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TENANTS UNION OF NSW
CO-OP LTD
48 Castington St.
Millers Point 2000

tenant

NEWS

No 43 OCTOBER 1991

SPRING ISSUE



The Tenants Union of NSW represents tenants against unfair treatment by property owners and real estate agents.

We help tenants to work together for decent affordable and secure housing by:

- * Resourcing tenants advice services
- * Lobbying Governments on tenancy issues.
- * Publicising tenants' problems and rights.

We believe that good quality housing is a basic human right... This means security of tenure, houses in good repair and protection against excessive rents for all.

Solidarity in numbers is the only way that our rights can be fought for and won.

Join the Tenants' Union, and help fight for tenants' rights in NSW.



TENANT NEWS is produced by the
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LEGAL CENTRES FUNDING INCREASED

In the last Federal budget, the A.L.P. Commonwealth Government nearly doubled its funding of Community Legal Centres (CLCs) from \$2.7 million to \$5.2 million.

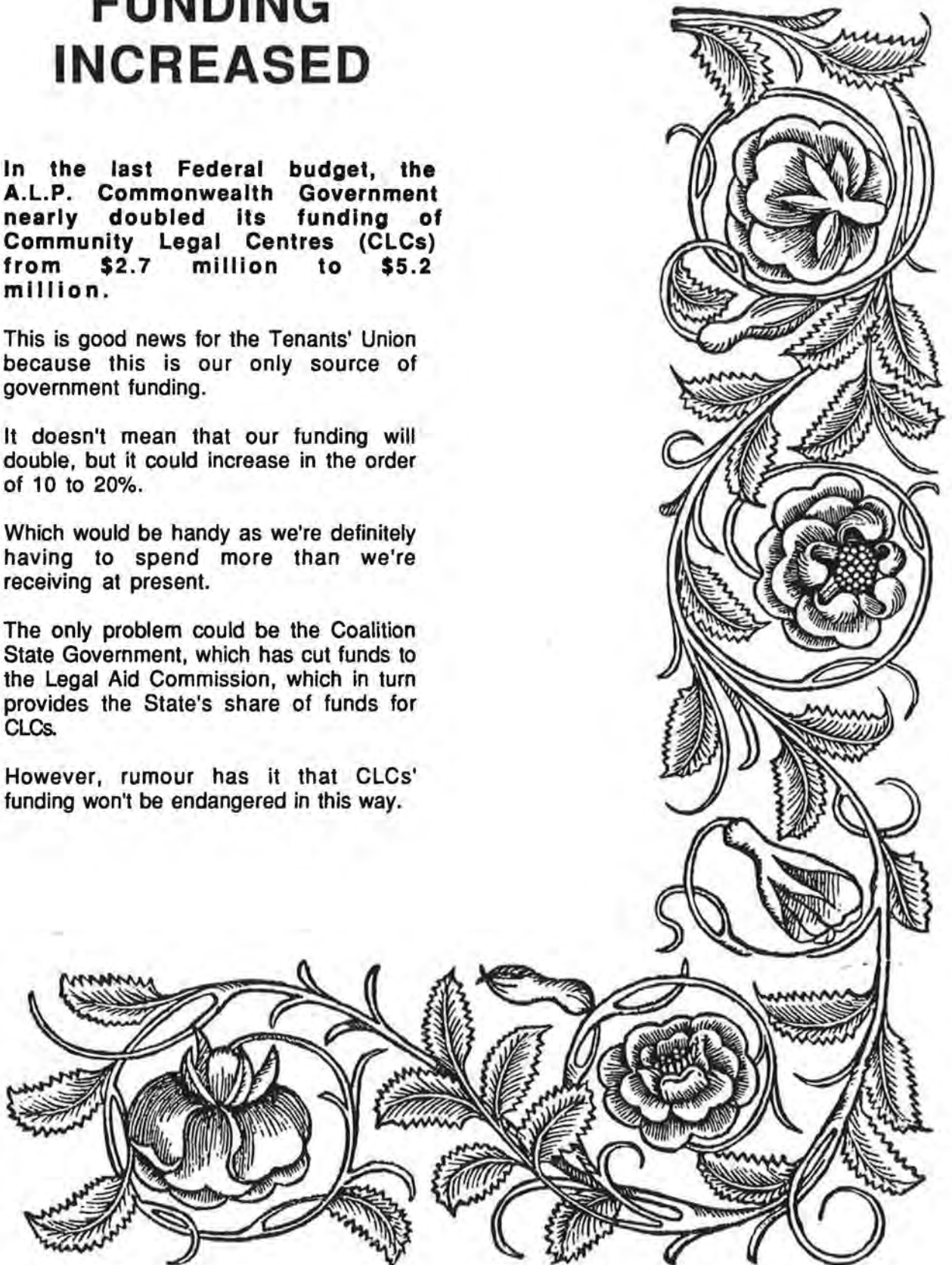
This is good news for the Tenants' Union because this is our only source of government funding.

It doesn't mean that our funding will double, but it could increase in the order of 10 to 20%.

Which would be handy as we're definitely having to spend more than we're receiving at present.

The only problem could be the Coalition State Government, which has cut funds to the Legal Aid Commission, which in turn provides the State's share of funds for CLCs.

However, rumour has it that CLCs' funding won't be endangered in this way.



