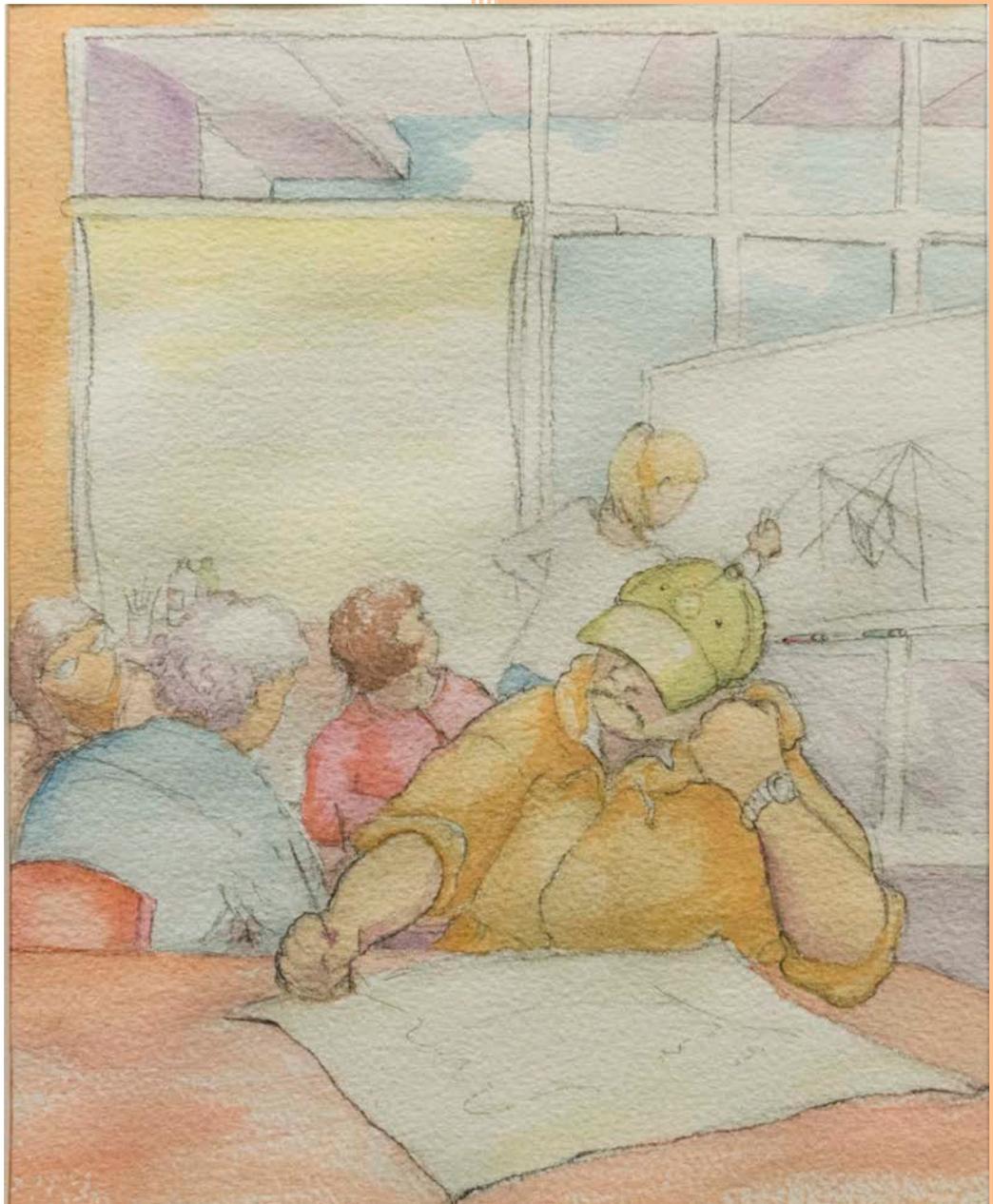




Annual Report 2015 -2016

Tenants' Union ACT



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Editor: Deborah Pippen, with thanks to Committee members.
Cover art – “Artful Renters” by Joan Hulmes, 1st Prize ITD Art Competition 2015

The Tenants' Union acknowledges the financial support and assistance received from members and from the ACT Government (Justice and Community Safety Directorate and the Community Services Directorate (Housing ACT)).

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Mission Statement

The ACT Tenants' Union is an organisation for tenants by tenants that seeks to enable all tenants to enjoy appropriate, affordable, accessible and secure housing in the ACT.

Core Values

The ACT Tenants' Union is a non-profit community legal centre committed to:

- the participatory involvement of tenants to achieve its vision and aims and promoting rental housing which meets the needs of tenants;
- ensuring tenants' views are recognised and incorporated into decision making processes;
- educating tenants and other stakeholders about their rights and responsibilities;
- promoting self-help mechanisms for tenants seeking dispute resolution;
- fostering effective dispute resolution mechanisms;
- ensuring provision of high quality assistance to tenants through input into effective delivery of a Tenants' Advice Service (TAS) and other tenancy support services;
- fostering high morale and work satisfaction, and providing career and development opportunities for TU and TAS staff (as far as possible);
- the continued use of resources resulting from investment of tenants' bond money to support the rights of tenants, and increasing funds targeted to directly supporting the rights of tenants;
- supplementing funded resources with effective voluntary resources and coordinating both to ensure the TU ACT is recognised as a well-managed organisation with effective internal and external stakeholder relationships.



TU Reception Area

TU Management Committee

The Tenants' Union (TU) Management Committee is formed each year from volunteer members of the Union who are nominated and elected at the Annual General Meeting. Committee membership consists of three executive positions, four general positions and one staff representative. During 2015/16 the committee membership comprised:

President	Penny Leemhuis	General Committee	Penny Rumble
Treasurer	Anne Macduff		Lauren Farrell
Secretary	Genevieve Bolton		Alex Wahlin
			Leigh Watson
Staff Rep/Public Officer	Deborah Phippen		

The contributions of all committee members are greatly appreciated. Members freely give their valuable time and their involvement is integral to the smooth running of the organisation.

TU Staff

Paid Staff

Executive Officer: Deborah Phippen
Principal Solicitor: Vanessa Faulder
Office Coordinator: Nicola Hearn
(part-time)

TAS line advice workers:

Advice & Project: Stephanie Triefus
Advice (part-time): Sarah Hein (to August)
Kate French (Aug to Feb)
Nicola Hearn (from Feb)

Changes:

We bid a fond farewell to Sarah after four years in the part-time TAS role, moving on to fulltime legal work. We were lucky to be able to employ one of our interns, Kate, for a short period, until she took up a Federal Government graduate position. When Kate left Nicola was able to combine the two part-time positions.



Nicola, Sarah and Kate



TU staff support dog Indigo

Volunteer Staff

Our Administrative Intern Program gives ANU law students experience in a community legal centre one a day a week providing admin support, as well as an opportunity to do some small projects such as researching and writing material for our website. Australian Government Solicitor graduate secondees join us for placements of one day a week for 3 months.

