
From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, 8 July 2021 2:59 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.

- Real Estate Agencies can be so inhumane and do not value the real lives of renters. A few examples I have experienced 1st hand:

1. When my housemate who was the first listed name on the lease, was contacted regarding an inspection had not checked his emails so we had been unaware of a routine inspection, as they had failed to let any of the other tenants who were named on the lease know about it. When I phoned to enquire why we had not been notified, I mentioned that this housemate was depressed following a relationship breakdown, and hadn't checked his emails, I was informed that due to his condition this is not the kind of person they want in their rentals and it would be unlikely they would continue our lease. I reminded them they could have contacted me (and thought they are obligated to do so before inspection), and was told they don't have time nor care. This same agency had made us pay 6 months rent up front to secure the property, and then continued to tell us we were late on rent every month for 6 months and I had to call them to remind them every month that we had pre-paid for the term. We c

hose not to continue with this lease after this period.

2. In my most previous rental, there was a very large leak over the kitchen, believed to be under the toilet of the above apartment. When the landlord had a handyman come to fix the damage, they didn't even enter the above unit, and just painted over the stained ceiling in the kitchen of our unit. The stain continued to grow, became dark and smelly and continued to worsen until we moved out.

3. In the same unit as the leak, our air conditioning unit had began to fail and become incredibly inefficient, our electric bills tripled when we had tried to run the machine. The landlord finally agreed to get a service technician out to look at the aircon, who confirmed to us that it was broken and needed replacing and would be cost inefficient to repair the aircon; he provided these details to the owner, who refused to replace or repair the unit. The unit became

so hot in the summer, we could no longer be there, and added to our reasoning to move out as soon as the next lease ended.

4. Again, in the same unit, there was a small crack in the glass cooktop range at the very corner near where it is attached to the counter. On leaving the property, we were made to pay for the damage to this cooktop, which we believe would have been usual wear and tear. We had spent 7 years at the apartment, paying at least \$120,120 in rent during those years, and had done our best to keep the place clean and tidy, and being house proud of our little home for those years; we paid the fee, as the real estate explained it had shortened the life of the appliance; quoting that the life expectancy of such an appliance was 10 years. The unit had been renovated a number of years prior to us moving in, and we had been there for 7 years, so the appliance was far older than the 10 years they quoted. We felt this was unreasonable but we didn't want this to affect our ability to rent at our next home should they pass on a bad reference or blacklist us.

5. When my partner and I moved in together, the estate agent that we signed the lease paperwork, after securing the lease said to my partner and I that we should apply for rental assistance via Centrelink, I said this was not relevant to our situation, and she said anyone who is renting would should be on Centrelink because we clearly don't earn very much. We had a combined income of around \$110,000 at the time, but clearly she felt we had to be reliant on the government if we needed to rent too.

6. My partner and I are in our 30's and have been renting since we have each been 18 years old. Neither of us could stay in our hometowns for work after school, due to lack of work so we both had to move away from our childhood homes and rent from a young age. We have only just been able to start saving for a house deposit now, nearly 15 years later. This has been a long time paying rent to pay other people's mortgages. The most disheartening thing for us over this time, is that we have never been able to have a pet, and as both of us are animal lovers, we are now trying to secure our own property, but wish that we hadn't had to wait for so long, to start what we feel is our true adult lives.

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,

[Redacted signature]

[Redacted contact information]