



Office of Hon Paula Bennett

MP for Upper Harbour

Minister for Climate Change Issues

Minister for Social Housing

Minister of State Services

Associate Minister of Finance

Associate Minister of Tourism

A. O'Sullivan
fyi.org.nz

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Dear Mr/Ms O'Sullivan

Thank you for your Official Information Act request of 22 March 2016. You have asked if there has ever been a policy of offering lifetime tenancies in state housing since 1990 or thereabouts.

Housing New Zealand manages a small number of tenants who have life tenure and these result primarily from a governmental decision to buy Auckland City Council's pensioner and residential housing in 2002. Housing New Zealand is contractually obliged to honour the Council's undertaking to provide a guarantee of accommodation for life for tenants at that time.

Historically Housing New Zealand also managed tenants who, due to a rising level of income, no longer required an Income Related Rent Subsidy (IRRS) and effectively paid market rent. However, Housing New Zealand had no legal mechanism that allowed them to end the tenancy since the tenant no longer had a need for social housing. In 2011 the Government introduced a policy of reviewable tenancies.

The Government wants social housing to be available for people and families most in need. Tenancy reviews help make sure that people living in social housing still need it, and if they do, that the house continues to meet their needs. It's important that people who have benefited from social housing and whose situation has improved, are given the support to move into the private rental market or home ownership, if they're able to.

Yours sincerely

Hon Paula Bennett
Minister for Social Housing