Interns: Monica Paton, Kate French, Genevieve Lai, Olivia Sparrow, Stephanie Kim, Helen Wang, Max Haesler, Rebecca Huang
Secondees: Jacqui Yates and Chelsea Brain

Funding

The Tenants' Union receives funding through the ACT Justice and Community Safety Directorate (JaCS). Funds are sourced from interest on bonds lodged with the Office of Rental Bonds and held in the Bond Trust Account. This interest also funds the administration and operation of the Office of Rental Bonds and the residential tenancies component of the ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal). It is important to note that while tenants' money contributes to the operation of the tribunal; there is no similar contribution from landlords. There was no readily available breakdown of the distribution of these funds.

The table below show bond figures over the past four years.

	15/16	14/15	13 - 14	12-13		15/16	14/15	13/14	12 - 13
No. of bonds lodged	18,360	19,506	19,045	17,188	Value of bonds lodged (\$)	31,981,569	32,991,086	33,481,829	31,764,702
No. of bonds refunded	16,620	17,395	17,321	15,507	Value of bonds refunded (\$)	26,394,086	27,925,704	28,122,303	24,753,754
Average value of bonds (\$)	1,741	1,691	1,758	1,693	Value of bonds 30 June (\$)	64,224,351	61,175,369	58,971,442	56,758,084

This funding enables the Tenants' Union to provide high quality services for tenants throughout the ACT. During the year the TU received a minimal amount of additional funds from members. The increase in funds held in the Bond Trust Account clearly reflects the increase in rents across the ACT.

In light of changes to Legal Services funding in the ACT (and across the country) the ACT Government proposed simplifying our previous funding agreements and combining them into one agreement. The new agreement is from July 2015 – June 2017.

We also continued to receive event funding through Housing ACT for the ITD art show.

TU's funding is sourced from interest on bond and therefore from private tenants and some community housing tenants and other occupants. The TU specialises on private tenancy matters and does assist people in other tenure types (including community housing, student accommodation, caravan parks) however it does not assist Housing ACT tenants. Unlike in other States and Territories the TU does not receive funding for this, the ACT Government funds Canberra Community Law (CCL) to target assistance specifically to people in public housing. This split does work well as the TU does not have to develop expertise in public housing management

President's Report

Rent? Home? Sanctuary?

2016 has been a busy and productive year for the Tenants' Union ACT. The federal and ACT elections consumed many hours of work by the Executive Officer Deb Pippen. The rising housing affordability crisis in the ACT has an impact on the Tenants' Union work. Now more than ever the TU has a vital role to play in ensuring the rights of tenants' are protected. While much legal work has been done by the TU staff positive and engaging projects have also taken place. In all, the ACT Tenants' Union has provided Canberra renters with a professional and inclusive service that has contributed to the community's understanding of what a home feels like and how home impacts on their lives.

Major achievements of the year include the new TU website which was completed in June and provides an inclusive and easy to navigate site for renters to obtain information. Accreditation of the TU and a majority of items on the work plan have been completed. Staffing levels have undergone some changes and the management committee recognises and appreciates the efforts of Deb and Vanessa in accommodating the shortfall and rising to the occasion. The presence of TU on social media continues to broaden the work of Tenants' Union and maintain the profile of renters' rights.

The Annual Art Exhibition was a resounding success. Supported by Belconnen Arts Centre and Housing ACT the exhibition attracted talented artists and many attendees at the awards. The art work theme 'Rent? Home? Sanctuary? Provided an opportunity for artists to think about what their rental home meant to them. Comments from the visitor's book included:

'My family and I enjoyed all of the beautiful Art on display. My daughter especially liked the one of Buster at Floriade.'

Yvette Berry MLA

'Beautiful works! All artist should be very proud of their artwork.'

Helen Merritt, former Tenants' Union President

Of particular note was the introduction of a new element to the exhibition, namely the "We Rent" portrait project that showcased portraits and stories of a range of people renting their homes.

In line with International Tenants' Day TU and our colleagues from the Coordinating Committee hosted a number of events including, the film screening of "900 Neighbours", a forum "Your House, My Home" and acoustic soup music and food event. Events such as these promote and support renters' in perceiving their housing as homes.

I would like to thank the staff at TU for their commitment and professionalism to renters' the community and the management committee.

I would also like to acknowledge and thank the TU management committee for their time and work in expanding and improving the Tenants' Union ACT.

It is with optimism that 2017 proves to be a year of stronger presence in the community of the Tenants' Union ACT and the platform of previous work continues to be built on.

Penny Leemhuis
President

Executive Officer's Report

Reviewing the year and looking at last year's report I see how things have changed, and how many have stayed the same. The same problems for tenants, the same unrelenting demand for assistance, the same pressures on staff trying to meet that demand while providing a high quality service.

Firstly, the advice service – TAS figures continue to reflect the impact of the website leading to complexity (and length) of advice calls due to the wide range of basic information being available online. With our Principal Solicitor we take on more complex and time consuming activities as part of more complex advices and casework. As the statistics show, this additional work is restricted to those people facing disadvantage. One-off advice is available to anyone renting in the ACT because all tenants (and some occupants) pay bond and are entitled to some assistance.

Major work for the year:

- On the CLE side of our service, the website figures clearly show it been a great success. We also continue to utilise Facebook and Twitter. A major piece of work for our small office was the redevelopment of the website.
- We also continued to provide presentations and workshops in tenancy issues and law;
- Always a highlight each year is the International Tenants' Day art show and competition and other events highlighting the positive side of renting and celebrating tenants' contributions to the ACT community as well as raising issues (see separate report for details).
- The review of the Residential Tenancies Act did finally bear some fruit with the release of the first tranche of "non-controversial" amendments in the beginning of 2016 and we provided a submission and attended a stakeholder meeting to finalise the changes with the result finally being tabled in the Legislative assembly in August. Tenancy law changes are certainly slow but we persist in the hope we will see improvements result from the "balancing" of tenant and landlord interest.
- A major piece of administrative and governance work was lengthy process for renewal of certification for the National Association of Community Legal centres National Accreditation Scheme.
- Review of TAS night-time volunteer service and the free information sessions. We reviewed these two programs and in both instances determined that they were unfortunately not the most effective use of our scarce resources. On a positive note we introduced on-line client and CLE surveys and have been receiving very valuable feedback (see report). We also did initial work on a proposal regarding information sessions for developers and lessors.

I would like to thank all of my TU co-workers (paid and volunteers) for their continual assistance and support. We are a very small team working within a sometimes very challenging environment. The fact that we continue and the TU/TAS is well respected is down to the fabulous staff. It is well known that the work is hard and the rewards are not monetary, but your work is respected and you are valued!

I would also like to take the opportunity to thank the TU Management Committee for their ongoing support and work. We all acknowledge and highly value the time that they give freely.

