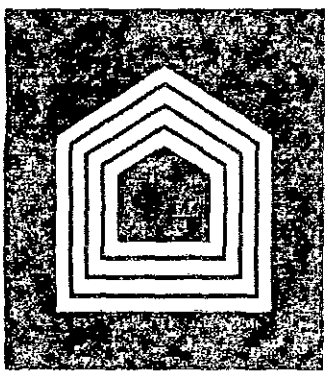


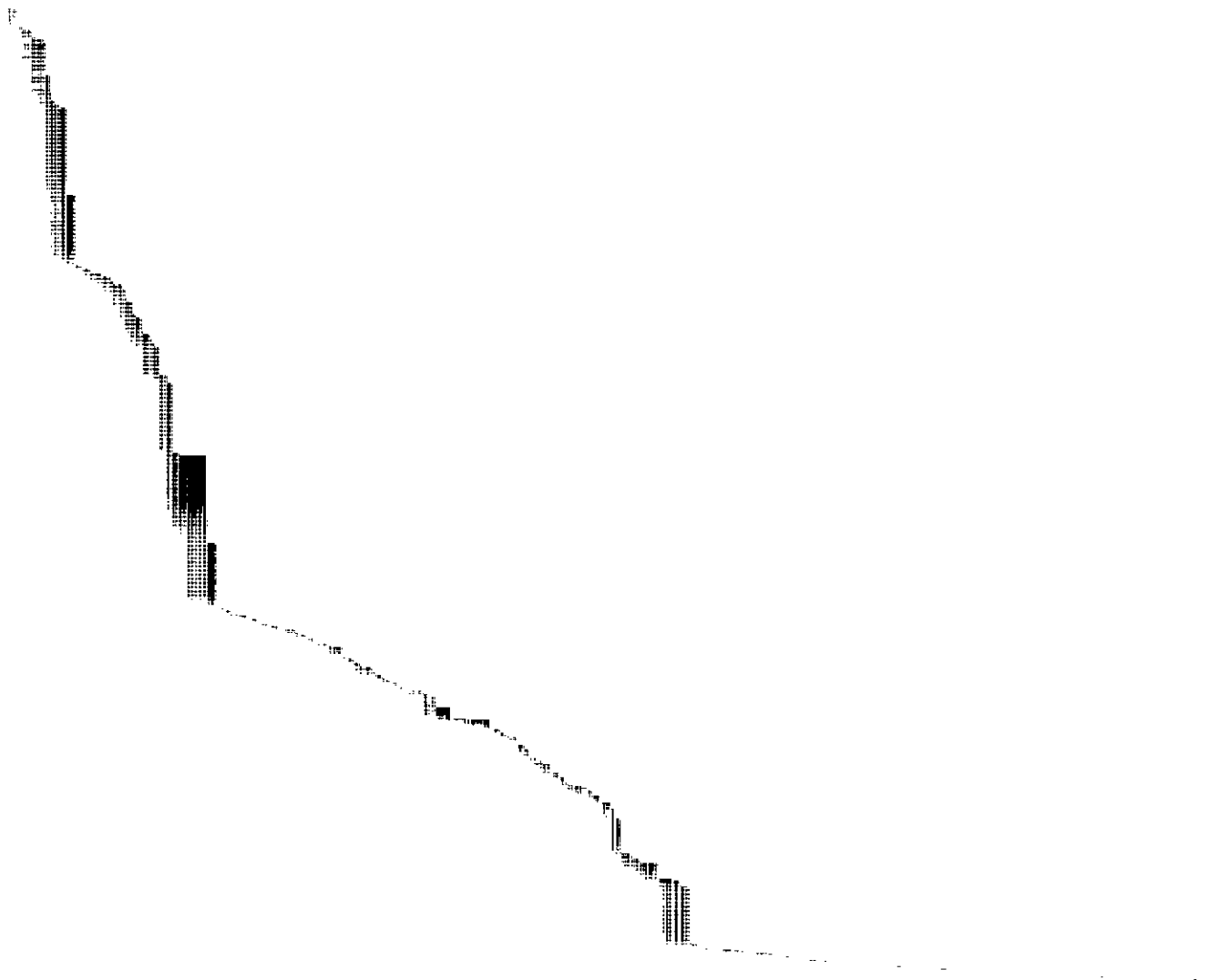
07 JUL 2017



**Manawatū
Tenants'
Union**

Housing

Today



2

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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 2017

The big story this year, is that housing affordability issues have had serious ramifications for the health and social wellbeing of an increasing number of New Zealanders.

