



TENANT NEWS

N.S.W.

NO. 20

MARCH '83

REPORTS TO THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

1) resourcing unit

The work of the Resourcing Unit is broadly arranged under three headings, namely, 1. Facilitation of Service to Tenants; 2. Community Education; and 3. Community Development or Working on Tenancy Issues from the State-wide perspective.

1. FACILITATION OF SERVICE TO TENANTS

The Tenants' Union Resourcing Unit supports and resources 36 Tenants' Advice Services (TAS) across N.S.W., 7 TAS west of Strathfield, 15 East of Strathfield and 14 TAS outside Sydney. The distribution of TAS indicates areas where tenants are under particular pressure for a variety of reasons including the loss of low-cost rental accommodation due to development pressure, demographic characteristics and increasing income insecurity. The Unit strives to improve service for and to tenants and to consolidate TAS. Expansion of the network is constrained by the limited funding of the Unit. In addition to TAS, many legal, health, welfare, educational, consumer and housing services utilise the resources of the Unit. The mobility of the Unit is invaluable for disseminating experience and cross fertilising programmes to assist tenants.

TAS NETWORK

New TAS since last AGM are Canterbury Info Van, May Murray, Marrickville, Sydney University, Albury, Bathurst, Orange, Wollongong, Katoomba, Woodburn and Casino. Some TAS have a larger local profile than others. The Unit supports all TAS! All TAS are independent and affiliated with the Tenants' Union.

There have been a marked interest in TAS from Local Government circles (e.g. Waverley, Leichhardt and North Sydney) and social planning services and, together with the fact that some services are deluged with enquiries, the Unit has been developing detailed submissions for seeking funds. To date most assistance in this respect has been for Newcastle, Katoomba and A.C.T.. Generally speaking, this is preliminary work for TAS and will become vital whenever new landlord and tenant law is legislated in N.S.W. The diminishing availability of legal aid in N.S.W., coupled with a preference for criminal over civil matters, has exacerbated TAS problems. Whenever new law eventuates, the work and experience of the Unit in respect of TAS and community education (see below - 2) will become vital aspect in alleviating the housing difficulties of low-income earners.

HOTLINE

Some TAS take Hotline referrals for a few hours a week and, in addition, so do some volunteers and agencies not published as TAS. Bondi Cottage has had withdraw from the Saturday morning slot. However, the Hotline is now covered most mornings.

OTHER SERVICES OFFERING TENANCY ADVICE

This includes certain Council workers, other social and community services, the occasional DSS staff person (e.g. Windsor, Surry Hills, Manly, Rockdale, and Kempsey), some community health centres, youth centres, etc. and our bi-lingual network (see below). Many legal aid services utilise Resourcing Unit skills and resources.

German	Cabramatta Community Centre (TAS)
Thai	
Lao	
Chinese	
Vietnamese	
Italian	Balmain Info Van (TAS)
Greek	
Arabic	Canterbury Info Van (TAS)
Egyptian	
Polish	Matraville CYSS (TAS)
Vietnamese	
Turkish	Hillsdale (TAS)
Spanish	
Greek	South Sydney Community Aid (TAS)
Korean	
Spanish	Nic Nac (TAS)
Greek	
Lao	Lao Association
Italian	Co.As.It.
Italian	Filef
Egyptian	Marrickville CYSS
Arabic	
Greek	
Turkish	Australian-Turkish Child Care
Arabic	Arabic Child Care Committee
Yugoslav	Yugoslav-Australian Centre
Arabic	Marrickville Information Centre
Arabic	Australian Lebanese Association
Spanish	Newtown Neighbourhood Centre
Portuguese	
Turkish	
Greek	

Bi-lingual instructors' Programme.



BACK-UP

This Unit acts as back-up for TAS and arranged back-up in general (legal and information). There is some principle follow up on cases such as a report to the Rental Bond Board and the Council for Auctioneers and Agents on an agent using a scheme to evade the provisions of the Rental Bond Act. The Unit works with TAS on specific issues including the famous Cabramatta Report on law reform and with Fairfield TAS on the repositioning of Consumer Claims Tribunal in that area following the closure of the Liverpool Consumer Affairs Office.

