



## Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

*United Nations Consultative status with ECOSOC, UNESCO and UNCTAD  
Special relations with the ILO, FAO, UNICEF, and other organisations and  
agencies*

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15 September 2015

Prime Minister John Key  
Minister of Housing Nick Smith  
Parliament Buildings  
Wellington

Dear Prime Minister and Minister Smith

The members of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) Aotearoa Section have expressed our concern in many letters and submissions about the dire lack of adequate and affordable housing in New Zealand. It is having an extreme, adverse effect on many of the most vulnerable in our community, especially children, who through no fault of their own are living in damp, mouldy houses, or motor camps and camping grounds and are frequently being moved because their caregivers are unable to afford the rent. This is also having an adverse effect on their schooling and sense of security, not to mention the effects on their health. It is disgraceful that we have so many children admitted to our hospitals with third world diseases such as bronchiectasis, cellulitis and rheumatic fever.

Housing New Zealand has allowed a lot of their rental accommodation to become run down until they are not fit to live in, which seems to be the case in Glen Innes in Auckland, where a lot of houses are being demolished or moved to make way for new apartments, supposedly affordable dwellings, but not affordable to the people who have been moved. They want to continue renting from Housing New Zealand, because they cannot afford to buy any sort of house, but the possibility of this is far from certain. When they are given notice to move, often at very short notice, they are offered a short term tenancy to end in three years, and some have already been moved twice.

Why is Housing New Zealand not able to provide funds to build more rental accommodation? It cannot be because of lack of funds. We were astonished to hear during the last week that Housing New Zealand was able to pay \$118 million to the government. Surely it would be better to use this money to build more houses.

New Zealand needs to do better than this. It is hard to be proud of our country when so many of our most vulnerable citizens are treated so badly.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, to which New Zealand is a state party, includes the provision that every child has the right to enjoy the highest attainable standard of health, and places

obligations on state parties to provide material assistance and support to ensure children can enjoy this right in relation to housing.

We are interested to know how the Convention is taken into account when decisions are made around housing, and look forward to your earliest reply.

Yours sincerely

Joan Macdonald  
*for WILPF Aotearoa*