Politicians, for the most part, have failed to address the big issues that matter most, and about what people are concerned about. Issues around homelessness, lack of affordable options and the growing number of tenants with mental health problems.

There is a real sense of social injustice about present housing policies this has created the crisis that is now facing the country. The present housing policies are inherently inadequate and it seems that the government is floundering under the weight of the housing crisis. It fails to even acknowledge that there is a problem, despite having to use and in some districts buy motels to deal with the overflow of homeless families, many of whom are women and children.

What is the answer? We have to go beyond the rhetoric and give serious consideration to the rebirth of state housing. Like it or not, renting is now the only accommodation that generations to come, can afford, we need a state house building programme on those grounds alone. There are now more New Zealanders living in rental accommodation than there are home owners. It's a tragedy, for a country that at one time had one of the highest home ownership rates in the western world. There is a need for a National Housing Strategy and a role for the state as the final guarantor of social cohesion.

In Ireland, a country with similar housing issues, the government

has put in place, a scheme where the state pays for refurbishment of private rental accommodation, on the condition that it is used for social housing. The government has provided funding to ensure neglected private sector properties are brought on stream for social housing, under a number of initiatives. One of these policies being used is for the government to make \$100 million dollars available to local councils to purchase and convert them to social housing. It could work here all it needs is the political will, which has been lacking for some years in New Zealand.

The shortage of affordable housing has brought back the idea of 'Prefabrication Homes', made in factories and erected on site. In New Zealand the image of 'prefabs' has been stigmatized by the media. In Europe, a number of groups have produced interesting homes at low cost, yet here in New Zealand central and local government have shown no interest in low cost rental housing.

The Manawatu Tenants Union has never been as busy as it has been over the last year, the need for our services is greater than ever. Tenants are on the phone or else calling into the office, a number have been referred to us by other agencies. Of concern is the number of tenants who have health issues as well as the challenge of finding affordable and suitable housing.

Property management is an area that tenants have issues

with. The Manawatu Tenants Union has been pursuing the idea that property managers should be licensed, at present they are not answerable to anyone. Anyone can start up a property management company, take letting fees and pick up rents without having to prove they know anything about what they are doing. There have been attempts to set professional standards for property managers over the years, but nothing has changed in New Zealand, overseas property managers are required to be licensed.

Lettings fees, is another issue which has been around for quite sometime we believe the time has arrived for the issue to be reviewed. Landlords hire property managers to provide services to property owners, tenants should not be required to pay for that service, again in overseas countries, landlords pay this up front cost. Another problem the Manawatu Tenants Union would like to see some improvement in for tenants, is a register of all landlords. Tenants are required to provide references, and have a credit, employment, past rental history with the Tenancy Tribunal, the list goes on. Landlords along with property management companies have the power to blacklist tenants, yet tenants know nothing of their landlords rental history. A landlord register could act as a character reference for their tenants, its just common sense.

The Manawatu Tenants Union held a Housing Forum at the Catholic Diocesan Centre in Palmerston North which was well attended, we are grateful to the key note speakers that we were able to attract.

The proposed Residential Tenancies Amendment Bill consists of legislation covering methamphetamine contamination, liability

for careless damage and the tenancy of unsuitable properties.

Daniel is our representative on the newly established Tenants Advocates Network based in Wellington. The network consists of a number of tenants organisations around New Zealand, its a voice for tenants at a national level.

Of concern is a national survey of property managers who believe that tenants should be penalised for late rental payments. At present tenants get a 14 day notice to catch up with rent arrears or they will be taken to the Tenancy Tribunal if they get 21 days behind, with eviction as the final outcome. High rents are the problem, not the solution for those seeking accommodation at a fair rent, penalising tenants is not the answer, education is the way to go.

