

**Submission  
No 17**

**FOLLOW-UP REVIEW OF THE MANAGEMENT OF NSW PUBLIC  
HOUSING MAINTENANCE CONTRACTS**

**Name:** Ms Lisa Coates

**Date Received:** 1 December 2020

Date: 1 December 2020

My husband and I have lived in Community Housing for 26 years. In that time the inside of this house has been painted 3 times, (before we moved in, 5 years later and then 9 years after that). So it has now been 11 years since the house was painted inside. I have paint coming off ceiling's in chunks, to the extent that it has gone back to bare gyprock. Throughout the house there is paint coming off walls as well. I had an Inspector point out to me that the last time the house was painted inside, some rooms only had 1 coat of paint. As for the outside, it has been painted once in 2000. In 1997, I had a gentleman from the Charlestown Office explain to me (after measuring for a Kitchen and Aluminium Windows) that everything got a rating. At that time we were waiting for a new front fence and for our driveway to be fixed. He said that our fence and driveway had a rating 1 High Priority, Kitchen rating 2, and Windows were a rating 3. So in 2000 when the outside of the house was painted, the inside was painted, we got a new painted picket fence (we are on a corner block) and our driveway built up with improved drainage.

In 2009, we had the inside of the house painted again. Some rooms have only had one coat of paint. We also had a new kitchen installed.

It was common knowledge that the Department of Housing (whose name is constantly changing) had a requirement of the inside of the house was to be painted at least every 7 years and the outside every 10 years. So if this was still the case, what has happened to my place being done? In November every year, for the last 4 years I have had an Inspector come out to see what work needs to be done on the house. The first Inspector hardly looked at the house, so I put in a complaint. As a result, I had his Boss come and spend at least an hour with me, to explain what they are looking for when they come out. He explained the Rating System, and what usually happens when they submit their recommendations.

So, it was this Head Inspector who pointed out to me that some rooms had only been painted with one coat of paint. This did not surprise me, as was well known that Contractor's had a habit of treating Department of Housing tenants like second class citizens, so they felt they did a second class job on the places. He also explained that in 80% of the time, something that has a rating of 1 (High Priority) gets rejected when it is submitted for approval.

This last Inspection, which was carried out on 27th November 2020, the guy came in, checked the smoke detectors, walked into each room with his I-Pad, and took a couple of photos. Went outside turned power off/on and checked meterbox. He never checked any windows for Rot/alignment, we have stupid push out windows, with push-up flyscreens (all of which are ripped to some extent). Half the so-called key locks don't work because the men who installed them were in such a hurry that they drilled the holes too deep for the pins. Most of the windows don't fully close when you shut them because they are warping. Some you have a slam and hope they don't smash. The Inspector never looked at the fences, nor in the backyard to see if there were any problems there. Basically, he was here 10 minutes and didn't give a damn.

Now, I must point out that over the years, small things that needed to be fixed have been done either by ourselves (Yes we are Old-School) or by the Department. Although when our back side fence was falling apart and my husband was trying to keep it together by nailing palings on sideways, we had a number of people look at it and take photos. It wasn't until one day I happened to say, you

must have a nice album of our side fence (with all the photos that had been taken of it) that something got done and it was replaced. The builder was nice enough to leave a few extra palings with us, so if one happened to break, we could replace it ourselves instead of having to call someone out to do it.

Now we are in the year 2020, earlier this year there was a huge influx of Tradies in the area. Roof's were being ripped off and being replaced. Timber fences were being ripped down and replaced with colourbond ones. Timber windows being pulled out and replaced with Aluminium ones. Exterior and Interior of houses were being painted. I thought to myself, well let's see if I am lucky enough to get some work done this time. Nup, got to be kidding. Our problem is....our place and yard look like it is Privately Owned, because we look after it and take pride in how it looks. Even after 20 years the front fence still has all it's pickets because if they fall off, I nail them back off. If one goes missing, I replace it. Admittedly the car gates aren't painted, but that was the Contractor who replaced them fault. I told him the name of the colour for him to match the rest of the fence, but he said no.

I have had Police, Tradies and even Department Staff drive past several times before they stop, they then get out and ask, "Have we got the right address?" and I answer yes. When we had the painted picket fence put up, my husband and I redid the front yard, we also created in the backyard another garden and courtyard. We had neighbours telling us that we had to enter the garden competition in the local festival. We did, we came second for the the front yard, and won the newly established for the back courtyard. A few years later, I was actually asked to be the Tenant Judge in a Garden Competition that was run by the Department.

So, our biggest gripe with the so-called system is the same as a lot of people in similar situations to ourselves. If you look after your house, you never get anything done, you are always pushed to the bottom of the pile, or your request gets rejected year after year after year. Maintenance, that if it was done on a regular basis, would cost less, instead of being put off to the extent where it is going to cost two or three times the amount. Whereas, people who smash holes in walls, break windows, yards are always a mess etc get everything. I was told by an Inspector many years ago, they had a lady with 4 kids do \$40,000 worth of damage to a house. They moved her out of that one and put her into another one. There is one particular house in this suburb that really gets my back up. It is a problem house, a lot of people in the suburb have had complaints with them. Just before last Christmas, they painted inside and out, put Aluminium windows in. Replaced the front door and put a Security door on. Three weeks later there were 3 large holes smashed in the front of the house.

So the work that we are currently awaiting and have been for numerous years now includes: a new roof, (currently waiting on contractor to redo Ridge-capping). Painting, inside, outside and front fence. Hopefully Aluminium Windows. Don't know about the carpet, as this carpet has been down for nearly 30 years.

Both my husband and I are on Disability Support Pensions. My husband suffers from Depression, Anxiety, COPD (for which he has an Oxygen Machine) for when he sleeps, Osteoarthritis as well as having a Hypoxic Brain Injury from when he had a

Cardiac Arrest 7 years ago. I have Depression, Osteoarthritis in my back, neck, feet, hands and one knee as well as Asthma. We have a contractor come and do the yard for us on a fortnightly basis, which we pay for ourselves. Apart from this we do what we can ourselves.