
From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, 8 July 2021 8:58 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.

My partner and I rent a one bedroom apartment for \$420 a week. This is up from 390, as we decided our second lease would only be a six month lease. We had our weekly rent go up as a result. Due to this, we pay more than any other single bedroom in the building, by about \$50 per week. There are other short term tenants in our building paying less. There are other apartments in our building advertised for less. It's frustrating. It compounds the disadvantage I face as a disabled young person. After paying for procedures and prescriptions, it becomes harder to access the non-prescription necessities (mobility aids etc) that allow me to live a life.

I've been moved from homes because of landlords deciding to sell. I've had my rent raised and meddled with, I've had bond withheld, and I've been made to go back and pull healthy plants from the ground (I'm physically disabled and have a heart condition preventing strenuous activity) in a house I no longer lived in. These were planted by our landlord! And now, as my partner and I search for a new home, the process is complicated by rising rent costs, lack of accessible housing, and being turned away from places because we are unwilling to rehome my 18 year old cat, who's been with me since her birth.

Prices of rent are increasingly incompatible with the cost of living. Each move is a financial and physical burden in itself, driving young Australians further from the housing market. And yet this is a burden our landlords can push onto us at their convenience. It deepens the class gap and proves landlords have little regard for their tenants (never mind the mold, damage, and nails sticking out of the kitchen floorboards I've had to live with). As the government, it's your responsibility to step in and defend the citizens living within the power structures preventing them from defending themselves. You fail to do this on many fronts (disabled young people, welfare, covid, homelessness, children's welfare, public transport. I could write for pages the injustices I've faced because of local and national government. I could write for books about the times I've faced grievous personal circumstances and did not find respite or support in my government.)

We, as a loud, empowered collective demand better, whilst we, as frightened and increasingly desperate individuals, can only hope you will make the choice to enact change to help us. Please make that choice.

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 black rectangular redaction box covering the signature of the author.