
From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, 6 July 2021 4:26 PM
To: Mirani 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 Stephen Andrew MP,

Dear the Community Support and Services Committee,

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.

We live in an old donga near Mackay where we pay most of the repair bills ourselves as the owner is under mortgage and insurance stress and we like where we live. For example we paid \$500 for plumbing repairs two years ago. Our rented property is not well insulated and very hot in summer and cold in July when temperatures drop to below 10C. This adds considerably to our electricity bills.

During the last cyclone to hit in 2017 we had roof damage in the kitchen and bathroom that was very poorly repaired months later by the landlord's insurer. The landlord himself with his son only properly repaired it this past June, four years later, while we vacated it for a week to allow easy access.

As renters we get no concessions or rebates for the solar power installed on the roof. There is not much option to move as rental housing is very scarce in Mackay. This situation of scarcity of rentals below \$300 a week is widespread across Queensland, so legislation is needed that ensures rental properties are well kept and rental increases are reasonable, and renters have fair warning of coming evictions if the rental property is to be sold. Ways to improve the release of more land in safe areas in which affordable housing under \$200,000 - \$300,000 e.g. manufactured housing can be placed is an urgent need to protect social cohesion and well-being.

Sky high insurance for damage from storms and other disasters is one of the costs those owning rental properties face and it is one cause of rising rents. Future housing must meet more stringent codes to protect it from climate change impacts and as much as possible ways must be found to make such changes affordable for all who are affected. Safe and affordable housing for those below median incomes is a public health necessity.

A systematic inquiry into low income rental housing and what can be done to improve public health and well-being for those affected is necessary to inform forward planning policies. This extends far beyond tinkering with current housing legislation and meeting the immediate needs of real estate lobby groups and others.

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 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. Better still have a comprehensive review to inform what can be done over the next decade to improve the current situation.

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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