
From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, 8 July 2021 8:14 PM
To: Nicklin 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 Robert Skelton MP,

Dear the Community Support and Services Committee, cc my local MP -

Homelessness is a huge issue on the Sunshine Coast and throughout the state of Queensland. It is out of control and renters have been forced out of their homes as a result. Everyone on the Sunshine Coast should read this local report of a family forced from their home due to a rental increase they couldn't afford. It is shameful that the rental situation is so dire. Here is this mother's heartbreaking story:

<https://aus01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.sunshinecoastnews.com.au%2F2021%2F07%2F07%2Fsunshine-coast-rental-crisis%2F&data=04%7C01%7Ccssc%40parliament.qld.gov.au%7Cf597ba7f94474153b89108d941f91b96%7C234f33c1f5a34c5d8628a50c061ce055%7C0%7C0%7C637613360430812414%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzliLCJBTiI6Iik1haWwiLCJXVCi6Mn0%3D%7C1000&reserved=0>

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.

In its current form, the Housing Legislation Amendment Bill 2021 will do little to improve the lives of the 1.8 million renters in Queensland. While this bill may be palatable to the real estate lobby, it completely disregards the experiences of renters all across 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.

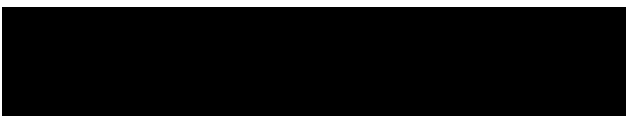
I urge the Queensland Government to take this opportunity to amend this bill and to implement real rental reforms that will make renting in Queensland affordable, secure and fair.

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,



HOME / OPINION



BY SUNSHINE COAST NEWS / 7 JULY 2021

This is an open letter to Sunshine Coast residents. The writer wishes to remain anonymous, but has supplied her name and contacts to [Sunshine Coast News](#). We thought this story deserved to be shared and was best told in her heartfelt words ...

I'm a 36-year-old mother of two children aged 15 and 10.

I'm writing to highlight the impacts of the tragic rental crisis at present. I want you to read my words, and I mean *really* read my words, let them sink in, let them make you feel what we feel and, hold on to them for a while after you finish reading them. Because these thoughts and feelings are tormenting us 24/7 right now and we don't see any light at the end of this dark tunnel we are being forced into.

I moved out of home when I was 16 years old and have been renting ever since in Queensland and NSW. Never once in that 20 years have I been evicted, nor did I ever skip a rent payment. I have never caused damage to a property and always been refunded my bond. During that time, I have paid approximately \$400K into the pockets of property investors. At no point did my income level ever affect my ability to rent a home in the affordable parts of Australia that I've lived in over the years.

- Related story: [Search for \\$500-a-week rental becomes an impossible dream](#)
- Related story: [Families feel the squeeze as rental battle intensify](#)
- Related story: [Rent or rent: more families than ever lose the roof over their heads](#)

I have been renting here on the Sunshine Coast since 2008, and after quite an unstable start to their life, my children finally now have strong foundations here, including at their schools, soccer club, gym, social circles and familiar places and memories.

I currently rent a four-bedroom home in Mountain Creek for \$520 per week. My two children and I share our home with my older brother who pays one quarter of the rent (\$130 per week), which makes my share of the rent \$390 per week. This is diligently paid.

We had been renting this property for 10 months and our lease was soon to expire when, about eight weeks ago, we were advised that the landlord would be moving in, therefore we would not be able to renew our lease as intended. Common story for most renters at the moment. Am I right?

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I've heard stories of landlords using this excuse as a means to get the tenants out 'without grounds,' only afterwards the evicted tenants see the home listed at a much higher price. I can only hope that my landlord has a heart and is an honest human being and, if not, I'd rather not know about it.

Since receiving this news, I've been keeping my ears to the ground and my eyes peeled for anything and everything containing the word 'rental', and what I have found instead of a cosy home like I usually do, is disturbing to say the very least.

In addition to a market flooded with overpriced short term rentals, I find a long, long list of sad stories told by vulnerable people being forced into circumstances that only make them more vulnerable.

The saddest stories are of people with chronic health issues and or from low-income households being forced out of their homes into a desolate rental market.

There are also stories from thousands of people, stable long-term tenants, claiming they have just received increases of almost 50 per cent.

Why can we see homes advertised online, for almost up to \$200 per week higher than the previous rental price? Why are we allowing people to BID on rental properties rather than regulate a fair playing field where listing price is final price for all? Why are prospective tenants allowed the advantage of offering a year's rent in advance rather than the typical legislated two weeks?



With eviction hanging over us, I have begun applying for homes close to work and school only to be consistently rejected due to the 30 per cent rule. The rule that specifies an application cannot be approved if the rent is greater than 30 per cent of the applicant's income according to local real estate agencies.

Rental prices have increased, but pay rates have not. Five years ago, 30 per cent of our income got us a suitable home for the size of our family in an affordable suburb outside the major cities.

Today, for 30 per cent of my income, in this area I would be lucky to score a single room in a share house with a bunch of strangers and be forced to bunk up with my teenage son, my pre-teen daughter – sadly our beloved family pets would be so far out of the picture it's devastating.

[REDACTED]

How is it that one realtor can specify that the rent cannot be more than 30 per cent of a tenant's income, and another allow up to 40 per cent? Not much of a 'rule' it would seem, but a means to discriminate against people on low to moderate incomes and drive property values higher by locking poorer people out of certain areas, which leaves vulnerable people displaced, and ultimately creates a huge socio-economic divide in this 'lucky' country. Lucky for some.

[REDACTED]

I am now going to be forced to rent a home in a town I have never even been to before, one that has a much higher crime and unemployment rate, just so that I can stay under the 30 per cent threshold.

[REDACTED]

Moving to a home in a suburb further away from work and school actually means my expenses are going to be higher than if property managers were to let me simply rent in my home town. It will cost an additional \$150-200 per week on fuel to get to and from the Sunshine Coast for work, to take my kids to school and their other extra-curricular commitments in order to provide at least an inkling of stability in their already upside down lives.

Living in a town where I don't know anyone, have no family or social support, don't feel remotely safe, won't be getting any sleep for all of the above reasons, and have to drive 3 – 4 hours each day costing an additional \$150-200 p/w that (I'm fully prepared to spend on rent rather than travel) costs more financially, regardless of the cost to the mental health and safety of me and my children but hey, it beats homelessness and living in tent city. Or does it?

The government needs to take immediate urgent action to minimise the impact of housing affordability on citizens:

- Limit rental increases, including between tenants, to protect tenants from being kicked out and homeless, just so greed can prevail.
- Ban rent bidding. Listing price should be the final price.
- Ban realtors and landlords from accepting more than two weeks advance rent.
- Mandate changes to the 30 per cent rule in line with real life incomes and rental prices.
- Increase rent assistance in line with current rental increases to prevent those on lower income from being displaced and socially isolated.