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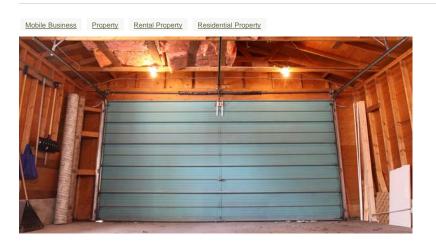


Holly Ryan Retail, Innovation and Manufacturing reporter for the NZ Herald

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Manurewa landlord fined for renting garage to young family

1:49 PM Friday Mar 17, 2017



A landlord has been fined over illegally renting a garage to a young family. Photo / File / Thinkstock

A Manurewa landlord has been ordered to pay damages after illegally renting out a converted garage as a separate household unit.

Satya Silan will have to refund \$15,840 in rent and pay \$750 in damages to a family with a young child after an investigation by the Tenancy Tribunal which began last year.

"Allowing a family to live in an unlawfully converted garage is unacceptable as it poses a serious health and safety risk," said Steve Watson, manager of the Tenancy Compliance and Investigations Team.

"Our investigations found that the Auckland Council had issued Mr Silan notices to cease using the premises as a third household unit and to remove unconsented building works, reverting the building back to a standalone garage," Watson said.

"Mr Silan continued to rent the garage before this work was completed. We also found that this was not the first time Mr Silan had rented the converted garage to a tenant."

Silan came to the attention of the Tenancy Compliance and Investigations Team after an article in the media reporting on Silan's tenants who were told to leave their rental property without another place to live.

"The Tribunal decision should serve as a serious warning to landlords that they are running a business, and it is their obligation to get it right, providing a warm, dry and safe home for their tenants," Watson said.

"There are significant consequences for landlords who fail to meet their obligations, and we will not hesitate to crack down on poor landlord behaviour."

The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment's Tenancy Compliance and Investigations Team was formed in July last year to monitor and enforce compliance with the Residential Tenancy Act 1986.

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The Team has a budget of \$2.6 million this year and \$3.3 million next year, and has the power to prosecute landlords who seriously or persistently breached basic housing standards.

So far, 242 complaints have been received. Of these, 26 involved no breach, a compliance agreement was reached with landlords in 76 cases and in 55 cases the team provided advice to landlords.

It has also lodged cases with the Tribunal in three incidents involving 199 properties.

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Building and Construction Minister Nick Smith said the conviction sent a strong message to landlords.

"This prosecution is significant in that it is the first time the Government has pursued a landlord for failing to provide a warm, dry, safe home," Smith said.

"Last year's tenancy reforms enabled the ministry to directly prosecute landlords rather than relying on tenants to take an action in the tribunal," he said.

"The law change also introduced a requirement for smoke alarms, home insulation by July 2019 and strengthened tenancy protection when taking tribunal cases over substandard rentals."

- NZ Herald

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