

Non-compliance breaches tenants' trust and costs landlord over \$177,000

6 June 2019

Auckland landlord Widhani (Debbie) Iskandar has been ordered to pay \$177,720.56 by the Tenancy Tribunal for deliberately and knowingly failing to lodge tenancy bonds in the largest group of applications brought by MBIE's Tenancy Compliance and Investigations Team

Auckland landlord ordered to pay \$177,720.56 by the Tenancy Tribunal for failing to lodge tenancy bonds.

Ms Iskandar must lodge \$119,625 in bond money with the Tenancy Bond Centre, and has been ordered to pay \$47,600 for committing unlawful acts under the Residential Tenancies Act (the RTA) in relation to bonds. Ms Iskandar must also pay \$10,495.56 in Tribunal and application costs.

"The legal requirement to lodge tenants' bond money with the Bond Centre is a fundamental responsibility landlords have under New Zealand's tenancy law," says Steve Watson, Acting General Manager, Housing & Tenancy Services.

"Trust is a key component in the relationship between a landlord and a tenant, and for a landlord to breach that trust on a scale such as this is unacceptable."

The Tribunal found Ms Iskandar received and failed to lodge tenancy bond money in 81 cases, to the total of \$119,625. Ms Iskandar has been ordered to lodge these funds immediately, as required under the RTA.

The Tribunal also issued 68 legally binding Orders ordering Ms Iskandar to pay \$700 each to a number of tenants where an 'unlawful' act had been proven by TCIT and was able to be awarded.

"I am extremely pleased with the outcome of these applications as a tremendous amount of time and effort went into this investigation. TCIT has the ability to enforce this significant number of Orders through the District Court, if Ms Iskandar fails to comply we will not hesitate to do so.

"TCIT will continue to focus on landlords who systematically breach the Residential Tenancies Act. We will also continue to identify landlords who fail to properly install mandatory smoke alarms, provide insulation statements and – following the 1 July 2019 deadline – install insulation."