

MCM Submission on WCC Rents Review. Sunday 5 July 2020

- We believe that, with a large unmet need for housing amongst low-income people, those who can afford to rent in Wellington's private market should not be accommodated by WCC social housing. This would remove the need for adding a higher income band above current thresholds for tenants. Some tenants have told us that the increases in rent anticipated for the low income (middle band) would be unaffordable for them and would increase their housing insecurity. Applicants should only be eligible to become a tenant if their income falls into the lowest band, unless they also have other exceptional housing needs.
- The Ministry of Social Development accommodation supplement should not be included in the council's assessment of tenant income for setting rent.
- Clear and easy-to-understand language should be used in documents relating to WCC tenancies. We feel, for example, that the label 'fairer rents' for this consultation is misleading.
- We favour the council lobbying central government to have its Income-Related Rent Subsidy (IRRS) apply to WCC social housing tenants. This is preferable to rates being applied to social housing.
- While some WCC tenants will get a reduction in their rents (to 60% of market rents) which we support, they would have to compete for the limited supply of apartments with higher income earners.
- The Covid-19 pandemic has shown that some sectors of society are more prone to vulnerability. This is an opportunity to review the priorities of the city on the affordability of infrastructure for social housing in inner-city suburbs such as Mt Cook compared to those elsewhere.

Peter Cooke, Spokesperson, Mt Cook Mobilised