

## **Te Toi Mahana – Tenant Participation Policy**

26/5/2023

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### **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to outline Te Toi Mahana’s approach to engaging with tenants and involving tenants in decisions that affect them.

### **Relevant documents**

This policy should be read alongside the Te Toi Mahana business plan which identifies a number of organisational priorities for year one to build tenant engagement, in the context of a changing operating model and environment and the Communications and Media Policy.

### **Strategic context**

The Te Toi Mahana board has established the following as objectives to guide the direction of our organisation as Te Toi Mahana establishes itself as a great provider of community housing for the communities of Wellington:

- Ensure tenants are at the heart of everything we do
- Establish and build our credibility
- Build an effective and sustainable operating model
- Nurture a purposeful and fulfilling workplace
- Be a leader in the community housing sector
- Foster genuine partnerships
- Maximise our capital delivery.

This tenant engagement and participation policy is one important way that Te Toi Mahana ensures tenants are at the heart of everything, by setting out the basis on which they are involved in providing feedback and contributing to decision making.

## **Policy statement**

Tenant participation involves active encouragement and support to ensure tenants are part of decision-making processes that affect them. This can improve relationships between tenants and Te Toi Mahana, increase their satisfaction with services, and improve quality and enhance housing outcomes.

## **Te Toi Mahana will:**

- Support tenants to develop and sustain a tenant advisory group (or equivalent) to provide regular opportunities for tenants to meet with Te Toi Mahana employees
- Support tenants to develop and sustain tenant-led initiatives and projects e.g., through Te Toi Mahana's community development activities at complexes around Wellington
- Ensure tenants' views are considered ahead of decisions that will affect them
- Provide opportunities for tenants to share views to improve their physical environment and develop pride in where they live, particularly with respect to the development and upgrade of properties (e.g., development of gifted sites, and through the HUP2 upgrade programme managed with WCC)
- Facilitate increasing digital inclusion and the removal of barriers to online participation to enable tenants to more easily and regularly provide feedback
- Enhance tenant awareness of social, recreational, and educational programmes and services that may be of benefit to them
- Enhance neighbourhoods and build community spirit and involvement through partnership working, supporting communities and events, and exploring funding opportunities
- Consider options to support and fund tenant-initiated community initiatives e.g., through the ongoing promotion and administration of a Communities in Action fund
- Operate the Tenant Support Fund (with funding gifted from WCC) in a way that ensures input from tenants on its best use
- Develop the Tenant Portal to improve the ability of tenants to communicate directly with Tenancy Advisors about issues that affect them (e.g., including using tenant champions in each complex to facilitate increased uptake and use).

## **General principles**

- In the development or amendment of any policy, process or system, the impacts on tenants will be identified and considered and where those impacts are significant, tenants or their representatives will be invited to be involved in the review process.
- Depending on the size and significance of the change to any policy, process or system, a communications and involvement plan will be developed. This will include identification of the most appropriate medium for communication. This may include a face-to-face engagement (e.g., tenant community meetings or drop-in sessions), written letters, or meetings with tenant representatives or tenant advisory group.
- Feedback and consultation carried out with tenants should be recorded and tenants informed of the results and outcomes through appropriate communications channels
- Te Toi Mahana staff will operate in a way that empowers tenants to get involved in ways that suit them
- Te Toi Mahana will measure its impact by reviewing progress, monitoring outcomes, and taking a continuous improvement approach. This will include annual tenant satisfaction surveys will be conducted to evaluate Te Toi Mahana services and to inform reporting to CHRA and WCC.

## **Tenant communications**

Clear, effective, and proactive communication is critical to enabling tenant participation. Te Toi Mahana is committed to:

- Providing tenants with information that is accurate, relevant, timely, accessible and meets legal and best practice requirements
- Regular face-to-face communication by Te Toi Mahana governance and employees
- Regular newsletters that include tenants' input
- Regular and timely information updates using appropriate channels such as social media channels, Te Toi Mahana website, and the tenant system portal, emails, letters, quarterly newsletters
- Use of interpreting services when required to ensure language is not a barrier
- Attending regular meetings with tenants and tenant groups.

The form of communication should reflect the importance of the issue and be inclusive. This includes

using culturally appropriate approaches and catering for tenants with accessibility needs.

Te Toi Mahana will develop relevant communications and branding guidelines that will be used as the basis for all written communications. All communications will be approved in line with Te Toi Mahana's Communications and Media Policy.

### **Policy Review**

This policy can be reviewed at any time, at the Board's discretion, and must be reviewed within two years of the policy's approval.