
From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, 13 July 2021 1:56 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.

A lot of my horror stories aren't quite as wild as others I've heard. I'm mostly just tired and worn down by the insecurity. I'm tired of moving house every year or two, I'm tired of filling out forms and inviting real estate agents to scrutinise my private life and finances, I'm sick of jumping through hoops just to demonstrate that I am worthy of a roof over my head.

The story of renting encapsulated by the last house I lived in. It was a beautiful house that had been renovated as cheaply as possible. Doorframes didn't fit, the floorboards were a soft, cheap timber you could mark with a fingernail. We had run of the mill frustrations; "the fireplace works" "We will not fix the fireplace", we would need to pay a significant fee to change tenants on the lease things of this nature. What made it frustrating is that the landlord who lived next door also owned the real estate agency we were renting through. We weren't told about that little conflict of interest.

When the landlord decided that our garage would be better suited for his use it wasn't a discussion we could have in good faith. We requested a discount on the rent, after all, it was a useful covered area and we were paying a lot for the property. But it was clear that under no circumstances could we keep the use of this space, or pursue compensation for it. Based on the research I did I was confident that we shouldn't have to pay such a large fee to transfer someone's name to the lease, and that we were entitled to compensation for the loss of the garage, let alone the landlord entering the property on a day by day basis. But, I also knew that were we to actually enforce our rights it would be very easy simply to say "there is no reason for it, but you will have to move out at the end of your lease. No Fault Evictions make any renters rights meaningless, because you know that getting on the owners bad side by enforcing them is like signing a declaration that you will be moving in 6 months.

This frustration was made worse by seeing the garage filled with a boat, and then an expensive luxury 4wd. It is frustrating enough knowing that simply by getting in first and monopolising something you need to live, someone becomes entitled to hours and hours of your weekly work. But seeing you and your housemates rent going to pay for nicer and nicer stuff, all the while knowing that asking for a better deal can be enough to see you have to go through the stressful and invasive rigamarole of looking for a new place is alienating and aggravating.

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.