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tenant news

TENANTS UNION OF NSW

100 Mallett St.
Millers Point 2000

Tel: (02) 27-3811 June, 1979

N.S.W.

No. 7

INDEX

	page
Annual General Meeting	1
Treasurer's Report	2
Landlord/Tenant Act Reform Committee	3
Increasing the stock of rental housing	5
The rental situation in Sydney	6
The N.S.W. Government's Rental Advisory Service	7
Tenants' Advice Service Statistics	8

TENANTS' UNION WORKSHOP

The next tenancy workshop will be on 22nd July,
1.00 - 4.00p.m. at St. Luke's Church Hall, 118
Regent Street, Redfern, 2016.

Enquiries, please phone 699 4073.



Registered for posting as a publication Category B
Newsletter of the Tenants' Union of N.S.W. Co-op. Ltd.,
118 Regent Street, Redfern, 2016.

Phone 699 4073, 699 2260 Wednesdays 5.30pm - 9p.m.

Service Fee Due. Your Annual Subscription (Service Fee) for 1978 is due if a X appears in the box at the foot of the front page.

Service fees are: \$1 for students, pensioners and Social Welfare recipients;

\$3 for people who are working;

\$5 for organisations.

The Board has power to waive this service fee if members indicate hardship.

Please complete the enclosed slip of paper and return it to the Secretary of the Tenants' Union.



1
The Third Annual General Meeting of the Tenants' Union of N.S.W. was held on Tuesday, 20th March, 1979. The 34 people who attended elected the following people:

Directors for 1979: O. Gager, G. Moore, D.Owen,
M.Jones, B.Mitchell, C.Begg,
J. Matthews, L. Redwin,
M.McRae.

Alternative Directors: H. Campbell, M.Milston,
H. Weiry.

Secretary: L. Redwin. Membership Secretary:
H. Campbell

Treasurer: M. Jones Publicity Officer:
B. Mitchell

Editor of Newsletter: N. Martin

Membership

The meeting discussed the need to increase membership and members' involvement. Several suggestions raised included: a closer relationship between Tenants' Union and Tenants' Advisory Service, strong neighbourhood groups and the possibility of offering additional services to paid members. A simpler method is through members telling friends, relatives and neighbours about the Tenants' Union and encouraging them to join. Have a few spare membership applications in the house for people who are interested. Any other suggestions for increasing membership and participation would be welcomed.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

If you would like to help out in a Tenants' Advice Service, contact the service nearest to you (see last page). We'll help to train you.

TENANTS' UNION OF NEW SOUTH WALES CO-OP. LTD.Statement of Income and Expenditure 1978

(This Statement is still subject to audit)

<u>INCOME</u>		\$	<u>EXPENDITURE</u>		\$
Service Fees	209.00	Printing	730.92
Donations	134.37	Stationery	40.31
Grants (Shelter)	690.00	Postage	245.48
Sale of Pamphlets	170.05	Publications	49.03
Sale of Car Stickers		18.33	Photocopying	25.98
Proceeds from Stalls		239.31	Telephone	92.68
Lectures/Workshops	113.70	Furniture & Equip.		127.20
Bank Interest	1.93	Petty Cash	10.00
			Contributions to		
			Tenants' Advice		
			Services	60.00
			Bank Charges	5.00
			Miscellaneous	26.40
<u>TOTAL</u>		<u>\$1,576.69</u>			<u>\$1,413.00</u>

Claims made in 1978
but still unpaid at
31.12.78 \$81.80

Balance of Income over Expenditure at 31.12.78 = \$163.69

(Balance of Income over Exp. and Unpaid Claims = \$81.89)

Share Capital at 31.12.78 = \$237.00

Share Capital in Trust
(awaiting approval by Board) = \$40.00

Interest Bearing Deposits

On 28.7.78 \$200.00 of Tenants' Union funds were transferred to Interest Bearing Deposit with the Commonwealth Trading Bank (Redfern). Rec. No. 623468.

The interest rate is 9% p.a. calculated at six monthly intervals. At 31.12.78 therefore NO interest has accrued on this deposit.

Kate Holland (Hon. Treasurer)
20.3.79

The Landlord and Tenant Act Reform Committee

The New South Wales Government has finally established a committee to look at landlord-tenant legislation. The Committee, which meets monthly, is composed of:

- A.Schulstead (Rent Controller) as Chairperson,
- B.Murrell representing the Real Estate Institute,
- H.Llewellyn, representing the Flat and Property Owners' Association,
- Prof. R.Sackville from the Law Faculty at the University of N.S.W.,
- S.Rothman, town planner and a member of the A.L.P. Housing Policy Committee,
- C.Petrie, social worker,
- M.Macrae representing the Tenants' Union,
- F.James representing Redfern Legal Centre,
- J.Dunford, barrister,
- A.Lang from the Law School at Macquarie University.