The Unit has taken up specific squatters cases and the occasional bond dispute before Tribunal and represented a tenant at a Fair Rents Hearing and the subsequent appeal.

ORGANISING TENANTS

The Unit has successfully supported groups of tenants on issues from rent increases to compensation evictions.

TRAINING WORKSHOPS

Either a series or a full-day training workshop has been held in the last 12 months at: Pyrmont, Matraville, Hillsdale, Darlinghurst CYSS, "Changes", Bondi Junction, Hillsdale (Spanish), South Sydney, Manly, Sydney University (Canterbury Info Van), Kings Cross, Dulwich Hill, Redfern Legal Centre, Marrickville Legal Centre, Auburn (Ethnic Workers), Cabramatta (Ethnic Workers), Blacktown, Sutherland, Woodbury, (Casino and Lismore), Wollongong, Bathurst (Orange), Albury and Katoomba.

ADVANCED WORKSHOPS

An advanced workshop on evictions for tenancy advisors, migrant workers, staff of ALAO, Public Solicitor's Office, Consumer Affairs and Community Legal Centres, was well attended. Kevin Anderson, SM, spoke and answered questions. The Unit will arrange further advanced workshops as required by advisors. A topic well situated is bond disputes at Consumer Claims Tribunal.

Follow-up on the evictions workshop will include a mock court so advisors can become as familiar as possible with court procedures for advising and supporting tenants in evictions and utilising minimal legal provisions as necessary.

OTHER TRAINING

Staff of the Unit visit TAS as necessary or as frequently as possible. These visits take from a few hours to a whole day, and the advisors discuss all facets of the operation of a TAS.

TAS visited apart from scheduled training workshops include Hillsdale, "Changes", Bondi Beach, Kings Cross, Redfern, Redfern Legal Centre, Redfern Community Health, Darlinghurst CYSS, Fairfield, Cabramatta, Dulwich Hill, May Murray, marrickville Legal Centre, Bathurst, Wollongong, and all the bi-lingual network.

TAS CIRCULAR

TAS's, the bi-lingual network, housing services and the community legal centres are regularly circularised on service to tenants such as changes in a centre's operation, notices on workshops, updates on REI productions, etc.

STATISTICS

The TAS network statistics for 1982 are complete. The network is handling close to maximum enquiries, especially considering TAS offer tenancy advice as one of their range of services.

A new summary sheet for collecting these statistics has been developed demonstrating the range of service of a TAS.

The Unit itself has been called on to give a significant amount of tenancy advice.

RESOURCES

The last year has seen the production of the "Protected Tenancies" pamphlet and a new "Where to Go for Help" pamphlet. Pamphlets on sharing and bond disputes would fill a definite need. The Unit helped produce pamphlets on the rights and obligations of Housing Commission Tenants. The Unit developed an Assignment Form for transferring leases between tenants.

"Your Rights as a Tenant in N.S.W." is now available in 11 community languages: Lao, Chinese, Vietnamese, Turkish, Macedonian, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, Arabic, Greek and Polish. Although Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs provided most of the funds, the Unit had to supply labour, on top, 1/6 of production costs. This material is primarily distributed through ethnic agencies. All the English pamphlets have been compiled into one booklet with a successful application to Law Foundation of N.S.W.

Tenants' Rights Manuals continue to be sold.

The demand for these resources is so great, supplies dwindle as soon as a production is complete. The Unit is currently waiting for a law reform timetable from the Minister, Mr. Whelan, before embarking on the next search for funds. Needless to say, such searches are extremely time-consuming for the Unit.

NEWSLETTER - "TENANT NEWS"

A quarterly production of the Tenants' Union reports Union activities and is valuable public documentation.

2. COMMUNITY EDUCATION

This is a vital aspect of the Unit's work and accordingly a programme is being developed to systematically, effectively and thoroughly inform the community of their rights and obligations in the tenancy relationship. Aspects of the programme are prioritised and accomplished as resources permit. Volunteers can perform different aspects. This is an attempt to better represent the influence and importance of the Resourcing Unit. The nature of TAS host agencies also is important in reaching disadvantaged renters.

Group

Recent Community Education

Migrants

Notices of newsletters of Ethnic Communities Council and Ethnic Affairs Commission on the availability of tenancy information for migrants.