I would also like to thank Penny Leemhuis for taking on the President role on top of her fantastic work with older women and homelessness.

Deborah Pippen

Tenancy in the ACT



The TU is the only service in the ACT working exclusively with Residential Tenancies Act. We are a small centre with a big job.

Tenancy and housing figures vary in how current they are because different information is gathered at different times. Tenancy data is sourced from several Australian Bureau of Statistics

(‘ABS’). According to the ABS the ACT population was estimated to be 395,200 in March 2016 (an increase of 93,000 from when TAS was first funded in 1994). 2014 figures show 145,000 households in the ACT. Of these, 28% (40,600) were rented properties. The average household size in the ACT was 2.6 people. Using this figure we can estimate that there are over 105,000 people in rental accommodation in the ACT. This is the potential client base for the TU, less those living in the 11,500 Housing ACT properties who we do not advise as HACT tenancies are assisted by Canberra Community law.

TAS Statistics

The primary service provided by the Tenants’ Advice Service is free advice through the TAS line, our capacity to provide additional assistance such as casework and representation is severely limited by resources and only undertaken by our Principal Solicitor. To understand our statistics it is important to understand how the service is provided, it is not a simple matter of a helpline.

Advice Line

MAKING CONTACT - *The demand for tenancy advice has always been beyond the capacity of the TU resources to meet, with many people unable to reach the service at all when it operated as an immediate advice service. This was very frustrating for people seeking assistance and very stressful for staff. To overcome this the TAS operates as a call back service. Tenants leave their details between 9 and 11.30 am, the calls are triaged and advice workers returning calls throughout the day. This system is clearly set out on the website and has alleviated frustration felt by people continually receiving engaged signals. It also means that tenants can provide an overview of their problem before the advice call, and can also let us know when is best to contact them.*

That said, we can still find ourselves faced at the start of a day with up to 30 calls to make and only our two advice workers to deal with them. If the number of call-backs is too high to manage (either as a number or because of staff absences) we do not turn on the answering machine and people calling are advised to try again the following day. We continue to use Twitter to advise whether the line is open or not. Urgent matters are referred to the admin line. We also have a referral process so workers in other services can easily refer urgent matters.

CALLBACK PROCESS - *Once we have recorded details each caller is sent an SMS noting we have their details and will be in contact. Advice workers deal with urgent and priority matters first. They make three attempts to call a person, each time leaving a message to say they have tried.*

Once they reach a caller they determine if they can assist them and have to collect standard demographic information we are required to collect.

There is no limit to the length of advice calls. They take as long as the worker determines is necessary and because many are complex matters this can take some time.

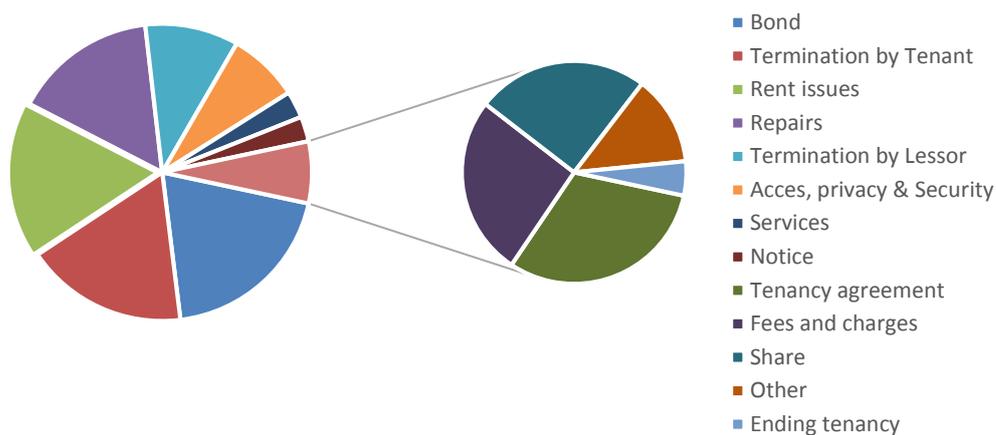
Once a call is completed the advice work is required to complete a detailed record of the facts, the issues and the advice. This is necessary for supervision of the advice, ie ensuring advice is full and correct, and also for a record of the issue as many people ring back as the matters progress.

Each completed advice sheet is checked by the TAS line supervisor by the end of each day.

The Calls

TAS advice calls for the year – 1,829 (an average of 5.4 per day). This does not count the number of unsuccessful call-backs made to people (131) or people (110) who say they have resolved their matter (often through website) and no longer need advice, or people referred elsewhere (66). TAS clients for the year – 1,567 demonstrating that clients receive multiple calls. Issues/problems advised about – 2,392, demonstrating that people may make initial contact about only one issue but are usually receive advice about related issues as well, eg they call about ending a tenancy and also receive advice about getting their bond back. Average length of a call is 26 minutes.

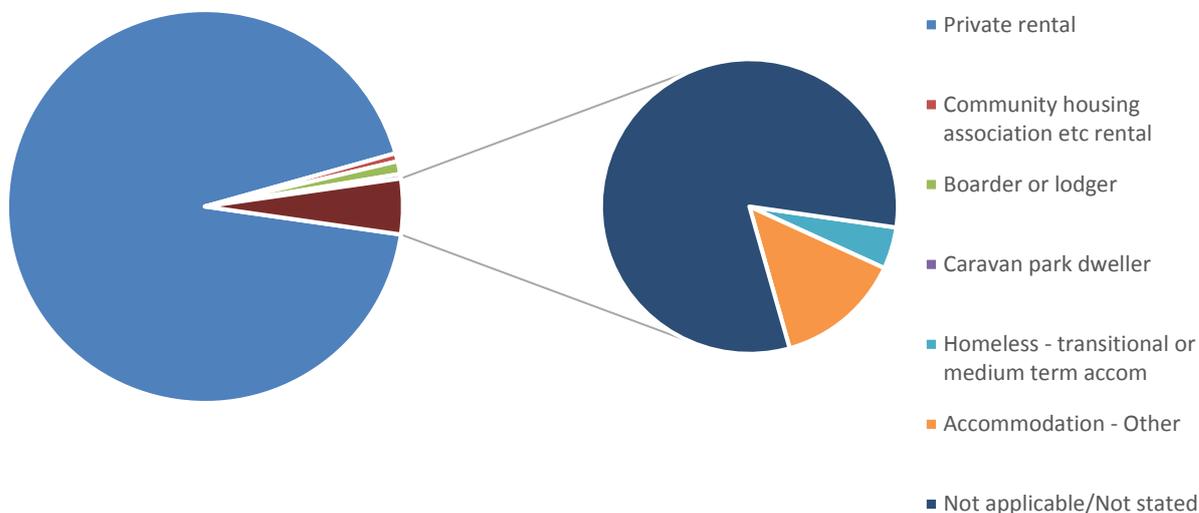
TAS Line Issues



TAS Top 4 - most common problems for tenants

	2015/16	2014/15	2013/14	2012/13	2011/12
1	Bond	Bond	Termination by tenant	Bond	Bond
2	Termination by tenant	Termination by tenant	Bond	Termination by tenant	Termination by tenant
3	Rent issues	Repairs	Repairs	Repairs	Repairs
4	Repairs	Termination by Lessor	Termination by Lessor	Termination by Lessor	Rent issues

Tenure Type



Casework

Along with casework the Principal Solicitor supervises all advice work and any other work associated with the legal practice.

