

2018-10/009

File location

October 18, 2018

Residential Tenancies Act Reform  
Ministry of Housing and Urban Development  
PO Box 82  
Wellington 6140

Tēnā koe

### **Reform of the Residential Tenancies Act 1986 Consultation**

The New Zealand Nurses Organisation *Tōpūtanga Tapuhi Kaitiaki o Aotearoa* (NZNO) welcomes the opportunity to write briefly in **support** of the above reform. As an affiliate of the Council of Trade Unions, we support its submission and those of other unions.

Shelter is a critical determinant of health and the right to shelter is affirmed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 25) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Art.11). As such, housing is a priority concern for the nursing profession and for the 52,000 nurses, midwives, and allied health workers we represent. Entrenched health disparities for *tāngata whenua* and others affected by poverty, disability, structural discrimination, or location reflect, among other things, a disproportionate dependence on poor quality rental housing. Addressing the availability, affordability, quality, and security of rental housing is thus fundamental to improving population health and equity. Indeed, we suggest that investment in rental and social housing to ensure equitable access to shelter, is the most cost effective way of preventing ill health reducing health demand, enhancing wellness and addressing unmet need. As the Report of the Commission on the Social Determinants of Health identified, inequity underpins poor health outcomes (Marmot, 2008).

We note the need for a multi-pronged approach, and that reforming tenancy laws is only one part of the comprehensive action needed to address the housing crisis we face. We note and support Renters United and others advocacy for rent control in response to constant hiking of rents. We particularly recommend to your attention the Salvation Army's recent report *Beyond Renting: responding to the decline in private rental housing*<sup>1</sup> for a cogent exposition of the conditions that gave rise to and are sustaining the crisis, as well as proposals for policy reform.

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<sup>1</sup>[https://www.salvationarmy.org.nz/sites/default/files/files/%5Bfile\\_field%3Atype%5D/20181017sppubeyondrenting.pdf](https://www.salvationarmy.org.nz/sites/default/files/files/%5Bfile_field%3Atype%5D/20181017sppubeyondrenting.pdf)

Accordingly, NZNO warmly supports all the measures proposed in the discussion document:

- Ending no-cause tenancy termination;
- Increasing the amount of notice from 42 days to 90 days a landlord must generally give tenants to terminate a tenancy;
- Changes to fixed-term agreements to improve security of tenure;
- Limiting rent increases to once a year;
- Limitations on the practice of rent-bidding;
- Enabling provisions for tenants and landlords to get agreement on having pets and doing minor alterations to homes; and
- Controls for boarding houses to provide adequate new tools and processes for compliance and enforcements systems.

We also recommend that you consider and pursue as a matter of urgency, other strategies to ensure that all New Zealanders have access to affordable, secure and healthy housing, and the opportunity to buy their own.

Nāku noa, nā



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### **About NZNO**

NZNO is the leading professional nursing association and union for nurses in Aotearoa New Zealand. NZNO represents over 52,000 nurses, midwives, students, kaimahi hauora and health workers on professional and employment related matters. NZNO is affiliated to the International Council of Nurses and the New Zealand Council of Trade Unions.

NZNO promotes and advocates for professional excellence in nursing by providing leadership, research and education to inspire and progress the profession of nursing. NZNO represents members on employment and industrial matters and negotiates collective employment agreements. NZNO embraces te Tiriti o Waitangi and contributes to the improvement of the health status and outcomes of all peoples of Aotearoa New Zealand through influencing health, employment and social policy development enabling quality nursing care provision. NZNO's vision is *Freed to care, Proud to nurse*.