
From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, 12 July 2021 7:28 PM
To: Bonney 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 Samuel O'Connor 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.

The real estate agent leasing the premises decided, through wilful ignorance, to insist on me using their foreign software to receive notices. The server they used was an insecure overseas server through which malware could be distributed. I am a lawyer keeping confidential client files on my computer system and am legally bound to protect these. As a result of my objection the agent decided to rescind (late at night by email) an already agreed lease renewal. I started a procedure with QCAT who decided in my favour, BUT the agent continued using insecure email delivery, thereby ignoring the reasons stated by the QCAT adjudicator. The story goes on from there and remains unresolved with the agent continuing threatening behaviour. When I asked for maintenance to be performed she, again, gave me notice of termination. I intend to bring this before the QCAT tribunal again.

The weakness in the system could be improved by: 1. The reasons of a QCAT decision to be included in their formal communications. 2. Give QCAT the power to penalise agents for repetitive malpractice. 3. Remove the 'No reason' condition from the notice to leave as this is an illogical condition: there is always a reason, and for security of tenure of the lessee a reason should be stated so that the lessee has a right to contest malfeasance. 4. Compliance with and compulsory updating of legal knowledge requirements of agents prior to renewal of a license, together with a penalty system for non-compliance.

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 sender.