Awaiting reply on submission to Board of Adult Education for fees to pay bi-linguals to speak to migrant families on tenants' rights and obligations

Feature, 2EA, German programme.

Spokes AMES Bankstown.

Bi-lingual instructors use T.U. material in their housing kits.

Many ethnic groups have been sought out and tenancy information forwarded.

Country Regions

Notice of T.U.R.U. services and resources marked "Attention Country Community Services" in Local Community Services Association and NCOSS Newsletters.

Unions

Meetings Trades and Labour Council about Cabramatta Report, leading to their endorsement. Notification of 56 N.S.W. Trade Unions of T.U.R.U. resources, permission to reprint acknowledging source and invitation to purchase Tenants' Rights Manual if required. (Opportunity taken by some Unions).

Trade Union Information and Research Centre used T.U. material for their publications.

Women, Single Parents

Talks, Blacktown Family Crisis, Betsy Women's Refuge, Single Parents' Group, Anthony House, Fairfield, Darlinghurst Inter-Agency.

Youth

Talk St. George Youth Network.

Talk Engadine High School.

Tenants' Rights Manual used in trans-ed classes.

ABC-TV, "Kids and Housing".

TU material used in Youth Workers' Lrgal Handbook. TU will apply for funds under QEII Trust for a worker to follow-up a youth programme.

Students

Liaise Housing Officers, Newcastle CAE, and UNSW and Welfare Officer, Uni. Sydney.

Talks with Welfare Students Sydney and North Sydney Tech.

Real Estate Agent students have exam question on T.U. and request our resources.

Talk to Social Workers at UNSW doing a week-long course on Social Work and Law.

Aged

Liaise with Combined Pensioners Association

Media

Regular 2SER features on the rights and other aspects of tenancy such as Central Listing Agencies.

S.M.H. (27/10/82) - article on rent increases

Daily Mirror (July) - week long feature on tenants' rights and obligations.

Sunday Herald on lease fees

All aspects of the programme are ongoing and in time new target areas will be introduced, e.g. local government planning and welfare staff.

3. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENTINPUT TO WIDER HOUSING PROGRAMMES

The Unit is involved via tenancy issues in wider housing forums. In the last six months, this has included: participation in a conference of housing problems in West Sydney, at Penrith; the Eastern Suburbs Housing Conference; Darlinghurst Housing Seminar; Marxist Summer School; the National Housing Conference; the National Conference of Tenants' Unions and Squatters; the NCOSS Seminar on Housing for Low-Income Earners; the NCOSS Boarding House Group; consultation with Ethnic Affairs Commission on problems of migrant tenants; contribution to the report by Social Impacts on the Housing Commission and Single People; participation in public tenant meetings in Inner-Sydney and Wollongong; participation in N.S.W. Shelter; and part of delegation to new Minister for Housing, Mr. Walker; liaison Housing Information and Referral Service on tenancy matters; liaison Squatters' Union.

ISSUES AFFECTING TENANTS AT THE STATE LEVEL

1. Tenant Blacklist - CRA. Numerous submission and representations to the N.S.W. Privacy Committee have resulted in the Privacy Committee altering their policy so that tenancy and credit records cannot be linked. This policy should be incorporated in forthcoming landlord and tenant law reform. Consumer Affairs sought copies of Unit submissions about this matter.
2. Lease Fees. - Numerous submissions resulted in the then responsible Minister threatening to "delicense" agents who overcharge tenants on fees. (SMH 26/11/82). Council for Auctioneers and Agents sought cases from the Unit and Fairfield and Cabramatta TAS on overcharging and also printed public notices on the matter in the SMH November.

The Unit has brought to the attention of the powers that be the unfair terms of payment of a reservation fee as requirement by the REI "Application for Tenancy". The Unit has pointed these out to the REI in case they feel like being more subtle.

3. Consumer Claims Tribunal in Western Suburbs. Acting on suggestions from the Unit, CCT for migrant will not be held in Court houses but in premises shared by Fairfield TAS.
4. 1986 Census Population and Housing. The Unit submitted on topics related to private and public renting and mobile homes as permanent residencies.
5. Consumer Claims Tribunal, and Bond Disputes. The Unit is submitting by invitation on suggestions to improve the operations of Tribunal in this matter.
6. Local Government Office. This office sought the Unit's view on the way building regulations affect the cost and supply of low-cost rental accommodation.
7. Landlord and Tenant Law Reform. Cabramatta Tenancy Working Party "Reforming a Feudal Law" was sponsored by the Australian Consumers' Association and the Unit is still in close contact with ACA about tenancy law.