UPDATE: BOARDERS AND LODGERS BILL IN PARLIAMENT

The Boarders and Lodgers Bill was voted on in the Lower House of the NSW Parliament on August 27.

It passed through almost unchanged, with the so-called 'Independent', Tony Windsor, voting with the Coalition Government.

The Bill was introduced by the Government. Ten amendments were moved by the independent, Clover Moore.

These amendments were designed to greatly improve the rights of boarders and lodgers, and would have been a great improvement on the weak legislation put forward by the Government.

The ALP supported these amendments, and proposed one other. The two other genuine Independents also supported the amendments.

Only two of these amendments were passed. One of these was passed by the Government.



The other being defeated on the floor of the house, as Tony Windsor voted against the Government. This caused considerable media attention in itself.

However, Tony Windsor voted with the Government on most of the legislation and the other nine amendments were defeated.

The two successful amendments included the one by the ALP, which says that boarders and lodgers must be given verbal as well as written notice to leave.

The other allowed the legislation to cover permanent residents of hotels and motels.

Amendments defeated would have given boarders and lodgers greater rights; for example, greater security of tenure, access to the Residential Tenancies Tribunal, and an increase in the period of notice given for terminations.

Without these amendments, this legislation is seriously flawed.

The Bill now goes to the Upper House, where the ALP and the Democrats have agreed to support the amendments.

This gives Fred and Elaine Nile the deciding votes. If they support the amendments, the Bill can be returned to the Lower House.

The Boarders and Lodgers Action Group (BLAG) wishes to talk to Fred Nile to put the case for reform. So far, he has not replied to BLAG's request for a meeting.



MEETING WITH DEIRDRE GRUSOVIN

Gary Moore

Recently a Tenants' Union delegation met with the NSW Labor Housing Spokesperson, the Hon Deirdre Grusovin M.P.

We discussed current issues facing tenants, community tenancy advisory services and broader housing policy matters.

Key points raised included:

- Further reform of landlord/tenant law
- problems with the operation of the Residential Tenancies Tribunal
- re-establishing a community-based tenancy advice and advocacy network
- impact of broad housing policy on affordability and availability of housing to tenants.

It was a productive meeting with commonality of approaches appearing in several areas.

The Tenants' Union will be producing discussion papers on some of these matters for Ms Grusovin and will be happy to arrange similar meetings with the Housing Minister, the Hon. Joe Schipp M.P., the Lower House Independents and the Upper House Independents and Democrats in the future.

FEW PROSECUTIONS BY COMMISSIONER

Sue Creek

The Tenants' Union has received many queries since the start of the Residential Tenancies Act about how and when people can be prosecuted for breaches of the Act.

The responsibility for compliance with the Residential Tenancies Act, including prosecution, rests with the Tenancy Commissioner. What has been done in this area?

According to the Residential Tenancies Update the following activities were undertaken during the first 6 months of 1991:

- 125 Cases referred for investigation by Tenancy Commissioner and the Tribunal.
- 1029 Inspections carried out, including visits to real estate agents and caravan parks.
- 36 Warning letters issued concerning breaches of the law.
- 4 Prosecutions commenced.
- 2 Prosecutions completed - both for illegal lockouts (in the first case \$2506.66 costs were awarded, in the second case an \$800 fine was imposed plus \$45 costs).

Why are the figures so low - only 36 warning letters and 6 prosecutions in 6 months??? Are there really so few people breaking the law?

The Tenancy Commissioner's Compliance Policy may throw some light on the situation.



According to this Policy, the following are considered in deciding whether to prosecute under the Residential Tenancies Act:

1. The seriousness of the alleged offence. Is it a technical breach or is there an intention to breach the Act?
2. Previous breaches. Have there been previous warning letters from the Commissioner?
3. Implications for landlords and tenants generally. Will it help eradicate an unsatisfactory industry practice by setting a precedent?

4. Strength of the case. Is there sufficient evidence to prove the breach?
5. The amount of money involved. Has the breach caused a tenant or landlord a substantial financial loss?
6. Were there mitigating or aggravating factors leading up to the breach?
7. The extent that the alleged offender has co-operated in the investigation?
13. Has the Minister for the Tenancy Commissioner made a public statement about "cracking down" on various types of activity?
14. What action has the offender taken to prevent a further breach? (eg. has the agent or landlord altered record keeping?)
15. Has action already taken resulted in the tenant being paid money lost because of the breach?



8. Could prosecution jeopardise the landlord/tenant relationship and lead to the tenant being evicted?
9. Are there more suitable alternatives?
10. Attitude of witness or victim (are they likely to strongly support the Tenancy Commissioner in any court proceedings?).
11. The need to produce public confidence in the Tenancy Commissioner's application of the legislation.
12. Is there sufficient time? (prosecution action must be commenced within 3 years of the offence).

Not all of the above have to be satisfied or will be relevant in any particular case.

However, prosecution can be very expensive - sometimes running into thousands of dollars - so the Tenancy Commissioner must be satisfied that the case is worth pursuing.

Another explanation is that the Commissioner (via the Tenancy Service) also attempts to achieve compliance through education and mediation.

Many people do break the law because they are not aware of it (though try running this defence as a tenant if you have given the wrong amount of notice to move out!).

However, there should be little excuse in most cases for real estate agents not knowing their obligations under the Act.