I forgot to mention that I have been only working part time due to an accident I had 12 months ago but I am back along with Daniel to provide support and advice to the many tenants in Palmerston North.

Kevin Reilly

Coordinator

Phone enquiries 767 Office visits 299

Manawatu Tenants Union

Officers 2016/ 2017

Chairperson Dr. Joy Panoho

Secretary Julie Campbell

Thomas Robertson

Treasurer Leigh Basile

Committee Members

Kerry Howe Lorna Tattersfield

Kathleen Stephens Hannah Kuriger

Ben Schmidt John Holland

Marlene Taylor Thomas Robertson

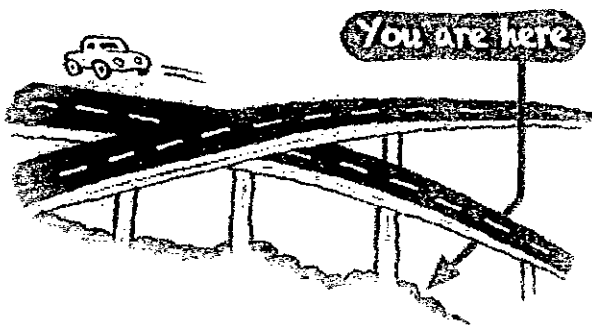
Advisor Noorangi Puleosi

Analyst / administrator Daniel Ryland

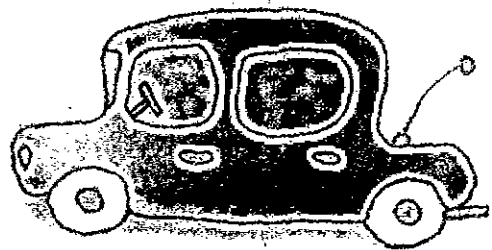
Cordinator Kevin Reilly

OUR LATEST HOUSING LISTINGS

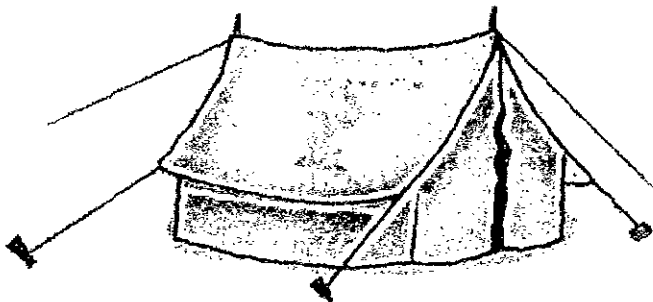
Inner city pied-à-terre with excellent motorway access.



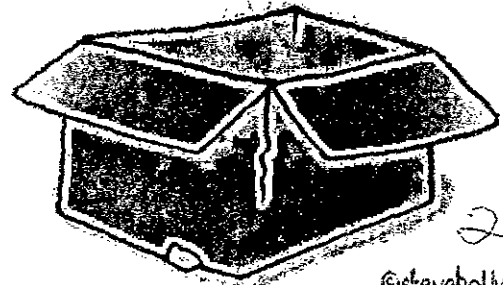
Say goodbye to theft, violence and bronchitis with this stylish, secure lock-up-and-leave.



Awake to the sound of truck-song in this outstanding Grafton Gully one-bedder.



Get your foot in the door with this exciting central city starter. This one ticks all the boxes.



2016.

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Acknowledgements

Ministry of Social Development

Community Organisation Grants Scheme

**Palmerston North Community Services
Council**

Catholic Diocese of Palmerston North

Thomas McCarthy Trust

Palmerston North City Council

Massey University Students Association

Lottery Community Funding

Jack and Marjorie Ferrie Trust

Page Trust

**Thanks to our many valued supporters in
the wider community and to members of
the Governing Board of the Manawatu
Tenants Union for their leadership.**

Manawatu Tenants Union

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Just like this leaflet,
Tenants and
affordable housing
Are used to being
IGNORED.

Housing is a basic human right.