
From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, 12 July 2021 6:48 PM
To: Pumicestone 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 Ali King 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.

Rental affordability is a huge issue right now. With many Southerners moving up to Queensland, even fewer properties are available for rent, pushing prices up even further. With the cost of living rising and rising, and income support payments woefully inadequate, the scales of power are weighted very much against us renters.

I am a single Mum on Newstart, and the rental situation is very concerning. I have a Domestic Violence Protection Order in place against my ex-partner, but I cannot even get on the waiting list for a Housing Commission property! I have repeatedly attended the Department of Housing at Caboolture, only to be repeatedly turned away, and told to satisfy another red-tape criterion, when I have previously been on the waiting list for approximately 2 years and was even offered temporary Community Housing I had to knock back because I have a cat.

I would love to feel secure in my housing, not on the verge of potentially having to move soon or feeling bullied by real estate agents.

The 3 monthly inspections are very invasive. A stranger enters your home and photographs everything every three months. I don't believe that inspections should be so frequent, nor should they be allowed to take an infinite number of images of my personal possessions.

I would love to make a garden and put in a couple of nails to hang up some pictures without losing my security deposit.

I am sure some real estate agents treat your security deposit as a fund for upgrades. I have had agents take photos of minuscule marks on walls that are genuinely barely noticeable to claim painting from their handyman.

I have had owners enter my home uninvited, to attend repairs with tradesmen, and the agents do very little about it.

As a renter, it is you versus the agent, the owner and the legislation that seems to favour them.

Of course there are some agencies that are better than others, but even my current agency tried to have me pay for a plumber recently, when it is the owner's responsibility to maintain the property. They even sent me a water bill on Christmas Eve and told me (after an inspection) to trim a tree that had grown, because it was bigger than when I had moved in!

I've had a friend who said an agent took a photo of a small piece of litter in her garden, and a real estate agent leave a note for me after an inspection about not leaving my breakfast dishes in the sink. I literally pay to live there!

I've had my lounge room ceiling covered in mould, and found out a property I was renting had possibly been used as a cook house for drugs! Healthy for my young son?

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,