Also, it is acknowledged that many individuals do not want to take legal action - they simply want their problem resolved as quickly and easily as possible.

What information is on record - outcomes of Tribunal hearings? complaints (written or oral?), previous investigation reports?

Obviously, one thing we can do is to ensure that the Commissioner (or Tenancy Service) is notified of cases which we feel warrant investigation or prosecution.

Tenancy Service has an official Complaint Form. This does not have to be used - a letter will suffice.



However, whilst there is an important role for alternatives to prosecution, this must be matched by a determination to take further action and impose penalties where someone has blatantly or persistently breached the law.

Otherwise people will simply continue to ignore it.

Part of the structure which needs to be in place is a system which can identify repeat offenders. We have been assured that Tenancy Service can cross reference files.

Is the system being used? Is it automatic or what prompts checking to see if someone is already on the files?

But the official form ensures that the Tenancy Service has the relevant details if they decide to refer the matter for possible prosecution.

It is also worth noting that an action for prosecution is generally less likely if the tenant is not willing to go to court over the matter.

The bottom line is, however, that we would like to see the Tenancy Commissioner taking a more proactive line on this important issue.

Without more prosecutions and strong publicity of successful actions, there is little disincentive for the sharks who continue to operate in the private rental market.

RESERVATION FEES

Sue Creek

A reservation fee is a fee you can be asked to pay the landlord to show your intent to rent the premises while the landlord is considering whether to accept you as the tenant.

Since May of this year, the Residential Tenancies Tribunal has been given the power to hear disputes over reservation fees.

Applications to the Tribunal must be made within 30 days of becoming aware of the breach (unless you have been able to get the Tribunal to extend this deadline to hear your case).

A Reservation Fee does not guarantee that the place will be let to you. However, the landlord can only take one reservation fee at any one time.



The maximum reservation fee that you can be asked to pay is the equivalent of one weeks rent.

If the landlord rejects your tenancy application you must get it all back. If you are accepted, the reservation fee must be put towards the rent.

If you decide not to enter into the agreement, the landlord can only keep the equivalent of the amount of rent s/he would have received if the place had been rented for the time it took you to tell the landlord that you did not want the place.

For example, if the rent is \$210 per week, and you took 3 days to inform the landlord that you had changed your mind, you would lose \$90 ie 3 days of rent.

The fee can only be used for rent, not other costs like advertising. However, if someone is living in the place you should not lose any of the reservation fee.

Moreover, if you have changed your mind because the landlord has varied the original terms of the tenancy (for example, increased the rent), you should get back all of the fee.

POLL TAX UPDATE

Paul Mortimer

The Greiner Government is looking at a new system of Council Rates. These would put more costs on to low income earners.

These costs would be passed on to tenants through rents. So tenants on cheaper rents would have their rents increase.

Mr Greiner has said that he will '...not introduce a poll tax or anything that smells like a poll tax or looks like a poll tax.'

However, the system proposed by The Oakes Report would allow 60% of council rates to be charged at a flat rate, with only 40% charged according to the value of each property.

The result is that rates on cheaper homes will rise, and rates on more expensive homes will fall. Clearly, this will benefit the rich at the expense of the poor.

The higher rates on cheaper homes will be passed on to low-income tenants. Landlords will simply charge higher rents for these homes, to cover the rate increases.



The State Opposition has called this a poll tax by stealth.

Although it is not really a poll tax, strictly speaking, it has some of the same characteristics as Margaret Thatcher's tax.

It would take a tax based on land values, and replace with one which charges rich and poor at much the same rate. A person's ability to pay is hardly

considered under this sort of system.

A task force has been set up by Mr Peacocke, Minister for Local Government, to look at the Oakes Report.

It generally supports the report, and has recommended that local councils operate more on the 'user pays' principle.

This would include charging a fee to have garbage collected. Presumably, tenants would have to pay this fee.

We will be watching with interest to see what the State Government does with these recommendations.



THANKS TO 'B.A.T.L.'

The Tenants Union would like to thank Building Apprentices Training Limited (BATL) for fixing our fence and side gate.

The side gate was actually stolen some months ago. Someone's need must have been greater than ours. And the fence succumbed to a storm.

BATL stepped into the breach and fixed it for us at minimal cost.

We appreciate the support.



New Estate Workers: Reprieve

Paul Mortimer

In July, the NSW Minister for Housing, Mr Schipp, tried to axe New Estate Workers funded by his Department.

These workers are essential for new housing areas. They develop new services and help to bring about a sense of community in new housing estates.

There are 10 such workers in community centres in Sydney, Newcastle and Wagga.

Initially, the Minister simply sent letters to each centre, saying that funding would stop on September 30.

Fortunately, public tenants and community workers quickly began an effective campaign. For example, there were significant local protests in Maroubra, Woolloomooloo, Riverwood and Sutherland.

The result has been a partial back-down. By mid-August, Mr Schipp announced that his Department will continue funding of these workers.