So far the Committee has met four times and has discussed several points. It is expected to issue an interim report around September this year. Discussion at meetings has been restricted largely to comparing the South Australian and Victorian legislation. The following have been agreed to - cannot demand more than one month's rent in advance; 30 days' notice required for rent increases; rent increases should be no more regular than once every six months; records should be kept of rent payments; and rent payable should accrue daily and not periodically.

A tribunal, similar to the Fair Rents Board, needs to be set up just to deal with tenancy cases; tenants should not use the rented premises for any illegal purpose; the tenant should not cause a nuisance to nor disturb neighbours; the landlord should ensure that premises are vacant at the start of a tenancy; and the tenants' obligations, as set out in the lease, should not commence until the place is ready for their occupation.

Two sub-committees have already been set up. One is examining areas for deletion and amendment of present landlord-tenant legislation. (A.Lang, J.Dunford and G.James) This has not held a meeting yet. The other is looking at the responsibilities of landlords and tenants relating to repairs, damage and cleaning. (B.Murrell, H.Llewellyn, C.Petrie and M.Macrae) This has met twice and on 2nd May R.Mowbray represented the Tenants' Union.

The following points have been discussed by the sub-committees. There is agreement that where the landlord doesn't do essential repairs, then the tenant should have access to a tribunal who can order repairs to be done; there is a need for some definition of cleanliness; the tenant should have some recourse for claiming back costs for cleaning premises dirty at the commencement of the lease; and in cases of emergency where the tenant gets urgent repairs done, he or she should be able to recoup these costs.

The Committee has publicly invited interested organisations and individuals to make submissions on areas concerning landlord-tenant relations.

Research on Boarding Houses

Currently a study is being done on the Boarding House situation in Sydney. Seven Sydney council areas are being looked at - South Sydney, Randwick, Waverley, Woollahra, City, Leichhardt and North Sydney. The standard of the housing, the availability of boarding accommodation, the rents and services offered and the legal position of a boarder are all being studied.

If you have any information which you wish to contribute please contact G. Moore or P. Rumble on 387 3532/389 8937

Increasing the Stock of Rental Properties

Letter from Mr. S.D.Einfeld dated 13th March, 1979 advising that the N.S.W. Government is considering inducements to encourage the construction of rental accommodation. He stated:

"The run down in the stock of rental properties and consequent effect on rentals is a matter of grave concern.

It is intended that measures to try and reverse these trends will be considered as a matter of urgency by the Directorate of Housing being established within my portfolio. One of the methods being considered is the provision of land surplus to government requirements on terms and conditions favourable to the development of tenanted dwellings.

I have asked the Deputy Director of the Directorate of Housing to note that your organisation has a special interest in these questions."

A Chance for the Housing Commission to Build Up Its Stock of Houses in Inner Sydney?

South Sydney Community Aid initiated correspondence with the N.S.W. Government over disposal of properties owned by the Government on abandoned lengths of inner city freeways. On 26th January, 1979 Mr. Harry Jensen, Minister for Roads, advised the following:

"Methods of disposal have been developed which will provide for the properties to be offered to the previous owners..... If the previous owners do not wish to purchase the properties, Councils and Government Departments (such as the Housing Commission of N.S.W.) will have ample opportunity to acquire them."

Commenting on the latest state of the rental market, Mr Lawrence said "a demand for inner-city rental accommodation" was much in evidence. "This trend, which is particularly evident in Sydney and Melbourne, could well be due to locational factors — tenants preferring to live in areas closer to jobs, transport and other amenities."

One of the REIA's key indicators of the rental market is a city's vacancy rate (see table). This is the percentage of unlet dwellings compared to total rental dwellings managed by agencies surveyed.

REIA considers a vacancy rate of about 3 per cent indicates a reasonable balance between supply and demand. Below 3 per cent indicates a tight rental market and strong demand.

The table shows the differences between cities. The rental market is tight in Sydney and has been for several months. Canberra and Melbourne are also tight with a slack market in Brisbane, Adelaide and Perth.

The REIA has made its confidential survey information for the last six months available to The National Times to enable us to compile a comprehensive picture of both the sales and rental markets across Australia.

RENTAL: Throughout 1979, Sydney has experienced an extreme shortage of private rental accommodation, and many agencies have found that the need to advertise rental accommodation has been non-existent.

The shortage has been exacerbated by the boom in the sales market. Many prospective landlords have decided to sell their properties while demand is high, and insufficient new investors have come into the market place.

In March there was an easing in demand in most districts, with the vacancy rate up 1 per cent compared with the end of February.

"This could be a reflection of the easing of the money supply during the period, with home loans easier to obtain than at the same time last year," said Mr Morrison. (The \$557.2 million in home loans approved in Australia in February was 24 per cent greater than for the same period last year.)