The Unit has met with the new Minister, Mr. Landa, on this matter.

8. Recommendations for Improvement of Rental Scheme in N.S.W. This submission was constructed by a volunteer, Toni Beauchamp, in close association with the Unit.

The Board of Directors ratified the presentation of this document to the powers that be after a few changes were made.

9. Community Tenancy Scheme. This Scheme is administered by YACS. A Unit staff member is on the Central Management Committee. The Unit has been contracted to produce a lease for use in this scheme and other resource material. In addition, the Unit will travel to the groups across the State.

4. DIRECTIONS FOR THE UNIT

The Unit will continue through 1983 in the directions outlined in this report. Funding for the Unit's work is becoming daily a severe constraint. As a reminder, the Unit only comprises 1 x 28 hours per week worker and 1 x 24 hours per week worker and funding has not been increased from any of our sources to keep pace with inflation. The programmes of the Unit continue improve and highlight the predicament of tenants and it can only be expected that demands on the Unit will escalate. Cutbacks in the services of the Unit wukk be extremely difficult to explain to sections of the population hardest hit by the N.S.W. shortage of appropriate and affordable housing.

Our funding situation aside, Mary and Regina would like to thank every person who has helped us through the year. We could accomplish nothing without our friends and supporters and with you, we enjoy ourselves very much.

2) secretary's

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1. INTRODUCTION

During the past year the rental housing situation has again worsened. Regrettably, this seems to be a very common opening statement for the Tenants' Union's secretary's report. Headlines such as "Rents Up", "Sydney Rents to Soar by Christmas", "Rental Accommodation becomes Acutely Scarce" - are all too common. 28% of people in Australia rent their accommodation, there being over 400,000 tenancies in N.S.W. alone. However, there is a disproportionate emphasis by government and in the society as a whole towards private home ownership.

There is, however, new Landlord and Tenant legislation to come down this year which is mooted to be much better than the present archaic legislation but it will be interesting to see exactly what is in it and what has been left out.

2. STRUCTURE OF THE TENANTS' UNION

Some of you be be unaware of the exact structure of the Tenants' Union. The Tenants' Union is a co-operative society with members and a Board of Directors. The constitution has broad aims which seek to improve the lot of the tenant. As an offshoot to the Tenants' Union there is the Tenants' Union Resourcing Unit. This has the role of being a resourcing and education centre.

The Unit organises the Hotline and the Tenants' Advice Network, gives countless workshops, etc. The Tenants' Union itself is not funded but the Resourcing Unit is, and in this manner employs two project officers, Mary and Regina. Most of the work of the Tenants' Union is carried out through the Resourcing Unit and the project officers will be reporting on this work later.

3. WORK OF THE BOARD

The Board of the Tenants' Union is composed of representatives from various housing and local community groups, all of whom have an interest in rental housing and other people with a wide range of experience who are interested in rental housing. The Board, during the year has continued to pursue the aims of the Union in its wide ambit. A large amount of time of the Board has been spent on reviewing and commenting on reports and submissions prepared by the staff and volunteers who have been supervised by the staff. A lot of activity is still in the pipeline and is yet to come to fruition.

4. POLICY COMMITTEE

The Policy Committee will be convened this year on a regular basis with the aim of reviewing current policy and compiling a complete set of policy documents. This will be quite a considerable task seeing that the amount of research in the area is small and somewhat patchy. However, this will be a most interesting task and members wishing to contribute are asked to contact the office.

5. RESEARCH ON RENTAL HOUSING MARKET

A research project on the trends in the rental housing market has been started. This is being done by analysing the To Let advertisements in the paper. This form of analysis has been performed before but has been compiled by hand. However, we have recently obtained access to computing resources which makes the task much easier and enables a much more diverse analysis possible.

6. SURVEY OF POLITICIANS

A survey of State MPs' attitudes to rental and other forms of housing has been initiated. This will give us a picture of the awareness and opinions of State MP's and also service to bring to their attention issues in housing which concern things other than home ownership.