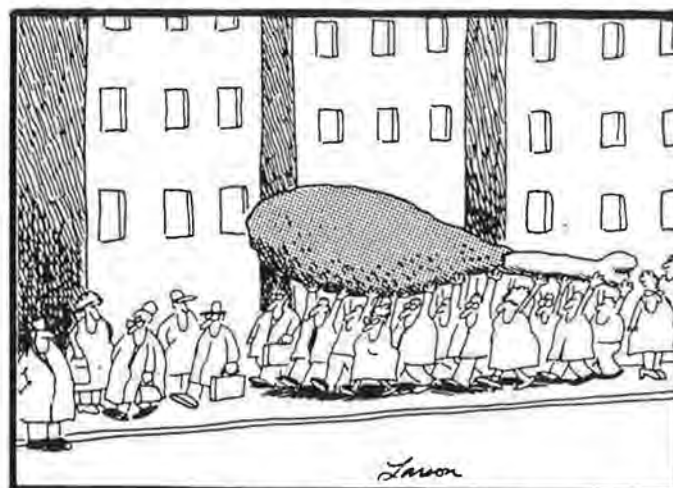
But only until another government department can take over this funding.

Mr Schipp feels the Departments of Community Services and Local Government should be responsible.

This means the program is still under threat, as these Departments do not have funds in their budgets for these services.

Once again, the NSW Liberal Government has shown that it is not capable of considering the needs of communities. All decisions appear to be based on simplistic economic principles, with cost-cutting the primary objective.

The only thing that appears to hold them back is the fear of a political back-lash from the community.



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AGE DISCRIMINATION

Combined Pensioners and
Superannuants Association of
N.S.W.

In 1977 the NSW Parliament passed the Anti-Discrimination Act. However the act did not outlaw discrimination against people because of their age.

In 1980 the Anti-Discrimination Board published a report, 'Discrimination and Age'. This report recommended that the act be amended to outlaw discrimination on the grounds of age.

The report has been ignored by successive governments.

The slow progress on this matter contrasts with the situation in South Australia.

The SA Equal Opportunity Act 1984 was amended on 26 April 1990 to prohibit age discrimination.

In 1990 the Combined Pensioners and Superannuants Association of NSW put forward a draft law to amend the NSW Anti-Discrimination Act along lines similar to the South Australian reform.

What we Proposed - in Housing:

Our Bill proposed that age discrimination be prohibited across the board - but that there be exemptions in some situations.

Example: A 45 year old supporting parent with his 15 year old son applies to lease a vacant apartment. The real estate agent says, 'Sorry, the apartment has just been let. Besides, our clients don't accept children.'



We proposed that age discrimination in accommodation be prohibited.

We also proposed to prohibit discrimination against an applicant for accommodation because the applicant intends to share the housing with a child.

Exceptions to this ban would be in the principal place of residence of the owner of the

accommodation (ie. where you live yourself).

Also, by non-profit organisations providing housing for people of a particular age group (eg. a nursing home for frail older people provided by a church or a youth refuge provided by a welfare group).

And in accommodation for recreational purposes where the use of that housing is limited to people of a particular age group.

General Exemptions:

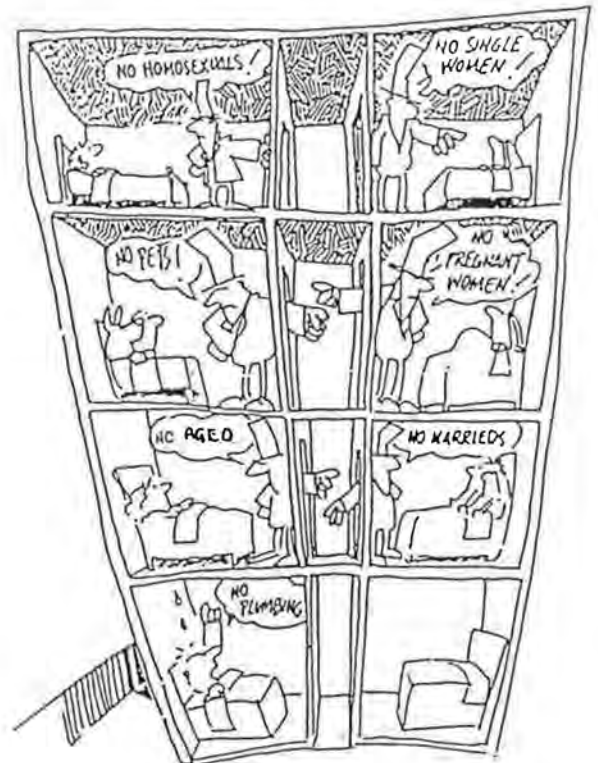
As well as the specific exemptions for the various areas, our Bill also proposed some general exemptions.

These included anything done to give people of a particular age group access to facilities or services to meet the *special needs* of their age group (eg. senior citizens centers).

What the Government has done:

In 1990 the Premier Nicholas Greiner introduced a law which prohibits compulsory retirement.

The Government has been reluctant to prohibit age discrimination in other areas of society, such as in employment generally and in accommodation (particularly the private rental housing market).



New Bill before the Parliament:

Richard Amery, Labor MP for Mt Drutt and the NSW shadow minister for seniors, has moved a bill on behalf of the Labor opposition to reform the Anti-Discrimination Act.

This is similar to that suggested by the Association last year. The Independent MPs have given it their support. Now it is up to the Liberal and National parties.

WSAAS SAVED

Paul Mortimer

Area Assistance Schemes (AASs) were suddenly axed by the Greiner Government in its mini-budget of early July.

This decision was reversed, but only after a very strong backlash and a well-run campaign by the regions affected.