But the rental market was still very tight (the tightest in Australia) with only a 2.4 per cent vacancy rate. The main areas which had an oversupply were Manly-Warringah and northern districts (such as Epping, Ryde and Eastwood) where the vacancy rate rose considerably to over 5 per cent, mainly unfurnished units and flats.

On the other hand, severe undersupply (vacancy rate below 2 per cent) was experienced in the inner western suburbs (Ashfield, Drummoyn, Summer Hill, Strathfield), city and eastern suburbs (Bondi, Randwick, Coogee), Canterbury-Bankstown, Parramatta-West, Liverpool and St George-Sutherland districts.

REIA also surveys the time taken by agents to let a property, which gives a further indication of the market. If the market is tight properties will be let more quickly. In March, 76 per cent of agencies indicated it took less than one week to let a property (62 per cent in February), which was by far the highest figure in Australia. (Canberra was next highest at 50 per cent.) A further 24 per cent took between one and two weeks. Most of the agencies which stated it took 1-2 weeks were in the inner western suburbs, where many of the available properties were of poor standard and hence difficult to let.

	RENTAL MARKET			
	Vacancy Rate			
	Nov.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.
Sydney	1.8	1.8	1.4	2.4
Melbourne	3.1	3.8	3.2	2.8
Brisbane	4.5	2.7	3.3	4.2
Adelaide	3.6	3.3	4.5	4.2
Perth	5.0	5.9	4.9	5.6
Canberra	3.6	3.3	2.3	2.9

This article was extracted from "The Market Booming in Sydney, Rising in the other Capitals" by David Hickey in "National Times", week ending May 26th 1979, pp 33-34.

What do you do if your bond hasn't been lodged with the Rental Bond Board and your landlord refuses to return the money to you?

Inform the Rental Bond Board (1 Oxford Street, Darlinghurst) that your landlord has not lodged the bond money, and at the same time you have to lodge a claim with the Consumer Claims Tribunal.

Government Rental Advisory Service

The New South Wales Department of Consumer Affairs has set up a Rental Advisory Service financed through Rental Bond Board monies. This service is available for telephone enquiries and interviews and an Inspector is also attached to the service. (They look after lock-outs of non-protected tenants, whereas the Landlord and Tenant Section continues to look after lock-outs of protected tenants.)

They can be contacted by telephone Monday to Friday from 8.30a.m. to 4.30p.m., phone 238 8111. Alternatively anyone can go in for an interview at their offices between 9.30a.m. and 4p.m.

They are located at:

2nd Floor,
1 Oxford Street,
Darlinghurst, 2010.

(Building diagonally across from south eastern corner of Hyde Park, just up from Museum Station.)

The Tenants' Union is presently waiting on the Department to advise if country enquiries can ring and reverse telephone charges to the Rental Advisory Service.

The following chart represents the number and type of enquiries received by Newtown, Kings Cross, Lakemba, Leichhardt and Redfern centres in the six month period ended 31st December, 1978.

	Newtown	Kings Cross	Lakemba	Leichhardt	Redfern
<u>Summary of cases:</u>					
1. General advice	-	10	2	-	37
2. Searching for accommodation	48	-	-	-	4
3. Repairs	6	10	4	4	34
4. Rent increases	4	6	-	2	17
5. Invasion of privacy	-	-	1	-	10
6. Threat of eviction	7	19	-	5	32
7. Lock-out	-	1	-	-	4
8. Dispute over bond money	1	1	-	3	10
9. Enquiries re Rental Bond Board	-	-	1	-	5
10. Dispute over tenancy agree- ments	22	3	-	1	4
11. Dispute over rent payments	-	2	-	-	2
12. Rent arrears	-	-	-	-	1
13. Tenant seeks to terminate lease early	-	-	1	-	6
14. Discrimination	-	-	-	-	-
15. Dispute with neighbour	1	2	-	-	4
16. Other services, i.e. electricity, gas and water	1	-	-	-	4
17. Appl. for H.C. accom.	-	-	-	-	6
18. Other	4	-	-	4	9
TOTAL	94	54	9	19	162

"Other" included enquiries about lease expenses, house being sold, landlord problem with tenants, stolen property and dispute with co-tenant.

TENANTS' ADVICE SERVICES

These services are run by voluntary groups supported by the Tenants' Union of N.S.W. (Phone 699-4073)

BLACKTOWN (Residents of Blacktown Municipality only)

Blacktown Community Aid, Cnr. Kelso Lane and Newton Rd., Blacktown, 2146
Phone 621 5788

MONDAY to FRIDAY 10am - 3pm

BONDI BEACH

Bondi-Waverley Tenants' Assn.,
125 Roscoe St., Bondi. 2026.
Phone 3091607, 30 6449.