In conclusion, I would like to thank a whole series of people:

- Firstly, the project officers, Mary and Regina - whose dedication and ability is phenomenal. As I said before, the basis of the Tenants' Union's work is that done by Mary and Regina.
- Secondly, I would like to thank the Board who continually put in a lot of work despite a lot of other heavy commitments.
- South Sydney Community provides invaluable assistance with case loads, use of their facilities, etc.
- Also, I would like to thank Jean Currell, who does the secretarial work, the Treasurer, Christine; Membership Secretary, Meredith; the volunteers who prepared submissions and helped with the general running of the office, and all the people who helped me with mail outs, etc.

3) elections

Following the A.G.M., the Management of the Tenants' Union for the next year comprises:

DIRECTORS

Jean Currell
Meredith Foley
Peter Colley
Christine Gibson
(To fill 2 year terms)

Helen Sullivan
Julie Melbourne
Terry Johnson
Harvey Volke
Chris Robson

ALTERNATE DIRECTORS

Gary Moore
Nada Spasojevic
Sue Dawson
(To fill a one-year term)

OFFICE BEARERS

Secretary - Terry Johnson
Treasurer - Peter Colley
Membership Secretary - Meredith Martin

SETTING OF SERVICE FEE FOR 1983

It was resolved that the service fee for pensioners, etc. would not vary so membership is \$1 share, \$1 annual service fee.

For workers it will become \$1 share, \$5 annual service fee.

For organisations (and the Board has the power to vary this if the organisation is poor), it will become \$5 share, \$10 annual service fee.

4) MONEY \$ \$ \$

TENANTS UNION OF NEW SOUTH WALES CO-OP LIMITED

STATEMENT OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

FOR THE TWELVE MONTHS ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 1982

	<u>General</u>	<u>Project</u>	<u>Total</u>
	\$	\$	\$
<u>INCOME</u>			
Donations	173.93		173.93
Resource manual		2,356.57	2,356.57
Leaflets	109.50		109.50
Service fee	567.00		567.00
Grants		38,458.00	38,458.00
Interest	60.92		60.92
Miscellaneous	193.06		193.06
Building Society Interest		1,853.28	1,853.28
	<u>1,104.41</u>	<u>42,667.85</u>	<u>43,772.26</u>
<u>EXPENDITURE</u>			
Salaries		23,145.34	23,145.34
Printing	464.95	6,228.46	6,693.41
Postage	696.10	949.70	1,645.80
Stationery	26.60	71.17	97.77
Hotline		210.36	210.36
Telephone		942.40	942.40
Photocopy	97.70	171.02	268.72
Secretary		2,500.00	2,500.00
Insurance		190.94	190.94
Travel		497.12	497.12
Multi Lingual Project		5,758.97	5,758.97
Workshops		341.38	341.38
Miscellaneous	351.99	865.70	1,217.69
Subscriptions	120.08		120.08
Bank charges	25.00		25.00
Depreciation		139.50	139.50
	<u>1,782.42</u>	<u>42,012.06</u>	<u>43,794.48</u>
Deficit for year ending 31st December 1982			<u>(22.22)</u>



TENANTS UNION OF NEW SOUTH WALES CO-OP LIMITEDBALANCE SHEET AS AT 31ST DECEMBER 1962

<u>1981</u>		\$	\$
574	<u>SHARES</u>		680
20,729	<u>RESERVES</u>	19,665	
(1,064)	<u>LESS: DEFICIT for year</u>	<u>22</u>	
19,665			19,643
	<u>OTHER LIABILITIES</u>		
11	Monies held in Trust		11
20,250			<u>20,334</u>
	This is represented by:-		
	<u>FIXED ASSETS</u>		
411	Furniture and fittings		642
	<u>CURRENT ASSETS</u>		
1,620	Cash at bank		4,432
18,347	Deposit - Building Society (at call)		14,910
350	Interest bearing deposits		<u>350</u>
20,317			<u>19,692</u>
20,728	<u>TOTAL ASSETS</u>		20,334
	<u>LESS: CURRENT LIABILITIES</u>		
478	Group tax		-
20,250	<u>NET ASSETS</u>		<u>20,334</u>