The cuts would have ended the Migrant Tenancy Worker position at the Western Sydney Tenancy Scheme, funded through WSAAS.

But more importantly, this was part of a major attack on welfare services and the community sector by the NSW Government.

The whole incident was extraordinary. For a few weeks, AAS-funded projects were on a roller-coaster ride.

In May, the Greiner Government nearly lost the State Election. This is generally interpreted as a reaction against their incompassionate and 'cut spending at all costs' policies.

Instead of taking notice of this, the Government responded to its budget deficit, revealed only after the election was over. Each Department was told to find big savings.

Robert Webster, Minister for Planning, announced that the Area Assistance Schemes would be cut completely. Even recently-approved and current projects would not have their funding continued.

This went completely against an election promise to fund the projects for the next three years and extend the program to the North Coast.

The Minister could not have hit at a more politically sensitive program. The response was immediate and broad-based.

Regions involved were Western Sydney, Illawarra, Hunter and Central Coast. These include very marginal electorates such as The Entrance and Maitland.

Campaigns were quickly organised, backed by local community services, Councils and MPs. NCOSS helped to co-ordinate.

The outrage received considerable media attention, and soon there was a partial backdown.

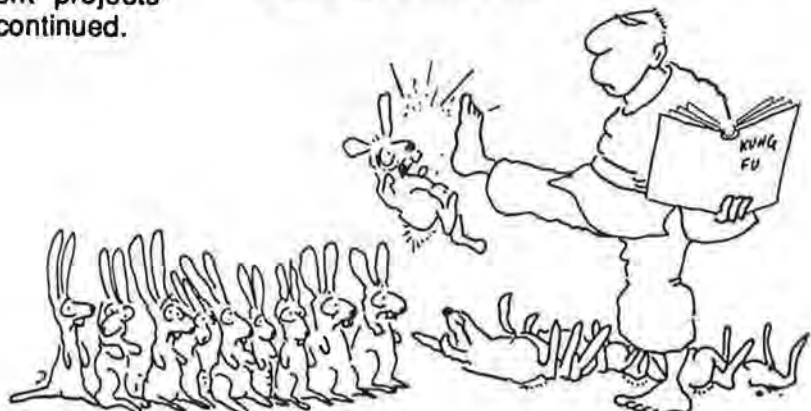
The Government agreed to maintain funding to existing and approved programs until they were completed. But the program would still be cut eventually.

Pressure continued, and by July 25, Greiner and Webster had backed down completely.

They restored the entire \$20 million needed to fund the program over three years, and recommitted themselves to extending the scheme to the North Coast.

Area Assistance Schemes are not completely safe, as the State Government would still axe them if it could get away with it.

But it is a good result so far. Congratulations to everyone involved in the campaign; we are aware that WESTS played an active part.



PUBLIC HOUSING EVICTIONS

**"We're Not Going to
Carry These People Any
More"**

Harvey Volke
Western Sydney Tenants'
Service

There is no longer any doubt that there has been a tenfold increase in NSW Department of Housing eviction actions over the past year. It further appears likely that the NSW Parliament has been misled on this question. And just to put the lid on it, it is possible the Department may be in breach of the Commonwealth - state Housing Agreement.

In the course of answering a question in the Upper House on 30 April, Mr J.P. Hannaford, representing the Minister for Housing (Mr Schipp) said:



" The Department evicted a total of 79 public tenants in the 12 months to 31 December, 1990, under the Residential Tenancies Act 1987.

This represents a decrease of 35 cases over the same period for 1989, which was 114 evictions.

The Department's policy is to preserve tenancies, wherever possible, and eviction action is only taken as a last resort and in the absence of an agreement to pay existing rental arrears. "

On the face of it, it seems likely that at the very least someone did not do their homework properly. In the calendar year 1990, the Department sought 1,037 termination orders.

The 79 cases to which Mr Hannaford refers were those cases where the Department went to the extent of having a warrant for possession executed - that is, got the sheriff to physically put the tenant on the street.

That tells us nothing of how many orders for termination the Department actually got; but it is highly likely that of the 1,037 applications for termination orders it made, it was successful in the large majority of cases.

The interesting question is what happened in the next stage of the process: that is, once the Department got its order, in 212 cases it took the further step of obtaining warrants for possession.

What is not known at any stage of the process is how many people moved out either before or after orders were obtained; so we are looking at numbers of actual terminations somewhere between 212 and 1,037.

What increases the possibility that the higher figure is more likely is the exponential increase in termination applications during 1990.

In the first quarter of 1990, there were 39 Department applications for termination and an order for possession.



In the second quarter this rose steeply to 242, in the third quarter 313 and in the fourth quarter 444.

What is clear is that something happened during the first quarter of last year. At that time either there was a change of policy or some key individuals decided to get tough.

And if the figures for January this year are anything to go by, the number of evictions is continuing to increase dramatically.

Two further points need to be made. In years past there were usually only a handful of evictions - the Department did everything in its power to avoid evictions. This no longer seems to be the case.

Secondly, the huge figure of 1,037 termination applications is still only the tip of the iceberg: before it gets to the stage of seeking an order, a series of letters is required.

Not only do we not know how many of the 1,037 left before warrants were sought, we also do not know how many more left at an earlier stage of the process before it even got to applying to the Tribunal.

