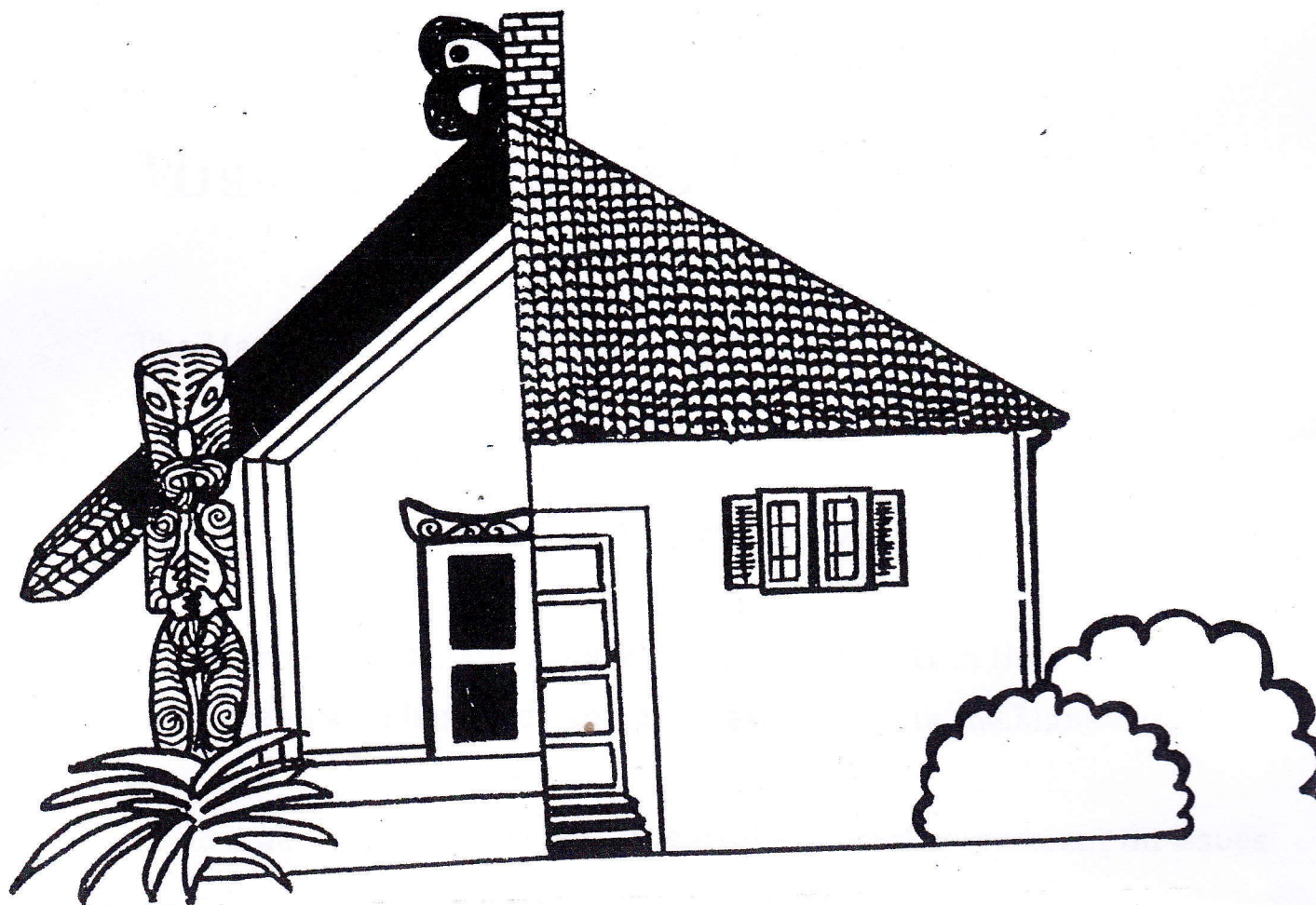


MANAWATU TENANTS' UNION Inc



ANNUAL REPORT 2015 **HOUSING**

The Manawatu Tenants' Union Inc.

Mission Statement

The Manawatu Tenants' Union aim is to:

- a) Protect, promote, and generally advance the rights, interests, and welfare of tenants in the Manawatu region
- b) To advise, assist, and generally support tenants in their dealings and disputes with landlords and other authorities in the Manawatu
- c) To make submissions to both central and local government on issues and laws affecting tenants.
- d) To monitor demolition of rental housing in Palmerston North and to make appropriate submissions to local bodies about increasing the rental housing in Palmerston North.
- e) Educate the public about laws regarding tenants.

