

Healthy Homes now law

Thursday 30 November 2017 The Landlord *By Miriam Bell*



Rental properties will now be legally required to meet minimum standards after the Healthy Homes Guarantee Bill passed its third reading in Parliament tonight.

The Bill, which was introduced into Parliament by former Labour leader Andrew Little last term, was passed with 63 votes to 57, with the support of Labour, the Greens and NZ First.

It will enable the government to establish minimum standards for insulation, heating, ventilation, draught stopping, drainage and moisture in all rental properties.

While the requirements of the standards are not specified in the legislation, the government aims to have the standards set within the next 18 months.

Minister of Housing and Urban Development Phil Twyford says that every New Zealander deserves a warm, healthy home to live in and the *Healthy Homes Guarantee Act* will help ensure that.

“Until now, rental properties have been treated differently from other products.

“A butcher isn’t allowed to sell meat that will make their customers sick, but a landlord is allowed to rent out a house that is too cold, or damp and damages the health of its occupants.”

Twyford says that while most landlords do a good job, the fact is the lack of legal standards means some rentals are not currently fit to live in.

“Many landlords will already meet these standards and will not have to change anything.

“For those that need to upgrade their properties, government grants [of up to \$3,000] for installing heating and insulation will be available.”

Over the next 18 months, the government will run a consultation process to ensure tenants, landlords, public health and building science experts and industry representatives are involved in creating robust minimum standards.

Green Party housing spokesperson Marama Davidson says the legislation will significantly improve the quality of rental accommodation and will make a huge difference in the lives of many New Zealanders.

However, opponents of the legislation believe it will mean extra costs for landlords which will simply be passed on to tenants.

NZ Property Investors Federation executive officer Andrew King has previously said that while they support the provision of good, healthy rental properties, they don't support minimum standards.

"We believe that the cost and value benefits of doing this are simply not there. Tenants will see little benefit but it will up the costs for landlords and that translates to increased rents."