There is yet another issue - and this is where the Department may well be in breach of the requirements of the

Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement: that of the issue of no-cause eviction notices.

Sixty day notices relieve the Department of the responsibility of giving any reason at all.

Earlier on, we understand, departmental officers in fact complained that a member of the Residential Tenancies Tribunal was treating them differently from other landlords by requiring them to give reasons. We understand that they were assured that this would not occur again.

The fact is that the department is not like other landlords. One of its key functions is to provide public housing for low income people, and not simply for investment or profit purposes.

Yet this is the real reason why the Department has massively jacked up the number of termination applications. That is, it is probably under pressure from the Minister, from the Premier, or from Treasury, or from a combination of all three.

Why is the Department concerned that it should have to give any reason?

There are at least two reasons for that.



First, it is probable that the majority of termination applications are for rental arrears, whether 60 day notices or otherwise.

It is obvious that contrary to stated operational guidelines, the Department is effectively using termination notices to intimidate people into paying up their back rent.

It has also been our experience that in these cases it is insisting on taking cases through the Tribunal and getting suspended termination orders to blackmail defaulting tenants into paying up.

This is borne out by published comments from ministerial representatives and by comments made to us by departmental officers.

A spokesperson for Mr Schipp told the Mt Druitt-St Marys Evening Standard that eviction notices were a 'warning to tenants that they must be aware of the consequences of their actions.'

In a case we were dealing with, an operations manager in the central Sydney region told us the Department has a new policy now - that it is not prepared to carry rental defaulters, and that if they can't pay up they can get out.

Secondly, the Department is using 60 day notices in cases of nuisance and neighbourhood annoyance. In the past,

the Department has refused to act on tenant complaints of harassment, noise, violence and so on. This has created its own problems.

In its operation guidelines, the Department indicates that it uses 60 day notices in these cases to protect people under threat from further intimidation.

For this reason, it prefers not to have to name the people who have been complaining. This, again, is understandable.

However, the dangers of such an approach are obvious. In cases that are sometimes highly arguable (and we have had experience of these), departmental officers make decisions about whom they consider at fault, and issue 60 day notices accordingly.

This denies the tenant concerned the opportunity to know the case against them, the chance to reply to it, or even the chance to have their day in court.

Effectively, therefore, decisions affecting people's basic necessity of a roof over their heads, are made behind closed doors, without opportunity for redress.

This is a denial of natural justice.

What is even more disturbing is the fact that the Department does not appear to be pursuing other avenues.

At the exact time the Department's termination applications are skyrocketing, the number of applications on ground of dispute or breach, or other ground, has dropped to virtually nil. The explanation is obvious.

Certainly, we can't expect private landlords to consider social consequences (although it wouldn't be a bad thing if we could; it's one of the many highly unlikeable features of the private market), but is it just for a public housing authority to solve one person's problems by increasing those of another?

It is precisely on this ground of denial of natural justice that the Department may be in breach of its obligations under the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement.

Under Schedule 1(D) of the Australian Government's Housing Assistance Act 1989, a primary principle of the agreement is spelt out as seeking to 'alleviate housing-related poverty'.

And within this, under Schedule 1 (D)(b), people in rental housing are guaranteed security of tenure (subject to fulfilment of tenancy conditions). This is also required to ensure, among other things, that

A physical and locational environment appropriate to the tenant's needs is provided, and

Recognition is accorded to the rights of applicants and tenants and other users of assistance.

It could certainly be argued that in some cases of disturbance at least, appropriate physical and locational environment has not been provided. Also, recognition of the rights of applicants and tenants certainly includes the right to natural justice.

Finally, the Agreement clearly implies that the Department of Housing has an obligation to a particular class of people, that is, those at risk or in housing-related poverty.

And if the Department of Housing refuses this obligation, what is left for people who are already at the very bottom of the barrel?

At the least, it is not beyond the realm of possibility that this could be tested in a court of law. In fact, one or two cases have gone to the NSW Supreme Court.

To the best of our knowledge, on each occasion the Department has settled out of court on terms not to be disclosed.

It would seem logical, therefore, to deduce that the Department is not anxious to test the legislation. Is it perhaps fearful that it may be guilty of breaching its obligation to ensure natural justice to its tenants?

Surely there is a good case for arguing that whenever the Department decided to terminate a tenancy, it should be required to show cause.

The question is very simple, really: if people are to be securely housed, they should not be subject to arbitrary eviction. Why is that so hard?



CONSULTATIONS ON STATE PLAN

COMMONWEALTH - STATE HOUSING AGREEMENT:

Sue Creek

Under the last Commonwealth State Housing Agreement (CSHA), each State is obliged to produce an annual State Plan outlining how it proposes to provide housing services and allocate its housing dollar.

Community consultation is meant to provide the basis for this Plan.

