
From: [REDACTED]
To: Tuesday, 6 July 2021 12:58 PM
To: Pumicestone 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 Ali King 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 husband and I needed to move for work and education reasons into the private rental market. We were having a hard time getting a rental because we have a lot of children between us (divorced, blended family) and the competition was high for rentals with double income, no children people applying against us. We are both workers but our income is low. We found an old house for \$450 a week and inspected the home while the previous renter was still in the home. We were getting desperate at the time so even though the house was a bit run down it looked livable as someone else seemed to be living there comfortably.

The day we moved in I got to see the house without furniture and it was more wrecked and run-down than we realized. The owner just gave me the keys and took off, he didn't stop to take me through the house or discuss anything with me. The electricity had been turned off as well. I communicated with the owner my concerns about the house and some things I thought needed fixing straight away.

The lock broke on the door too and we weren't able to secure the property. They were reluctant to help us and said they were going away for the weekend and would do something about it on Monday. We said if we organized it would they reimburse us and they said they would but not for the call out fee. There were holes in the floor, missing louvers, insecure windows, no screens, no fans, holes kicked in the bottom of the house where intruders or animals could easily enter, only one set of keys for the front door, no keys for the back door, rotting floorboards, rotting and loose steps, broken glass, a faulty socket, broken taps in the bathroom etc. We were told by the neighbours that they installed the fire alarms for the previous neighbour not the owners. It took about two days for an electrician to come out and reconnect the electricity. When he did he found exposed asbestos and half the property had a faulty line and a faulty switch which would have been dangerous for us to us

e. We couldn't use the fridge as the electrical socket for that was part of the faulty circuit. There were also unearthed rods. The house in our mind was not safe to live in and the owners were in no hurry to fix anything. They

said we could do whatever we wanted to the place but it would be out of our own pocket and they would decide whether they would reimburse us or not. We were already paying a high rent for a run down, unsafe house so we left the property early. Luckily we were able to return to our old rental property otherwise we would have ended up homeless for a time.

Where are renters rights when the condition of the home they are paying top rent for isn't safe? We left the property and informed the owners and they only returned the 4 weeks rent to us but not the full bond amount saying it was their right as we broke lease. We were \$900 out of pocket and we were also \$900 out of pocket for paying movers twice, along with food spoilage, not to mention the mental, physical and emotional strain it took on us. We didn't get that money recovered and it isn't fair because they didn't hold up their end of the deal as landlords to provided us with a safe and secure property. There's not enough rights for renters and the landlords have all the power, that's why they felt justified in renting out an unsafe home to a family and charging top dollar for it. The owner even admitted that they hadn't been through the property for years and hadn't done any maintenance on it before we moved in, knowing full well when we would be taking over the property. H

e even communicated that he didn't care about the upkeep of the home, but expected us to pay our rent. This is unfair and unjust. As far as a trade for goods goes, this landlord believed he was the exception to the rule and ripped us off with his lack of concern for the house he provided for us to rent. He didn't go through a real estate either, he was privately managing it which is no wonder he didn't have the house to an industry standard. We sadly didn't realize what we were getting into until we moved there. So this is just another example of the injustice of the Australian housing market and the attitudes of home owners towards those less fortunate and the imbalance of power.

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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