
From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, 4 July 2021 9:08 AM
To: Mark Ryan
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 Ryan 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 am a 41 year old single woman with life long (diagnosed and treated) mental health issues that frequently stop me from being able to work and support myself. My only option is to rent, as I have given up on the dream of having a place of my own. My main emotional support is my 16 year old cat, as sad as that sounds. When I have to rent, my heart drops when I see that dreaded "NO PETS" at the end of a listing. I would never consider giving up my beautiful pet, as some days he's all that keeps me going. But I can't help but feel that as a renter I am considered a second class citizen, who should not be allowed the luxury of a pet.

Also, the standard practice of automatically ruling out a potential tenant if their income is not 3x the rent is unfair. I have spent many years with only Newstart/Jobseeker as income, and while I have had to be frugal and miss out on other things, I am able to allocate half or more of that income to rent, and should be allowed to. I have NEVER been late with rent or missed a payment, despite my issues. With my mental health issues sharing is no longer an option (it would take a very understanding, patient and gentle person to live with me), but I "cannot afford" (in the eyes of the lessor) to live alone. I am currently renovating a caravan to live in permanently as I have run out of other options.

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 solid black rectangular box redacting the signature of the sender.