Legal Practice Guidelines are applied to determine whether we can represent an individual. Criteria include the merits of the case; potential detriment if tenant not assisted; tenant's capacity to obtain other assistance; whether the matter is a public interest matter and the tenant's level of disadvantage.



**Principal Solicitor
Vanessa Faulder**

There were 13 cases at start of the period, 20 opened during the year and 9 still open at the end of the period. 24 cases closed during the period 5% of all TAS client matters. Our practice is severely limited by resources and the service has to focus primarily on advice work.

Examples of Casework issues and outcomes

Issue/s	Outcomes
Elderly client left public housing due to an assault. He requested a transfer and was placed on the wait list. Client managed to obtain a property on the private rental market with assistance of family. Entered into a 12 month fixed term tenancy and was then offered a public housing tenancy.	TU made an application to ACAT for termination of tenancy based on significant hardship. Tenancy terminated and lessor agreed to forgo rent arrears.
Client with significant physical disabilities lodged ACAT application for review of rent increase	Once TU became involved, lessor withdrew rent increase. TU also assisted to notify agent of repair issues.
Client had received multiple notices to remedy and notices to vacate due to rent arrears. There were difficulties working out how much rent was owed as property was originally managed by the lessors before they employed an agent. Client did not think he was in arrears to the extent alleged by the agent. Lessor lodged an ACAT application for a termination and possession order.	TU represented client at hearing and argued that the Tribunal could not be satisfied that the level of arrears put forward by the lessor was correct. Application for TPO dismissed.
Informal agreement between client and a (former) friend for client to rent friend's property. Family of friend didn't like arrangement and friend tried to renege. Client could not obtain keys to the property.	TU prepared application seeking confirmation of tenancy agreement. ACAT held there was a valid tenancy agreement. Lessor appealed and application dismissed. Lessor then sought to have inconsistent terms regarding termination of tenancy endorsed without the tenant's consent. Application dismissed.
Aboriginal client had a tenancy in Wreck Bay. Property became uninhabitable due to termites. The lessor wanted to build a childcare centre and use the land the client's property was on as cheaper alternative. Client was asked to relinquish her tenancy on the basis that she would be given a tenancy agreement for another block of land and the LL would build a house for her. House not built. Client was a single mother with 5 children and had been in and out of crisis accommodation and wanted to return to Wreck Bay.	TU lodged ACAT application, which was later withdrawn as difficult to argue there was an enforceable agreement where there was no building on the land. TU sought pro bono advice regarding prospects in another jurisdiction. Meyer Vandenberg indicated client may have a claim against the lessor. MV took over the matter on a pro bono basis after agreeing not to charge client for disbursements.
Client and friend rented a property through a private lessor. Multiple issues regarding condition of the property and furniture provided. Lessors became threatening when client asserted her rights and issued a defective Notice to Vacate. Lessors asserted that they would hold the tenants liable for damage and they could be bankrupted and this would impact on the visa status of the client's friend. Client and friend left the property due to concerns for physical safety after male lessor visited the property one day and was yelling and banging on the doors. Bond dispute referred to the ACAT.	Matter settled on day of hearing with tenants to receive \$400 from the bond and rest to the lessor. TU lodged complaint with the ACT Law Society in relation to the conduct of the male lessor during tenancy and during ACAT proceedings. The Law Society found that the complaints were basically substantiated but that the lessor had demonstrated (during meeting with the Law Society) an understanding of the concerns and matter would not proceed further.

Client Profile Comparisons

The table below demonstrates how the casework is targeted. The indicators and income levels are set by Federal Attorney-General's Department and are shared by all CLCs across the country.

	Closed Cases %	Advice %
DV indicator	50	2.7
Disability Indicator	50	5.6
Receiving Govt income support	41.7	11.2
Low income (under \$26,000)	27.3	21.1
Med income (\$26,000 - \$52,000)	11	33.3
Male	24.5	39.3
At risk of homelessness	42	6.3
Private tenancy	75	96.6
Community housing	4.2	0.7
Boarder/lodger	8.3	1.7

Client Feedback

In February we commenced using an online feedback survey for all TAS clients. From Feb to June we had a 17% response rate (28 responses out of 162 clients).

Responses:

How easy was it to make contact?	The vast majority of people said it was easy/okay, although a few did express some frustration at the call-back system. This is no surprise and it is obviously not the optimum way to operate an advice service however we do not have the resources to operate in any other way
How quickly did we respond?	Most people said quickly enough with our resources. This indicates that the triage system is working
Was the callback system clearly explained?	All said yes
How well did we treat you?	Vast majority said very well or well
Did you understand the advice you were given	All said yes
How useful was the assistance provided in helping you understand or deal with your problem?	Vast majority said yes, comment: <i>Before contacting the Tenancy Union, I had no idea what my rights were, and felt extremely anxious about my situation. The assistance provided to me made a huge difference - I was informed about the reality of my situation, was reassured about my circumstances, and was given clear advice about how to proceed. The positive effect of this assistance cannot be overstated - it felt like a lifesaver.</i>
Would you support more funding for us to have more staff on our advice line each day?	Vast majority said yes

Comments included:

- *Thank you for your help - the matter isn't resolved at this stage, but it helped to be able to talk over it with one of your staff and analyse my options!*
- *The TU service is vital for tenants in the ACT, I am incredibly grateful to the people who contribute to this service. It deserves better resourcing given the unequal relationship between tenants and landlords that exists in Australia.*
- *Good essential service*
- *Thank you for the advice I feel empowered to take the next step in taking my landlord to the tribunal*

- *Tenants Union is great. Very clear advice, this organisation needs more funding for the great work it does. Too many people are being mis-treated by real estate agents and are unaware of the rights they have.*
- *Fantastic service. Thank you. Please establish some kind of way to donate to you. Stephanie that phoned me was so fantastic and even rang me back to further clarify some advice she had provided.*
- *Great Service. Would love to see it expanded as renting (particularly in Canberra) sometimes feels very powerless as the leasing agents, or landlords, hold all the cards and this service is extremely beneficial to help understand complicated rental agreements.*

Other TU Work

COMMUNITY LEGAL EDUCATION

Website:

Overall statistics continue to be high and do include visits from all over the world, with a total of 1,100,702 page views over the year. It is useful in terms of seeing total exposure of the website and reflects the high position of the TU website in Google searches.

