
From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, 7 July 2021 10:16 PM
To: South Brisbane 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 Amy MacMahon 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.

While being a carer for my mother who was dying of cancer, the day after my mother died the owner tried to kick me out for fear I couldn't pay rent anymore. I had never been late on rent and my mum had lived there for 5 years before I moved in to care for her (she was only 49 when she died). The agent had to fight the owner but I was forced to sign a new lease that locked me into being trapped in the house my mother died in for another year because it was a year long lease or I had to vacate within two weeks while trying to plan a funeral and deal with her estate and grief alone.

The next place was a unit privately rented in [REDACTED]. The owner would be at the property of 4 units at least 5 times a week. He was abusive and when I had someone come to stay with me (I lived in a two room apartment in a block where every other house had multiple people living in it) to help me heal and care for me after an operation he had my neighbour call the hospital to find out information about my surgery to threaten me with. Once again I was never late on rent. When I left he broke into my property many times including entering while the movers were removing my belongings (I am disabled so I wasn't home at the time but the movers let me know what he did). He looked through my house including through my drawers and took photos as well as telling the movers to leave items behind that he then stole. When he tried to force me to give my bond over even though the house had been badly painted before I moved in, he screamed at me down the phone and had to be cut off by the moderator who told me that while I would likely win in court, because I have bad autism and other mental issues (I was having a mental breakdown during the move due to pressure and could barely speak) they asked me to settle on him taking half of my bond because they feared my health would suffer if I took it to court.

Most recent residence is run by [REDACTED] they have several people who are openly homophobic and transphobic. My property manager refuses to speak face to face with me because I am openly queer. They do not respond to emails (the only way we communicate) for maintenance requests. I have to spend weeks if not months begging for repairs including the back deck which I warned them about for years until it broke under me and my foot went through it. The deck is now breaking again including rotting stairs I have been asking them to fix and have caused me to fall more than once. Including a trip to the emergency room in which I was stopped to a board for 10 hours when they thought I broke my back (I still have issues with lack of feeling in some of my body since the fall and back pain).

When we were broken into they refused to give us a dead bolt instead they 'fixed' the somewhat broken lock. But we have no way of locking our windows or back door. So the house is never secure.

It is almost impossible to get the hot and cold water to work. When someone came out to look at the issue years ago we were told we did not have the legal right to hot water. This means that to shower it either has to be cold, which due to my physical disabilities causes my muscles to cramp and thus has caused multiple falls. Or the water is so hot it burns your skin.

I was forced to sign onto the lease entirely by myself during covid, because due to the nature of it being a share house people come and go. Especially when the house is not being maintained by the owner or the agents. The agents refuse to do the paper work for any new tenants so the entire house falls on my shoulders. They are aware of my disabilities and that the house is unsafe for me. This doesn't bother them. If anything they use it to bully me into not doing the work they need to do. Because right now all I can do is breach notice them 3 times then move out. Due to my financial circumstances and the fact that the house is falling apart due to the agents and owner not looking after it. Which will likely cause them to blame me, tank my rental record and take the entire bond with is many thousands of dollars, I cannot move. I am stuck in a house falling down around me, that they continue to force me to pay extra rent for things like a gardener who almost never comes and when they have recently tore my garden out. A garden that was legally within the bounds of where it should be. Causing damage to my belongings.

I have grown up in rental properties my entire life and I have never in my 33 years of life felt safe. The anxiety of losing my home has always been with me since I was old enough to understand fear. It is a constant weight that has at times driven me to attempt suicide, of which there is proof of ER records, due to my believing thanks to my disability support payments being threatened over Christmas 2019, I was led to believe I would soon be homeless.

This has not just caused life long trauma that has been identified by several mental health physicians, but [REDACTED]. This is not as simple as labor makes it out to be. This is life and death. This is life long trauma formed in childhood due to housing insecurity.

Please email or text me, to contact me more about this if needed.

My pronouns are he/they and I go by [REDACTED] I have not been able to legally change my name so I filled out My legal name at the top to make this 'official' as it were

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 large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature and name of the sender.