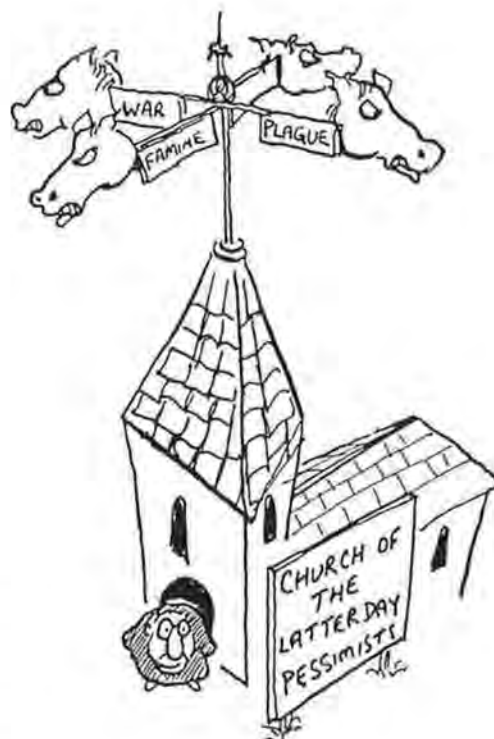
In NSW, the community consultations consisted of ten regional meetings and one statewide one.

While there were difficulties with the consultation process (largely due to lack of resources), some strong points were made.

When the draft Plan was circulated for comment, the Tenants' Union identified many issues raised in the consultations which had not been picked up.

These include the plea made in every region for the refunding of the community based network of tenants advice services.

It will be interesting to see if the final version of the Plan and the State Budget reflect any of our concerns.



MANUAL SALES

1000 copies of the new Tenants Rights Manual have been sold in NSW. These figures are from February to the end of September.

About 600 have been sold through bookshops by Pluto Press. The Tenants' Union has directly sold 400, mainly to community organisations.

This is a much better result than we've had with previous editions, and better than we had hoped for.

It means that a significant number of people have access to good information about renting.

Bodies which are using the Manual include the Department of Housing's Tenancy Service, and the Department of Social Security.

"WILL THERE BE AN END TO STATE INVOLVEMENT IN HOUSING IN NEW ZEALAND?"

Russell Murray

The 'International Union of Tenants' reports that in New Zealand the social welfare area has changed considerably since its change of government.

Housing is also set for some major restructuring, to the detriment of tenants and the well-being of landlords.

Mr John Luxton - the new Minister for Housing in NZ - said at the annual New Zealand Housing Network conference, that the present Housing Corporation could be improved through the introduction of an accommodation supplement.

He hoped the Government's decision to set public housing market rents at the mid-point in the private sector range - rather than at the current lower end of the scale - would encourage some public tenants to seek private sector accommodation or think seriously about buying their own home.

However, fewer than 5000 tenants out of 66000 would actually be affected by the rent increase.

Mr Luxton also said there was a need to find ways of encouraging tenants to move once their serious housing need had gone.

Charles Waldgrave - spokesperson for the NZ Housing Network - said that "the Government's idea delivering an income supplement for accommodation rather than income related housing would result in a massive crisis of homeless people all over the city."



"We are concerned it will be the beginning of a move to say 'we don't really need to keep our housing stock.'

"It is very tempting for a government which is facing difficulties to sell that off at a massive capital gain."

Ms Ronni Fitzmaurice, coordinator, said that the people who will benefit most from such policies will be property investors.

It is not only tenants who will find the new Government's policies tough....many people will face cuts in other welfare benefits....these cuts will of course mean substantially lower incomes.

SOURCE: 'IUT International Information' 2/91, p.11



NEW TENANT SERVICE FOR CAMPBELLTOWN

Lin Broadfield

Burnside is setting up a new Tenancy Advice and Advocacy Service for the Macarthur region. It is due to open in March 1992.

Burnside is a part of the Uniting Church. The new service will be based in Campbelltown, where Burnside has a number of programs operating.

The service will have the equivalent of 3 full-time workers, including general advisers, a full-time case-worker and part-time administrative worker.

It is intended that the service will operate in a fashion similar to the Western Sydney Tenancy Service, based at Harris Park, and that these two services will co-operate closely.

This means that emphasis will be placed on lobbying and advocacy, as well as direct case-work.

Campbelltown has a large number of public tenants as well as private tenants. The service will cater for both groups, as they are covered by the same tenancy law.



Public tenants need assistance under this State Government's policies. If they are treated poorly by the Department of Housing there is virtually no-one to appeal to.

Issues which need to be addressed include:

- "No-cause" evictions of public tenants
- The lack of new public housing
- No infrastructure in new-release housing areas, e.g. transport, health services, education.

The Macarthur region is the fastest growing residential area in Australia. The Local Government Areas of Campbelltown, Camden and Wollandilly have a combined population of over 200,000.

It has all the special problems of developing areas on the urban fringe.

People are geographically isolated. There are high numbers of young people, and youth unemployment is over 20%.

A high proportion of people are of non-English speaking backgrounds and do not know their rights.

There are few services, local industries are closing down, and people are finding it increasingly difficult to support themselves.

Under these conditions, housing problems mean that people are faced with a real crisis.

The NSW Government should be providing services for these people. Instead, Burnside will meet some of the need for tenancy advice and advocacy in the Macarthur region.

CORRECTION

In the June edition of Tenant News it was reported that a police person had been ordered to pay \$22,506 in relation to a lock-out case.

This is incorrect. The sum involved was only \$2,506.



LETTER FROM A MEMBER

Dear Person,

For your information but whether you can act on it or react to it, I do not know, I forward to you a recent experience.

I am on a Superannuation Pension. My rent is \$160.00 a week, which to me on my pension is very high, in fact looking at it in a Budgeting way and trying to provide for the future, in my case, I really think \$60.00 a week would be reasonable, not \$160.00 a week.