	2015/16	2014/15	2013/14	2012/13
Total visits	747,621	791,369	707,842	288,390
Total unique visitors	643,081	672,569	612,270	243,203
Average hits per month	62,302	65,947	58,987	24,033

	Visits	Page views
Australia	427,194	714,838
Canberra	42,489	119,101

A further breakdown for this year shows Australian visits as well as ACT visits. Website usage outside the ACT includes the many people who have left their rented homes in the ACT or are planning to rent in the ACT. It also includes landlords from outside the ACT, significant anecdotal evidence indicates that many landlords, real estate agents and other housing providers access the material on the website.

These figures reflect the use of website information for basic issues, leaving complex matters for the phone line.



The major project for the year was the redevelopment of the website. As we already had a site with a great deal of information, it took our small team several months to work with our web developer Darryl Butler to update the information and the design. The new site is much easier to edit and is suited to a range of devices.

Workshops / presentations – 22 presentations – , UC Orientation Introductory Academic Program, RTA tutorials for ANU law students at CCL and YouthLaw (Legal Aid), Migrant and Refugee Resettlement Service (x 10), Legal Aid law for Non-Lawyers, Northside Community service, Ursula Hall, Grassroots Conference for Real Estate Agents, UC Learning Support Team, CIT Adult Migrant English (x 5), Legal Aid Helpline.



Weekly Information sessions on break lease and bonds – 13 sessions. This project was reviewed during the period and ceased. We plan to incorporate the presentation onto our website. Information stalls – 8, including: Orientation Week activities at UC, CIT, ANU International Students and ANU Market Day, ACT Multicultural Festival and the National Youth Week Festival.

PUBLICATIONS, ARTICLES & MEDIA:

The newsletter is now a quarterly online publication, with approximately 170 subscribers. Information is also distributed through Facebook and Twitter.

Information is continually updated on the website (stats for the site are in the TAS stats section). We are also continually adding to the factsheets, sample letters and FAQs.

Media coverage in Canberra Times and local TV and radio, including – ABC radio re “slum landlords”; local filmmaker for documentary on public housing;



ADVOCACY AND LAW REFORM:

Issues covered by the TU and meetings attended during the year included: Sale of Canberra South Caravan Park; Community Housing; homelessness in the ACT and links with tenancy issues; national tenants survey (collaboration with Choice, NATO and National Shelter); ACT Community Services Industry Plan; national tenancy/housing issues (National Shelter Day of Action); RTA review; domestic violence and tenancy (Beyond Crisis Forums); housing and older people (work with COTA ACT)

Submissions – Residential Tenancies Amendment Bill; ACT Property Crime Prevention Strategy; Applicability and appropriateness of a new action in tort for serious invasions of privacy in the ACT; Reform to the Jurisdiction and Structure of the ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal.

Additional issues worked on: feedback on ACT Liberals draft housing policy, National Greens rental policy, ACT Real Estate Agents CPD Guidelines and training;



National Shelter National Day of Action. Deb Phippen, Adrian Pisarski (National Shelter) and Travis Gilbert (ACT Shelter)

Regular community forums

Other regular community forums and meetings that the TU has participated in include: Monthly ACT Shelter forums, monthly ACT Shelter meetings, ACT Legal Assistance Forum, International Tenants' Day coordinating committee, ACT Community Legal Centres, National Shelter, the ACT Shelter Executive Committee, the Youth Housing and Homelessness Forum, Canberra Community Law Board of Management, National Association of Community Legal Centres, National Association of Tenants' Organisations, Linking Into New Communities Taskforce, ACTLAF CLE/Legal Referrals

Working Group and ACT Pro Bono and Human Rights Stakeholders; Law Society Access to Justice Committee; ACT Joint Community Government Reference group.

Memberships

We maintained memberships of related bodies, locally, nationally and internationally. We have had regular contact with the International Union of Tenants, the National Association of Tenants' Organisations, the National Association of Community Legal Centres, National Shelter, ACT Shelter and ACT Community Legal Centres.

Through these memberships we share resources and have access to a wide range of knowledge of tenancy, housing and legal issues. We also gain access to services such as the community legal centre national email bulletin board, Professional Indemnity Insurance and a range of training and support mechanisms.



International Tenants' Day:



International Tenants' Day events continue to grow beyond the small events we ran in 2005 and 2006. Our biggest event continues to be the annual art exhibition and competition, which celebrates the achievements and creativity of people renting their homes in the ACT. This year we broadened the reach of ITD events by hosting the inaugural ITD film screening at Gorman Arts Centre, teaming up with the Food Co-op to co-host an Acoustic Soup event, and launching the new We Rent Portrait Project. We also produced a printed 2016 Calendar showcasing the artwork entered into this year's exhibition. The theme for ITD 2015 was *Rent? Home? Sanctuary?*



For 2015 we continued our relationship with Belconnen Arts Centre, where we ran both the exhibition and the free art workshops. Belconnen Art Centre is a large professional gallery and the venue, along with the experienced and generous staff, lends a sense of gravitas to the exhibition that the participants may not otherwise have access to. Yvette Berry, Minister for Housing, launched the exhibition. Volunteer judges from cultural institutions such as the National Gallery of Australia and Canberra Contemporary Art Space gave their valuable time to cast their eyes over the wide range of art works, showcasing a vast range of mediums, methods and messages.



Free art workshops for tenants

We also continued our relationship with the Food Co-op, this year co-hosting their October Acoustic Soup event on the 2015 ITD theme. Acoustic Soup is a monthly event run by the Co-op that draws a large crowd for live music and a delicious and affordable dinner. This event allowed us to engage with a diverse range of renters, including many students living in university accommodation.

The film screening at Gorman Arts Centre was another successful event. We screened Big Arts film '900 Neighbours', a moving and insightful documentary about the public housing residents of the Northcott flats in Sydney.



900 Neighbours (2006)

Finally, ITD 2015 saw the launch of the We Rent Portrait Project. The Project aims to give a face and voice to the renters of the ACT. In collaboration with emerging local photographers we produced a series of portraits of renters in their homes. Each portrait was accompanied by a personal story, illustrating the diversity of our Canberra renting community. We will continue to build on this project into the future, and aim to exhibit the portraits and stories on our TU website throughout the year and again at the ITD exhibition in 2016.

Incorporating art and cultural activities into a celebration of International Tenants' Day has proven a successful and popular way of engaging with people renting their homes, and provides a focus for the broader messages championed by both the Tenants' Union ACT and International Tenants' Day: strength in community, importance of home, the rights of the tenant and celebration of diversity. As always, many thanks our coordinating committee, and to all involved.



