



Thank you for your request of 20 February 2019 for information about the Hawkes Bay region under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act). We have taken the Hawkes Bay region to mean the area containing Wairoa, Hastings, and Central Hawkes Bay Districts, and Napier City.

- 1. How many complaints has HNZ received in the past year regarding anti-social HNZ tenants (in the Hawkes Bay region)?**
- 2. How many complaints of violence and intimidation by HNZ tenants have been received (in the Hawkes Bay region)?**

The table below provides the information requested in questions 1 and 2. Please note that the statistics provided represent the total number of complaints received, regardless of whether they were either justified or substantiated, or multiple complaints relating to the same incident. Please also note that the issues raised range from unkempt sections, rubbish, noise issues, parking issues, behavioural issues (such as harassment, intimidation or verbal abuse), and illegal activities.

| Alleged anti-social behaviour | Complaints |
|---|-------------------|
| Dog nuisance | 38 |
| General behaviour | 287 |
| Alleged illegal activity | 50 |
| Property condition and damage | 160 |
| Alleged threats, harassment, intimidation | 43 |
| Grand Total | 578 |

- 3. How many complaints are gang-related (in the Hawkes Bay region)?**

Housing New Zealand does not centrally record gang related complaints. This information may be held on individual property files but to review these files would remove Housing New Zealand staff from their core duties and therefore the greater public interest in the effective and efficient administration of the public service would not be served. I am therefore declining your request under section 18(f) *that the information requested cannot be made available without substantial collation or research.*

4. What were the different courses of action taken by HNZ regarding the problematic tenants?

When an issue is substantiated, Housing New Zealand works with its tenants and the appropriate agencies to address the issue. The justice system sets the threshold for illegal activity and the Police enforce this. Local authorities also have the ability to set by-laws, such as managing excessive noise and rubbish. These organisation have the mandate to manage peoples behaviour, Housing New Zealand does not, and our tenants, like everyone else, are subject to these laws.

5. How many tenants were evicted because of the complaints (in the Hawkes Bay region)? What were the complaints?

6. What courses of action does HNZ take with repeat offenders? How many of those are in Hawkes Bay? And by that I mean tenants who get evicted and are re-housed only to do the same thing again.

7. What does HNZ do with those tenants?

For clarity, an eviction is where a court bailiff is authorised to obtain possession of a property after a tenancy has been ended by the Tenancy Tribunal, the landlord has an order for possession of the property, and the tenant has not vacated it.

There were no Housing New Zealand tenants evicted in Hawkes Bay in 2018. Also, it does not centrally record the number of evicted tenants who were rehoused. This information may be held on individual property files but to review these files would remove Housing New Zealand staff from their core duties and therefore the greater public interest in the effective and efficient administration of the public service would not be served. I am therefore declining your request under section 18(f) *that the information requested cannot be made available without substantial collation or research.*

In 2017 Housing New Zealand began to make changes in its operational practices and focused its policies more on supporting tenants to remain in their homes. It did this in recognition that a stable home provides a solid foundation for families to thrive. Housing New Zealand also did this as a result of the increased pressure on the housing register, and the growing cost of providing short-term emergency housing. Removing people from state funded and supported housing just passed the fiscal and social responsibility on to other agencies, including non-government organisations to manage. Often this was at a higher financial cost than what was already being provided through an income-related rent subsidy.

Ending the tenancies of vulnerable people places them in an even more vulnerable situation. They were passed between agencies for support, which added to an already high waiting list for public housing; increased the need for transitional housing – including the use of motels, or they faced the prospect of staying in overcrowded homes, garages or cars. More than 44 percent of the people that live in a Housing New Zealand home are tamariki and rangatahi. These youth suffer the consequences and insecurity when their families are without a home.

Housing New Zealand's social objectives mean it must have regard for the community it operates in and treat its tenants and neighbours with respect, integrity and honesty. Housing New Zealand's tenancy agreements outline how to act as a good neighbour and its expectation that tenants be responsible, considerate and law-abiding.

Housing New Zealand provides its tenants with warm, safe and dry homes, and helps them to access support services when needed. This may be assistance from other government agencies, such as health services and welfare support, or non-government organisations that can help with budgeting and household management, like Citizens Advice Bureau, Budget Advice, Salvation Army, advocacy services and local community groups. Housing

New Zealand may monitor the progress of this through a Household Action Plan agreement with the tenant and its intensive tenancy management team can dedicate more time to work alongside our more vulnerable tenants.

By providing a stable housing foundation Housing New Zealand is helping wider society to better support the people in its homes address the issues they have, just like it does with people in other housing situations who need support. Housing New Zealand is committed to achieving the best outcomes for the people it houses so they can be contributing members of the community they live in and can be good neighbours.

8. How does Hawkes Bay compare to other regions in New Zealand in regards to unruly behaviour from HNZ tenants?

There were a total of 578 anti-social behaviour complaints in the Hawkes Bay Region. This is not significantly different to the national average of about one complaint per unit every six years.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of the decision to decline information. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or by calling freephone 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely



Rachel Kelly
Manager, Government Relations