Be that as it may, I thought that's the "market" price offered and that is the cost I have to pay.

However I thought, "I wonder if there is somewhere a lot cheaper where I could go and live". I rang Telecom and purely at random, I asked the girl, each time, to give me the name and telephone number of a real estate agent at various places.

The following is the offer for a 2 bedroom house or a 2 bedroom flat.

The Entrance: Flat, villa. \$130 - \$150 a week.

Rockhampton: Flats \$90-\$100/week.
Cairns: Flat (furnished) \$135/ week

Launceston: Flat \$120/week in city
\$110/week, 5 mins out. 2 bedroom
cottage, \$130 - \$135/week.

Hobart: Flat or house \$100 -
\$120/week, 15 mins from city 1/2
hour out is a long way.

So the range on the East Coast of Australia is \$100 - \$150 a week outside Sydney, which means in Budget terms I can't afford to live here, so God help us.

Peace be with you,

Barry Duffin.

This is a Private Service Announcement to all land-lords



ANYTHING WITH HALF
A ROOF ON IT; NOTHING'S
TOO DERELICT...

EXPAND YOUR 2-BIT BUSINESS
INTO A MEGABYTE OFF-
SHORE COMPANY, OR TWO...



ACQUIRE THE TASTE FOR THE
HI-LIFE; ADD 'ELOCUTION'
TO YOUR FILOFAX...

SHARPEN Yo

THE TEETH ON
YOUR DOBERMAN...
(OR OFF!)



those

Rocky Horror Show

days are here again...

FOR ALL YOU CITY SLICKERS
WITH 200 GRAND TO RUB
TOGETHER, WE'VE A ZAPPY
NEW APPROACH TO TENANTS



...AND IS THE HOMELESS....



Yes sir!! It's BONANZA TIME, AND WE'RE GONNA HELP YOU CLEAN UP WITH NOUVELLE, TOTALLY MISLEADING CHOICE...!!



EVERYBODY NEEDS A
Home, RIGHT...!?



...SO WE SEND THE RENT
THROUGH THE CEILING



CHOICE No.2 DO THEY
BUY OR PICK A NICE CHAP
LIKE ME FOR LANDLORD?



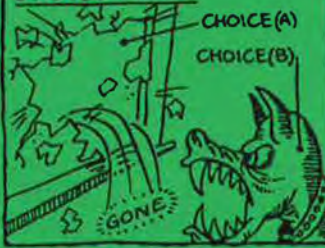
ALREADY I'M A WINNER,
AND (WAIT FOR IT!) I BANG
THE RENTS UP AGAIN!!!



REPAIRS!!?...FORGET IT!
WITH THIS NUMBER OF
HOLDING COMPANIES
THEY'LL DIE OF BEWIL-
DERMENT BEFORE
GETTING TO YOU!



THEY'LL WINGE ALRIGHT
(and even withhold the rent)
BUT YOU GIVE THEM
CHOICE No.3



THEY LEAVE, YOU MOVE IN
BOTCHIT+CO. AND SUDDENLY
YOU'VE 156 bedsits...



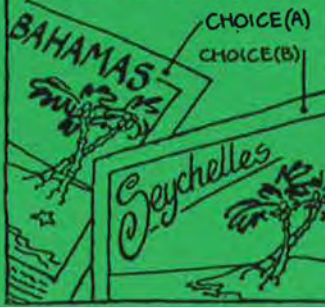
THEN GET YOURSELF AN AGENT...



MOVE IN A LOAD OF THE
GENETICALLY HOMELESS
(we'll guarantee the rents,
old chap... no problem)...



AND SETTLE INTO
GRATUITOUS WEALTH
SOMEWHERE LEAFY.



OH...and don't forget to
pay the piper who played
into your hand!!



YES I want to join the Tenants' Union of NSW

Name _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

Telephone (h) _____ (w) _____

First language _____

Please tick

☐ New membership ☐ Renewal

Are you a: ☐ Tenant ☐ Home Owner

☐ Other (specify) _____

FEES

Membership runs from 1 January to 31 December. New members can pay half fees after 30 June. New membership fee includes cost of share(s).

YEARLY FEE

Tick the fee that applies

	New Member		Renewal	
Pension/Benefit/Student	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 5		
Waged Worker	<input type="checkbox"/> 11	<input type="checkbox"/> 10		
Organisations (by income)				
less than \$30,000	<input type="checkbox"/> 45	<input type="checkbox"/> 40		
\$30,000 \$50,000	<input type="checkbox"/> 75	<input type="checkbox"/> 70		
\$50,000 \$100,000	<input type="checkbox"/> 85	<input type="checkbox"/> 80		
More than \$100,000	<input type="checkbox"/> 105	<input type="checkbox"/> 100		
Donation \$ _____				
I enclose \$ _____				
Signature _____				
Date _____				

Return to: Tenants Union, 68 Bettington Street
Millers Point 2000

OFFICE USE ONLY

Service Fee _____ Shares _____

Donation _____

Receipt No _____ Membership No _____

TENANT'S HOTLINE
251 6590
for advice and assistance
Monday to Friday 9.30am - 5.00pm

**Get Your
Friends
to Join the
Tenants' Union!**



**SURFACE
MAIL**

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TENANT NEWS

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68 BETTINGTON ST
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