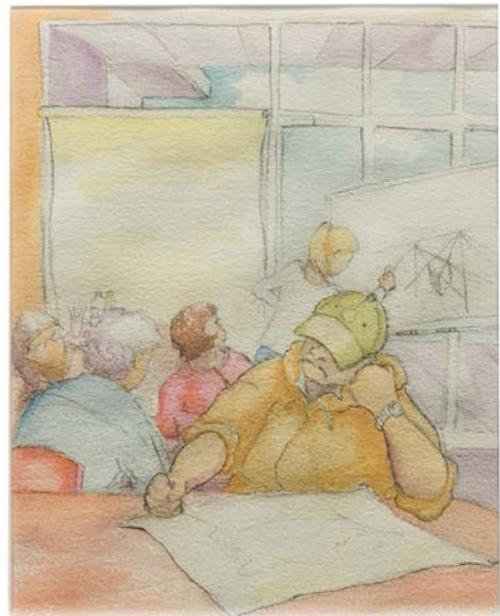
Yen (2015), We Rent Portrait Project

We congratulate the exhibition prize winners:

- | | |
|---------------------|---------------|
| 1st Prize: | Joan Hulmes |
| 2nd Prize: | Steven Doran |
| 3rd Prize: | Carlsford |
| Honourable Mention: | Yun Qing Gu |
| Photography Prize: | Carmen Carlon |
| People's Choice: | Steven Doran |



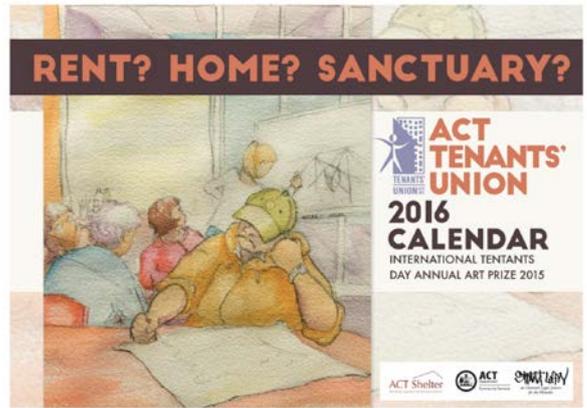
Dance of Angels No.1 (2015), Steven Doran (2nd Prize & People's Choice)



Artful Renters (2015), Joan Hulmes (1st Prize)



At the exhibition opening



Front cover of 2016 Calendar



The gallery space



Yvette Berry MLA opening the exhibition



At the exhibition opening

Treasurer's Report

Income:

For the financial year 2015 - 2016, the Tenants' Union ACT received a total income of \$ 439, 980. Of this amount, \$ 426, 783 was received from the ACT Department of Justice and Community Safety (DJACS). The remaining income was received through a mix of donations, membership fees and interest, and International Tenant's Day funding.

Expenditure overview:

Staff Expenditure

There were a number of staff movements this year. Although there were some vacancies, increased costs were due to MEA increases, some extra administrative support when Executive Officer was on leave, and paying out some annual leave.

Operational Expenditure

The Tenants' Union, along with a number of other CLCs, moved into new premises in February 2014 to create the ACT CLC Hub. While many of the one off costs of the move were covered in the 2013-2014 financial year, the move continues to have an impact on some other line items. In particular, rent and other shared utilities expenses (electricity, air conditioning maintenance) continue to be difficult to anticipate and are likely to increase. The WRLC levy was down because of very late End of Year invoicing from WRLC (now CCL) in August.

With a change in our phone contract there was an initial increase in telephone charges as we fine-tuned the new system.

There has been a considerable decrease in the amount our assets can be depreciated due to the age of those assets.

This year we revamped of the Tenants' Union Website which was our one-off project cost. In terms of Website/ Internet/ It support, our IT support costs increased and we have additional costs for new subscriptions for Survey Monkey for client surveys, and changed domain for updated website. We also purchased a new computer.

Operational Savings

Some savings have been made this year by reducing the amount spent on the following line items: postage, library/memberships, staff training/ conferences & meetings, printing and stationary.

Although the costs for Worker's Compensation appears to be in credit, this is because we paid more than required and have now been reimbursed.

The Bottom Line:

There was a surplus of \$1,367.

2015-2016 Financial Statement:

In the auditor's opinion the Tenants' Union's obligations under the auditing provisions for the 2015 – 2016 financial year have been satisfied.

For the upcoming financial year....

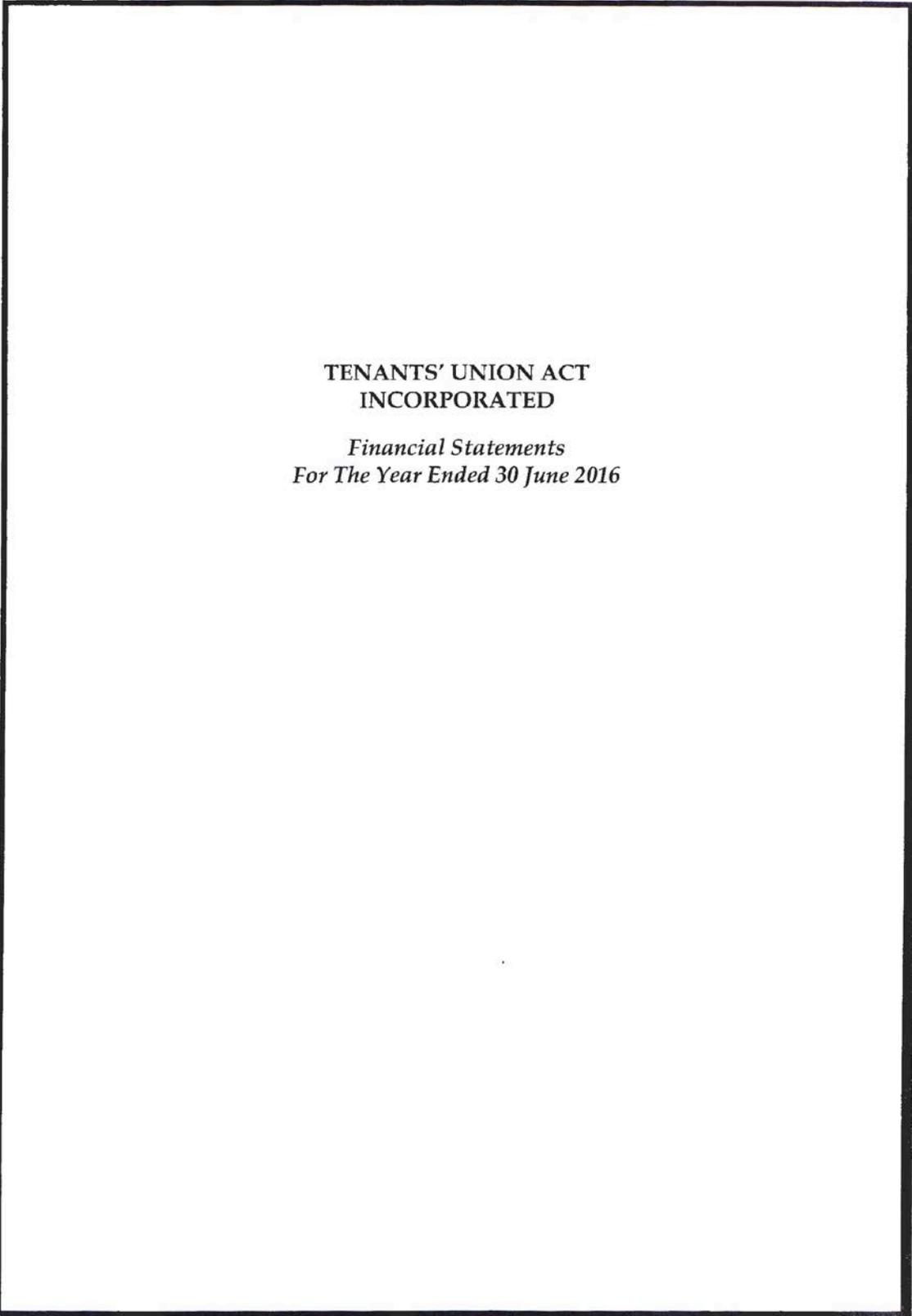
We should expect to have reduced costs in the coming financial year for the Telephone line item as the system's initial issues have been rectified.

