



The Chair  
Social Services Select Committee  
Parliament Buildings  
Wellington

**SUBMISSION ON  
RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES AMENDMENT BILL 2015**

By Grey Power NZ Federation

Summary

The Federation (GPNZF) supports the provisions of this amendment (with reservations) which following enactment, will be a step towards improving the health and welfare of tenants. An increasing number will be the elderly but as grandparents we have concerns for those on lower incomes in our communities.

Insulation

Section 138B

While applauding this move GPNZF notes that the Departmental disclosure document indicates that the amount of insulation required is the absolute minimum that will provide some benefit to tenants. We have a catch 22 situation where a higher standard could result in higher rentals because many landlords will not see the benefits to them (as discussed in the RIS) in insulating properties.

The proposal to self-regulate does not lie easily with GPNZF as we believe a number of landlords will not accept the requirements and tenants who are desperate will not raise the issue for fear of rent increases. They will not see the health benefits and cost that will accrue to them.

We suggest that a survey of tenants will reveal that large numbers are unaware of their rights despite the department's efforts to educate them.

GPNZF believes that giving tax relief to landlords for retrofitted insulation would improve the uptake and may encourage landlords to adopt a higher insulation rating.

Increased Powers of the CEO

GPNZF supports the increased powers which is intended to reduced retaliatory action by landlords but notes that this will only result in any action being taken if adequate funding is provided

### Fire detectors

#### Section 138A

GPNZF would like to see 3 (c) section strengthened.

Landlords should not be given the option of the type of detector that is installed as is suggested in the Bill. A battery operated detector is sometimes disabled by a tenant because it is activated by steam or burning toast and the benefit to them and their landlord is lost. GPNZF considers that all battery operated detectors should be replaced by photoelectric detectors by 1 July 2019. Battery operated detectors may last for several years, especially if the batteries are removed and only replaced prior to a landlord's inspection. This raises the issue of the lack of regulations for heating and ventilation.

We believe that many families use unflued gas heaters. GPNZF believes that consideration should be given to the mandatory installation of carbon monoxide detectors.

### Abandonment

#### Section 91AA

GPNZF while accepting the principle of the amendment (that the process of abandonment be started earlier than at present) is concerned that a landlord (who for example possibly has an opportunity to get an increased rent) may seize an opportunity to remove a tenant who is on holiday. GPNZF trusts that the Tribunal will take adequate steps to ensure that this does not occur.

GPNZF wishes to attend

#### Contact

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