MONDAY 2pm - 5pm, WEDNESDAY 6.30 - 8.30pm,
SATURDAY 9.30am - 12 noon

BONDI JUNCTION

"Changes", 38 Denison St., Bondi Junction. 2022. Phone 387 3532, 389 3937
WEDNESDAY 2 - 5p.m.

BURWOOD

Burwood Information & Aid Centre,
6 Burleigh St., Burwood, 2134.
Phone 747 5172

THURSDAY 4.30pm - 6.30pm

CHIPPENDALE

Chippo Info, Pine St., Chippendale, 2008.
Phone 698 8216

MONDAY - FRIDAY 1pm - 4pm
TUESDAY 4pm - 8pm

DARLINGHURST

Darlinghurst Information & Resource Centre, 68 Oxford St., Darlinghurst, 2010. Phone 312 606

TUESDAY 2pm - 4pm

KINGS CROSS

Community Resource Centre, 280 Victoria St., Kings Cross, 2011.
Phone 31 3210.

MONDAY 5pm - 7pm, WEDNESDAY 2pm - 4pm
SATURDAY 10.30am - 12.30pm

LAKEMBA (Residents of Canterbury Municipality only)

Canterbury Community Aid Bureau, 62 The Boulevarde, Lakemba, 2195. Phone 750 9603.
MONDAY 10am - 4pm

LEICHHARDT (Italian/Spanish spoken)
Migrant Advisory Service, Ground Floor, Marketown, Leichhardt. 2040.
Phone 560 4498 Ext. 7

THURSDAY 6pm - 9pm

LIDCOMBE

Housing Assn. for Low Income Families,
40 John St., Lidcombe, 2141.
Phone 649 3795

MONDAY - FRIDAY 9.30am - 12.30pm

MIRANDA (Residents in area only)

Crossroads Community Care Centre,
Room 302, Office Tower, Miranda Fair,
Miranda, 2228. Phone 525 3790

WEDNESDAY 10am - 4pm

NEWTOWN (Interpreters Available)

Newtown Neighbourhood Centre, 343 King Street, Newtown, 2042. Phone 516 4755

THURSDAY 3pm - 7pm

NORTH SYDNEY

Labour Community Services, 47 Mount St., North Sydney, 2060. Phone 922 4090

THURSDAY 6pm - 9pm

SURRY HILLS

Surry Hills Tenants' Action Group, C/-
Surry Hills Neighbourhood Centre,
Doherty Hall, Cnr. Norton & Collins Sts.
Surry Hills, 2010. Phone 31 8890
(Leave message)

REDFERN

Tenants' Rights Project of South Sydney Community Aid Co-op. Ltd., 118 Regent St., Redfern, 2016. Phone 699 4073,
699 2260

WEDNESDAY 5.30pm - 9pm

REVESBY

Revesby Housing Commission Tenants' Co-op., 85 River Rd. Revesby, 2212.
Phone 77 7960

MONDAY - FRIDAY 1.30pm - 5.30pm

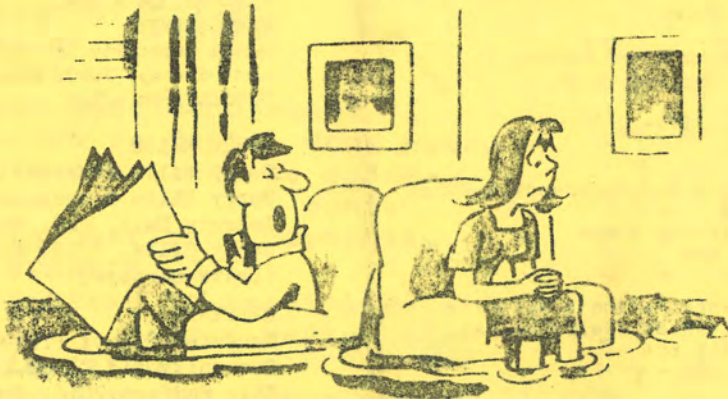
If you have been locked out of your house or flat, contact the Rental Advisory Service on 238 8111.

Protected tenants should contact the Landlord and Tenant Section of the Property Division of the Department of Consumer Affairs on 238 8111.

A Tenants' Hotline is Coming

The Tenants' Union has recently received funding from H.I.R.S. (Housing Information and Referral Service) for establishing a Tenants' Hotline. Any tenant in N.S.W. will be able to ring one telephone number for advice. Incoming calls will be automatically diverted to the Tenants' Advice Service which is operating at the time.

Presently the paperwork is going through for the purchase and installation of a divert-a-call machine.



*Naturally, it will get you down if you
keep thinking about it all the time!"*

STOP PRESS: The Newcastle Tenants' Advice Service is now open for business.

Address: Newcastle Neighbourhood Centre,
Hansell St., Wickham.

Phone: 049 - 69 3833 Thursdays 6-9p.m.