As we did last year, we continue to expect changes in the shared utilities expenses (electricity for heating and cooling). The ongoing costs continues to fluctuate in part due to changing landlord expectations so we will continue to keep a close eye on the budget.

Thankyou.

Many thanks to the TU staff for their attentive management of financial records throughout the year. And as in previous years, I am grateful to Deb Pippen and Nicola Hearn for patiently answering all my time consuming questions.

Anne Macduff
Treasurer



**TENANTS' UNION ACT
INCORPORATED**
*Financial Statements
For The Year Ended 30 June 2016*

TENANTS' UNION ACT INC.

STATEMENT BY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

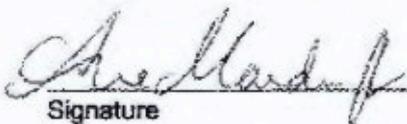
We the undersigned, being two members of the Committee state on behalf of the Committee that:

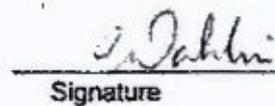
1. the Committee Members of the Association as at the date of this report are:

Penelope Leemhuis	President
Anne MacDuff	Treasurer
Genevieve Bolton	Secretary
Penelope Rumble	Committee Member
Lauren Farrell	Committee Member
Alex Wahlin	Committee Member
Leigh Watson	Committee Member

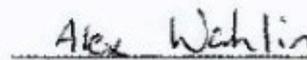
2. the principal activity of the Association during the year year ended 30 June 2016 was the provision of a tenants' advisory service.
3. the net surplus/(deficit) for the financial year ended 30 June 2016 was: \$ 1,367
4. in our opinion, the attached financial statements show a true and fair view of the operations and cash flows for the year ended on that date.

This report is made in accordance with a resolution of the Committee and is signed for and on behalf of the Committee by:


Signature


Signature


Treasurer
Committee Member


Committee Member

Dated this 7th day of November 2016

TENANTS' UNION ACT INCORPORATED
STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2016

2015		2016
\$		\$
	INCOME	
415,563	Grant income - Operational	426,783
8,543	IT Day funding	8,528
3,125	Other Income	1,426
4,160	Interest	3,243
<u>431,391</u>	TOTAL INCOME	<u>439,980</u>
	EXPENSES	
1,600	Audit Fees	1,850
10,786	Bookeeping	9,860
2,572	Depreciation	835
2,964	Insurance	2,671
2,061	Legal Practice Costs	3,011
3,374	Library/Memberships	2,966
1,425	Office Equipment & Furnishings	1,143
1,290	Postage	944
2,809	Printing & Stationery	1,968
9,332	Rent	14,110
	Salaries & Wages	
308,218	Salaries & Wages	314,553
(6,515)	Annual Leave Provision	5,956
26,907	Superannuation	28,288
8,902	LSL Provision & Payments	8,210
2,083	Project Expenses	5,080
7,791	Staff Training, Conferences & Meetings	4,112
1,908	Sundry Expenses	1,887
6,024	International Tenancy Day expenses	7,670
12,266	Telephone	13,417
4,531	Website/Internet/ IT Support	6,406
4,798	Workers Comp' insurance	(218)
4,346	WRLC Contribution/Levy	3,893
<u>419,472</u>	TOTAL EXPENSES	<u>438,612</u>
<u>11,919</u>	OPERATING SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)	<u>1,367</u>

THE ACCOMPANYING NOTES FORM PART OF THE ACCOUNTS.

TENANTS' UNION ACT INCORPORATED

**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
AS AT 30 JUNE 2016**

2015		2016
\$	NOTE	\$
	CURRENT ASSETS	
213,513	Cash	228,186
795	Other Assets	-
<u>214,308</u>	TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	<u>228,186</u>
	NON-CURRENT ASSETS	
56	Office Plant & Equipment	56
<u>56</u>	TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS	<u>56</u>
<u>215,199</u>	TOTAL ASSETS	<u>228,242</u>
	LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES	
15,080	Sundry Creditors	18,703
55,669	Provisions	63,721
<u>70,748</u>	TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	<u>82,424</u>
	NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES	
15,400	Provisions	15,400
<u>15,400</u>	TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES	<u>15,400</u>
<u>86,148</u>	TOTAL LIABILITIES	<u>97,824</u>
<u>129,051</u>	NET ASSETS	<u>130,418</u>
	MEMBERS' FUNDS	
107,110	Opening Balance	119,029
10,022	Reserve for Redundancies	10,022
11,919	Operating Surplus/(Deficit)	1,367
<u>129,051</u>	TOTAL MEMBERS' FUNDS	<u>130,418</u>

THE ACCOMPANYING NOTES FORM PART OF THE ACCOUNTS

TENANTS' UNION ACT INCORPORATED

**STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
for the YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2016**

2015		2016
\$		\$
	CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES	
427,231	Receipts from Members/Grants	436,736
4,160	Interest Received	3,243
(440,535)	Payments to Suppliers and Employees	(425,307)
<u>(9,144)</u>	NET CASH (USED IN)/GENERATED FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES	<u>14,673</u>
	CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES	
<u>-</u>	Payments for Plant & Equipment	<u>-</u>
<u>-</u>	NET CASH FLOWS USED IN INVESTING ACTIVITIES	<u>-</u>
(9,144)	Net increase (decrease) in cash held	14,673
213,512	Cash at the beginning of Year	213,513
<u>213,512</u>		<u>228,186</u>
	Represented By:	
<u>213,512</u>	Cash at Bank	<u>228,186</u>
	RECONCILIATION OF CASH FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES TO OPERATING PROFIT AFTER TAX	
11,919	Operating Surplus/ (Deficit)	1,367
	Non Cash Items in Operating Surplus:	
2,572	- Depreciation	835
	Changes in assets and liabilities	
120	-(Increase)/ Decrease in Other Assets	795
(21,065)	- Increase/ (Decrease) in Creditors & Accruals	3,624
(2,691)	- Increase/ (Decrease) in Provisions	8,052
<u>(9,144)</u>	NET CASH FLOWS RELATING TO/FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES	<u>14,673</u>

THE ACCOMPANYING NOTES FORM PART OF THE ACCOUNTS.

