

**Submission
No 22**

TENANCY MANAGEMENT IN SOCIAL HOUSING

Organisation: Triple H Forum
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Position: Chairman
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TRIPLE H (HOUSING, HOMELESSNESS AND HUMAN SERVICES) FORUM

SUBMISSION TO THE NEW SOUTH WALES PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE INQUIRY INTO CURRENT TENANCY ARRANGEMENTS IN NSW SOCIAL HOUSING

The Triple H Forum, which brings together services and organisations who work with clients who are dealing with housing, homelessness or human services issues, at its most recent meeting in July, 2014 resolved to prepare a submission to the above inquiry.

Our members come from a range of support services who come into contact with clients seeking assistance and have a solid knowledge of issues our clients face. Some of the concerns of our members are provided below in dot form.

- * Should the management of social housing be provided by community or in particular, privately owned tenancy management, this may involve utilisation of unskilled, unqualified employees with little background in the provision of community services, working with the homeless to offer sustainable, affordable housing, therefore not providing support to the most vulnerable in our society.

- * it is recommended that the inquiry seek information from NCAT to compare the number of warrants issued for Housing NSW, Community Housing Providers and Private Real Estate Agencies as a percentage of their portfolios as an indicator of the various providers' ability to sustain tenancies, thus minimising homelessness.

- * Anecdotal evidence indicates that there would be an increase in tenancy failures, evictions, tribunal hearings and clients being placed on TICA unfairly.

- * Privatisation is known to lead to profit based decisions.

- * There are concerns that homeless persons may find themselves facing less options for support.

- * Compassion and profit are not generally good bed fellows and it would be difficult to ensure that complex issues were gaining the priority they deserve.

- * If out-sourcing (not privatisation) of the management of

Public housing were to take place it would require demonstration that this would be a more effective means of service delivery which was not undertaken at the expense of clients, including increasing levels of homelessness and evictions. Sadly, often the two are linked.

- * Unless properly managed, any change to the delivery of social housing services which has at its aim to be "cost effective" may disadvantage or further disadvantage clients

- * if the management of HNSW properties was to be transferred to Community Housing or other tenancy management providers what specialist services would be required to protect the most vulnerable tenants against eviction and homelessness. Eg specialists, case managers, etc to deal with issues including hoarding, mental health, addictive behaviours, ATSI. In addition to rent collection, what additional services would the mooted alternative tenancy management agencies be providing to support clients

- * How would clients be selected for housing ensuring access regardless of income, race, health and history.

- * What evidence is there to demonstrate enhanced outcomes when public housing properties have been managed by private and community organisations. What was the percentage of rent collected, level of tenant damage, management costs, vacancy turn around times, client satisfaction ratings, evictions and wrap around support services.

- * What would be the effect on the income stream and the cost of managing tenancies if Government introduced a mandatory rent deduction scheme from Centrelink payments.

Our Forum is located on the border of New South Wales and Victoria and some of our members have historical knowledge of the management of so ail housing in Victoria going back approximately

20 - 25 years when the Victorian State Government placed the management of its properties into the hands of private tenancy management businesses, primarily Real Estate Agencies. This practice was reversed when the perceived and proposed benefits of such an arrangement were not met.

The Triple H Forum respectfully requests that the inquiry into tenancy management arrangements in NSW social housing take into account the competing priorities which are identified in the references of the Inquiry -

- **Generating income
- **Providing affordable and safe accommodation
- **Preventing homelessness

Gaining the support of local communities, service agencies and organisations to work together for the benefit of our clients and fellow members of our communities is paramount in ensuring positive outcomes and sustainable tenancies.

We ask that your deliberations take into account the issues of concern which we have raised.

Denise Osborne,
Chairman Triple H Forum
Albury. For and on behalf of the Members

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8 August, 2014