



25 March 2020

S20.07

Submission to the Social Services and Community Committee on the Residential Tenancies Amendment Bill 218-1

Introduction

- 0.1. The National Council of Women of New Zealand, Te Kaunihera Wahine o Aotearoa (NCWNZ) is an umbrella group representing over 200 organisations affiliated at either national level or to one of our 15 branches. In addition, about 450 people are individual members. Collectively our reach is over 450,000 with many of our membership organisations representing all genders. NCWNZ's vision is a gender equal New Zealand and research shows we will be better off socially and economically if we are gender equal. Through research, discussion and action, NCWNZ in partnership with others, seeks to realise its vision of gender equality because it is a basic human right.
- 0.2. NCWNZ welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the Social Services and Community Select Committee on the Residential Tenancies Amendment Bill.
- 0.3. This submission has been prepared by the NCWNZ Social Issues Standing Committee and the Parliamentary Watch Committee in consultation with individual NCWNZ members with relevant experience and expertise and by drawing on relevant NCWNZ policies and resolutions. It has not been possible to consult widely with all NCWNZ branches, individual members and member organisations within the timeframe for submissions.
- 0.4. Our submission was prepared within the framework of the United Nations' Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and NCWNZ's longstanding commitment to the health and well-being of children and young women.

1. Summary

- 1.1. NCWNZ supports this Bill as it modernizes and clarifies the existing legislation. NCWNZ had made earlier submissions related to the Residential Tenancies Act 1986¹².
- 1.2. It is a comprehensive Bill and this submission focuses on relevant sections which were thought to improve conditions for women.

2. Commentary

Comments from members related to Part I Amendments to the Residential Tenancies Act 1986.

- 2.1. Clause 7 Section 13 replaced (Form of tenancy agreement)

As well as the Tenancy Agreement being in writing and signed, it was suggested that the language of the agreement should be clear and easy to read.
- 2.2. Clause 14 Section 18 amended (Bonds to be no more than 4 weeks' rent)

Some members considered that four weeks' rent for the bond was high, especially for people on low incomes. A two weeks' minimum was suggested.
- 2.3. Clause 17 New sections 22F and 22G inserted (Rental Bidding)

The new section prohibiting the landlord from offering a tenancy unless the amount is stated in the advertisement, or offer, was supported as it was felt that this was not always stated. The new section that the landlord must not invite or encourage bids for rent was also supported.
- 2.4. Clauses 22 Section 42 amended (Tenant's fixtures) and 23 New sections 42A and 42B inserted

The changes proposed here were thought to clarify the situation on minor changes to premises for tenants.
- 2.5. Clause 37 New sections 55A and 55B inserted

Where the tenant repeatedly engages in antisocial behaviour, it was thought that there needed to be rules relating to the termination of the rental agreement for anti-social behaviour

Areas which particularly affect women, older people of the disabled that were not included in the Bill.

¹ S02.26 Submission to the Social Services Select Committee on the Residential Tenancies Amendment Bill <https://www.ncwnz.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/S02.26-Residential-Tenancies-Amendment-Bill.pdf>

² S05.11 Submission to the Department of Building and Housing on: Getting the Balance Right Review of the Residential Tenancies Act 1986 <https://www.ncwnz.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/S05.11-Review-of-the-Residential-Tenancies-Act-1986.pdf>

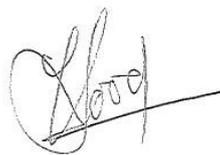
- 2.6. Members suggested that physical safety of the house that ensures the rental premises are safe for women, older or disabled people is important. Maintenance that relates to physical safety is not always carried out as and when requested. It is understood that currently there is a provision for such repairs to be carried out within 28 days and that was thought to be too long. Often repairs are not carried until an accident happens or repairs are carried out in an amateur fashion which puts people at risk.
- 2.7. Living in unsafe house can cause mental problems and anxiety to women, disabled and older people. Members suggested that all work needed to make house safer for a particular tenant should be done in within two weeks of the request lodged.

3. Conclusion

- 3.1. NCWNZ supports this Bill as it provides fairness to both parties and will make it easier to bring fairness to the renting environment.



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NCWNZ Board



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Committee