

## Controversial tenant shows why 90 day notice needed

Sharyn Shepherd, also known as Hope Maree Taylor, is a convicted fraudster who has reportedly harassed her neighbours at the Ōtautahi Community Housing Trust complex so much that they are frightened to go outside.

In 2019 Shepherd already had 439 dishonesty convictions. Now three of the four tenants at the Community Housing complex have either moved away or plan to move. One said “We don’t feel comfortable living here anymore.”

“The NZ Property Investors Federation (NZPIF) said that this would happen with changes to the Residential Tenancies Act, but were told we were scaremongering” said NZPIF President, Andrew King

Several neighbours are considering the drastic step of selling their homes. One said she believed it was unfair that the other tenants with “spotless” records were moving on while Shepherd stayed. This neighbour had hoped Shepherd would have been moved by now and was worried about what she might do next.

But moving an antisocial tenant is no longer a straightforward matter. Before the Residential Tenancies Act was changed, landlords whose tenant behaved in an antisocial way could use their judgement to end the tenancy. This was always done as a last resort as naturally landlords prefer to keep their tenants.

The Government now protects such tenants, allowing them to behave antisocially two times within a three-month period before any action can be taken. Even then, the landlord cannot use their judgement but must take the case to the Tenancy Tribunal to seek permission to end the tenancy. The Tenancy Tribunal, of course, requires proof.

Sharyn Shepherd, as is often the case with people who behave in an antisocial way, doesn’t think she is doing anything wrong and actually claims that she is the victim. Her neighbours are so scared of her that they are unwilling to attend a Tribunal hearing to present their evidence, which is a requirement. This fear of the consequences if evidence is provided is a common occurrence.

A NZPIF survey of members found that very few tenants ever receive a 90-day notice and it was not being abused by landlords. Removing the ability to issue a 90-day notice keeps people like Sharyn in her rental accommodation and forces other tenants and neighbours out of theirs.

“Government obviously hasn’t listened to us up till now” says King, “so who is going to highlight the problems with their new law and demand change? It’s too late once a Sharyn moves in next to you.”

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