Coordinator's Report

The Manawatu Tenants Union has been serving the community of Palmerston North, and the Manawatu region, for 32 years. Our commitment to tenants has always remained firm, we continue to give advice and information, and support at Tenancy Tribunals.

Housing has been in the headlines in the last year for all the wrong reasons. Secure affordable shelter has become a serious problem for an increasing number of families, and the number of tenants in dispute with their landlord has been increasing.

Disputes range from: bond refunds, eviction notices, 90 day notices, getting repairs to the home done, and indicate a breakdown in communication between landlord and tenant. It seems almost like class warfare as the disputes escalate. At the end of the day, the landlord has all the power and control.

Of concern are the difficulties tenants encounter when making an application to the Tenancy Tribunal. The Tribunal requires detailed information about the case. A copy of the tenancy agreement is needed, and many landlords don't provide an agreement (standard form), even though they are required to. 14 day notice copies are also required (which may not be held by tenants), stating the breach of the Residential Tenancy Act, the tenant wants an opinion on.

It should be noted that landlords already have a vast amount of information on their tenants; gained through their accommodation applications forms, and pre-tenancy agreements, much of which is passed on to Tenancy Services. At present, only around 8 per cent of tenants bother to apply to the Tribunal for a hearing. The pressure to provide this additional information is a barrier for many tenants, who want to give their side of the dispute. The time taken to get a Tribunal hearing is taking longer, which highlights the increasing pressure on the service, and the growing

number of people renting. The system is **working**; it just needs to be resourced to reflect this change in New Zealand society.

Affordable housing shortages in the private sector coupled with a push by Housing New Zealand to evict tenants and to sell state housing to private investors, will only see affordable housing disappear from the reach of those who need it. Many families will likely become homeless. The need for affordable housing has never been greater. The poorest people in our city are living increasingly precarious lives, as they struggle to pay their rent and support a family, and keep their dignity.

In 1995, the Manawatu Tenants Union proposed the introduction for a 'Warrant of Fitness' for all rental properties around New Zealand. So after many years, it was good to see the present government propose some regulation on the condition of rental properties.

While not a 'Warrant of Fitness', it is the first step in the introduction of one, given the increasing number of New Zealanders with little or no choice but to rent for most of their lives.

With an increasing number of renters, the Manawatu Tenants Union believes that now is the time to start a campaign to set up a Register of Landlords. This would mean that all landlords would be required to meet certain professional standards, and be of good character. Landlords require to know everything about the character of the tenant e.g. references, credit check, employment status, criminal record. Landlord registration is a step that will not happen overnight, as can be witnessed by the progress, and time taken, for the 'Warrant of Fitness' to become mainstream.

The future housing needs of the community will only increase as genuinely affordable housing options decline. We who work in the social sector have a responsibility to tell government that present housing policies are not working. Central government along with local government must provide long term leadership, by making rental accommodation a priority. Politicians are creatures

of the short term, who prefer to ignore **the difficult issues** that are not easily addressed; they should remember that tenants are also voters.

The Manawatu Tenants Union would also **like to take this opportunity** to thank the researchers who are working on a manual of governance for the **organisation**, it is hoped to be finished by November this year. There is no doubt that decent **affordable housing** needs have to be addressed. Every generation has the expectation that they will leave a **better future** for the next, a future where renting is not the new normal.

I would like to thank the Manawatu Tenants Union committee for all their support in maintaining our vital services to the community.

PHONE :

994:

OFFICE :

355:

TOTAL: 1349 - JUNE 23RD 2015

HOUSING IS A BASIC HUMAN RIGHT

Manawatu Tenants Union
From 01 April 2014 to 31.03.2015
Receipts and Payments

		2015	2014
Income			
Grants			
	Catholic Social Services, Diocesan	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,000.00
	Community Services Council	\$ 2,658.00	\$ 2,587.00
	Eastern & Central	\$ 4,000.00	
	Internal Affairs, COGs	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 4,500.00
	McKenzie Trust		
	Massey University Students Assn	\$ 500.00	
	Ministry of Social Development	\$ 52,450.00	\$ 19,450.00
	NZ Lottery Grants		\$ 6,000.00
	Pub Charities	\$ 7,450.00	
	TR Moore Trust		
	Sundry	\$ 3,000.00	
	PNCC Room Inc	\$ 178.76	
	Interest	\$ 320.31	\$ 199.35
	Total Income	\$ 81,557.07	\$ 33,736.35
Expenditure			
	ACC Levy	\$ 129.00	\$ 199.97
	Accountancy Fees	\$ 230.00	\$ 230.00
	Advertising	\$ 448.50	\$ 486.50
	Bank Charges	\$ 5.00	\$ 3.00
	Consultancy	\$ 6,037.50	
	Electricity	\$ 377.44	\$ 142.88
	General Expenses		\$ 8,101.11
	Motor Vehicle - mileage		\$ 149.40
	PNCC Community House Room Hire	\$ 41.40	
	PNCC Community House Insurance	\$ 191.34	
	PNCC Community House Rent	\$ 2,263.42	\$ 2,254.83
	PNCC Community House Waste Management	\$ 68.40	\$ 26.61
	Printing / Stationery	\$ 267.00	\$ 240.85
	Research Grant	\$ 11,666.67	
	Subscriptions	\$ 281.11	\$ 40.00
	Telephone	\$ 1,330.27	\$ 1,097.14
	Unpaid Bills	\$ 2,648.19	
	Wages	\$ 24,100.22	\$ 23,573.68
	Wages PAYE	\$ 4,270.78	\$ 4,419.66
	Total Expenditure	\$ 54,356.24	\$ 40,965.63
	Surplus (Deficit)	\$ 27,200.83	-\$ 7,229.28

Opening Bank Balance, 01.04.2014	\$	20,729.54
Surplus	\$	27,200.83
	\$	47,930.37
Unpresented cheques	\$	2,648.19
Closing Bank Balance, 31.03.2014	\$	50,578.56

Unpresented Chqs:	177340	\$	424.15
	177344	\$	2,224.04
		\$	2,648.19



MANAWATU TENANTS UNION

OFFICERS 2014---2015

Chairperson: Joy Panoho

Secretary: Daniel Ryland

Treasurer: Leigh Basile

Committee Members

Marlene Taylor

John Holland

Carol Phillips

Noorangi Puleosi

Thomas Robertson

Kathleen Stephens

Coordinator: Kevin Reilly

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Ministry of Social
Development

Community Organisation
Grants Scheme [COGS]

Palmerston North Community
Services Council

Catholic Diocese of
Palmerston North

Mr. Marty Gunn [Auditor]

Thomas MaCarthy Trust

Pub Charity

Eastern & Central Trust

Massey University Students
Association

Lottery Community Funding

Union's Manawatu

Manawatu Tenants Union
Development Plan Researcher's

Christina Severinsen

Elinor Chisholm

Rachel Hanson

We wish to acknowledge all
our many supporters in the
wider community.

Research and Governance

Over the past year we have had a group of researchers, Christina Severinsen, Rachel Hansen, and Elinor Chisholm working to improve our organisation's underlying policies and evaluation measures. The research is supported by \$40000 acquired through MSD Stream 3 funding directed towards improving our operational capacity and providing additional means to represent the work we achieve at MTU. The intention is future proof MTU, ensuring that the services we provide will continue by capturing the information and techniques which currently exist.

Over the course of the past year the researchers have made significant advances toward these ends. A complete draft of an Operations Manual has been made which collects into one place and lays out the existing policies for MTU regarding governance policies, recruitment and employment, appropriate provision of services, and ensuring the health and safety of the Coordinator and those seeking MTU's services. These policies either formalise what already exists within MTU or presents policies which are present in similar organisations as best practices.

Additional work has been made toward creating a structure for outcomes based evaluation to take place. The discussion to create a system most suitable for MTU is ongoing, but once completed a template will be provided to capture a richer set of data regarding what we achieve and how we network with other organisations. Upon completion of this initial process MTU will have techniques in place to represent the important work that we do and show changes and developments within housing in the Manawatu to potential funders, while always capturing collaboration data. It is anticipated that a trial of the outcomes based evaluation will take place within the coming months.

The final portion of the research has been to capture the work of MTU and the complex issues involved. A collection of narratives from the work MTU has performed in the past has been gathered and these will be added to the final presentation, capturing that the personal and complex lives of those we aid are not lost. The researchers have also generously offered to provide MTU with an updated web presence.

THE LISTENER JUNE 20TH 2015

