned for my life at all. I have helped so many people in need in my lifetime. I have offered my support & skills to others in need. I believe strongly that we, as a community, as human beings, need to support each other in times of difficulty and stress. I have seen the very worst of humanity and self serving individuals in this community since covid.

I hope something can be done.

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,