TENANTS' UNION ACT INC.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2016

NOTE 1: Statement of Significant Accounting Policies

This financial report is a special purpose financial report prepared in order to satisfy the financial reporting requirements of the Associations Incorporation Act 1991. The committee has determined that the association is not a reporting entity.

The financial report has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Associations Incorporation Act 1991

No other applicable Accounting Standards, urgent Issues group Interpretations or other authoritative pronouncements of the Australian Accounting Standards Board have been applied.

The financial report has been prepared on an accruals basis and is based on historic costs and does not take into account changing money values or, except where specifically stated, current valuations of non-current assets.

The following material accounting policies, which are consistent with the previous period unless otherwise stated, have been adopted in the preparation of this financial report.

a. Income tax

No provision has been made for income tax as the Company is exempt from taxation under Section 50-5 of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997.

b. Fixed assets

Leasehold improvements and office equipment are carried at cost less, where applicable, any accumulated depreciation.

The depreciable amount of all fixed assets are depreciated over the useful lives of the assets to the association commencing from the time the asset is held ready for use. Leasehold improvements are amortised over the shorter of either the unexpired period of the lease or the estimated useful lives of the improvements.

c. Employee Benefits

Provision is made for the Company's liability for employee benefits arising from services rendered by employees to balance date. Employee benefits that are expected to be settled within one year have been measured at the amounts expected to be paid when the liability is settled, plus related on-costs. Employee benefits payable later than one year have been measured at the present value of the estimated future cash outflows to be made for those benefits.

d. Cash and Cash Equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents includes cash on hand, deposits held at call with banks, other short-term highly liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less, and bank overdrafts. Bank overdrafts are shown within borrowings in current liabilities on the balance sheet.

TENANTS' UNION ACT INC.
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2016

e. Revenue

Government Grants / Membership Fees

Government grants are recognised as income on a systematic and rational basis over the periods necessary to match them with the related costs.

Interest revenue

Interest is recognised on an accrual basis.

f. Goods and Services Tax (GST)

Revenues, expenses and assets are recognised net of the amount of GST, except where the amount of GST incurred is not recoverable from the Australian Tax Office. In these circumstances the GST is recognised as part of the cost of acquisition of the asset or as part of an item of the expense. Receivables and payables in the balance sheet are shown inclusive of GST.

Cash flows are presented in the cash flow statement on a gross basis, except for the GST component of investing and financing activities, which are disclosed as operating cash flows.

TENANTS' UNION ACT INCORPORATED

**NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL ACCOUNTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2016**

	2016	2015
	\$	\$
2. CASH		
Cash at Bank - General & Donation Account	12,371	18,986
Cash Reserve Bank Account	214,321	194,279
Petty Cash Bank Account	1,494	248
	<u>228,186</u>	<u>213,513</u>
3. FIXED ASSETS		
Plant & Equipment	14,175	14,175
Less Accumulated Depreciation	(14,119)	(13,284)
	<u>56</u>	<u>891</u>
4 PROVISIONS		
<i>CURRENT</i>		
Provision for Annual Leave	34,979	29,023
Provision for Relief/Locum	4,000	4,000
Provision for LSL	24,742	22,646
	<u>63,721</u>	<u>55,669</u>
<i>NON-CURRENT</i>		
General Provisions/Training	4,000	4,000
Maternity Leave Provision	11,400	11,400
	<u>15,400</u>	<u>11,400</u>

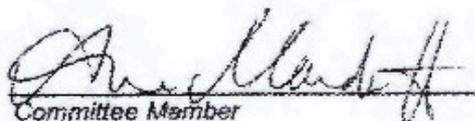
TENANTS' UNION ACT INCORPORATED
STATEMENT BY MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

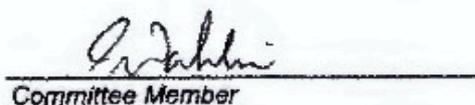
In the opinion of the committee of the Tenants' Union ACT Inc. the financial reports as attached

1. The statement of Financial Position and Statement of Financial Performance have been drawn up to give true and fair view of state of affairs of the Association as at 30 June 2016 and the trading results for the year ending 30 June 2016.

2. At the date of this statement, there are reasonable grounds to believe that the Tenants Union ACT Inc. will be able to pay its debts as and when they fall due.

This statement is made in accordance with a resolution of the Committee and is signed for on behalf of the committee by:


Committee Member


Committee Member

Dated this 7th Day of November 2016

HOUSTON & HANNA
CHARTERED ACCOUNTANT

K D Hanna FCA (Principal)

Telephone: (02) 6249 8515

(02) 6248 8175

Facsimile: (02) 6249 6792

GPO Box 810, Canberra ACT 2601

Suite 15, George Turner Offices

11 McKay Gardens, Turner ACT

email: kim@khanna.com.au

**INDEPENDENT AUDIT REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF
TENANTS' UNION ACT INCORPORATED
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2016**

Scope.

I have audited the attached financial statements of the Tenants' Union Incorporated (The Union) for the year ended 30 June 2016. The Committee is responsible for the preparation and presentation of the financial statements and the information they contain. I have conducted an independent audit of these financial statements in order to express an opinion on them to the members of the Union.

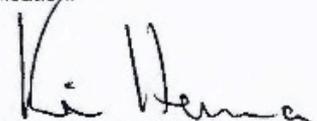
My audit has been conducted in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards to provide reasonable assurance as to whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement. The procedures included examination, on a test basis, of evidence supporting the amounts and other disclosures in the financial statements, and the evaluation of accounting policies and significant accounting estimates. These procedures have been undertaken to form an opinion as to whether, in all material respects, the financial statements are presented fairly in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards and Statutory requirements so as to present a view which is consistent with our understanding of the Union's position and the results of its operations.

The audit opinion in this report has been formed on the above basis.

Audit Opinion.

In my opinion,

- (a) The financial statements of the Union are properly drawn up:
- (i) So as to give a true and fair view of matters required by subsection 72(2) of the Associations Incorporation Act 1991 to be dealt with in the financial statements
 - (ii) in accordance with the provisions of the Associations Incorporation Act 1991; and
 - (iii) in accordance with proper accounting standards, being Applicable Accounting Standards;
- (b) I have obtained all the information and explanations required;
- (c) Proper accounting records have been kept by the Union as required by the Act; and
- (d) The audit was conducted in accordance with the rules of the Organisation.



Kim Hanna FCA
Registered Company Auditor

Date..... 7/11/16