

## **New Plymouth Stakeholder Meeting 20 May**

### **What should NZ do to plan for future housing need?**

#### **Affordability**

- Important role to play – a number of players need to act. Can't control all the players – range of other actors.
- Affordability – increases to accommodation supplement change to ratios in regions/family assistance.
- Regional transient population of people who are disadvantaged, adds levies and costs, in younger age group, have mental health issues – work collaboratively about transient population – change schools, debt accumulation, rising – invalid benefits – research about cost drivers.

#### **Standards**

- Rural – living in woolshed, isolated and not visible – well below par - worker accommodation on farms, pockets of substandard houses – floods uncovered them – Whanganui – address in partnership with Councils - good work with retrofitting – locally need to fill a gap – national consistency around retrofit work as good work – reducing costs - consistency in how funded.
- Good work at Waitara.
- Whanganui – focus on health
- Consideration of basic health disabled, invalids benefits – issues with affordability – LDRL – basic salary not enough even with increase to enable accommodation supplement.
- Affordability – work with families to get affordability right, addressing debt – realistically people will not achieve home ownership in lifetime in current framework (those on health invalid/disabilities benefit) – increase \$5 a week increase in affordability – a region where people can afford to buy their homes.
- Complex social infrastructure – issues transient population with job permanency – short term ownership or not ownership at all, can afford to rent – Government policy should support those who can't support themselves – New Plymouth – disproportionate number of high earners to low earners but still significant housing need.
- Quality not defined. Choice of Quality of life v quality of accommodation – those on benefits little hope of owning a home – or group just above that.
- Australia (Victoria) grant non repayable to assist first home owners – few policies to support first home ownership.
- Back to 1960's/70's HNZN role about people making choices.
- Wool shed example trapped because level of income and debt. Moved out there because of that - if other opportunities for them, would probably move.
- Family group – perpetuates disadvantage.
- Bigger determinant of wellbeing – employment - Patea, Waitara.
- Not sure home ownership is the issue. Australia providing first house assistance for number of years – house prices in Australia increased demand but not supply.
- Employment is a big issue – no point putting someone into a house they can't afford to maintain. Disposable income issue.
- Social attitude home ownership or house options - provision of quality initiatives with strong education (RHP, LDRL) expand range of housing options.
- LDRL focus on home ownership but identify number of housing needs that can't be met through home ownership.
- Agreement LDRL Taranaki from July?
- Important strong education component to address housing need in general.
- Define role: safety net, clear on what our roles and purpose is – to best identify every service linked – holistic issue, building strong communities, community design a key issue, danger of creating areas of ghettos – integrate social housing into community – asking tenants and people in rental housing, those who can't afford mortgage – what would help.
- Allocation policy should be more sophisticated - look at needs, part rent/part buy partnerships with employers – health and education providers, recruitment of nurses and

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teachers - employers provide subsidised housing – PCT's have become housing providers, help people save for deposit.

- Most of substandard houses in peoples' own homes.
- Costs incurred on organisations from high need families – smarter way to address needs.
- Labour market connections – high wage because can't afford accommodation – try to connect people to industry seasonal accommodation needs falls apart.
- Employer can't really buy into it. 'Family of five' Government agencies that work with families in high need.

### **Māori housing**

Pilot programmes plan to extend programme around country - Parihaka caravans-shacks liability issues, fires/Cyclone Bola 30's, 40's, 50's left lands to go to urban areas where employment was. 'The Great Migration' – people wanting to return to turangawaewae - how to assist establish appropriate housing for people with (mental) and other health problems with sub standard housing - HNZC expand programmes – Taranaki – RHP beginning to extend beyond East Coast/Poverty Bay/Northland work being done to evaluate programme and make case for further funding – next step – need to connect with Peter.

- Granny flats – Parihaka – aimed at Kaumatua and kuia but programme no longer in existence.
- Relationship between HNZC and governing bodies of hapu/iwi groups – more joint venture partnerships assistance in social housing areas.
- Discussion about LDRL in Taranaki – RHP starting in Whanganui – about building relationships and partnerships so people are aware – still period of waiting – moving from first step – not prepared to wait any further to develop.

### **Housing support capacity**

Capacity for communities to think about what need and Government's ability to respond to that – needs longevity - IKA programmes, subsidies are less, encourages employment and self sufficiency.

### **Rental sector**

About helping people break cycle of debt – rent/bond – cumulative – help these people. Ministry Paper on debt levels – all under 25 – level of indebtedness student loan, taxes, phone, power bills, HP's – perpetuates disadvantage.

- Government wants responsibility to be taken by communities - commercial side has to take responsibility about young people accumulating high levels of debt – need education to tell people what they are getting into.
- Part of holistic approach – those making \$ need to take responsibility.

**Concern of smaller rural councils** – Government abdicated responsibility requiring rate payers to pick up burden – assistance to elderly only available if high asset levels – houses changed hands – Stratford absentee landlords – biggest growth area – farm amalgamations – moving into rural areas – those on the run hide in rural areas.

- Mental health key issue – dumped into smaller communities with no assistance – school closures - pressure – another cost not Councils/rate payers' role to pick up burden.
- Documents – Councils have a social housing role? Surprised if Council want to be forerunner because of rates implications – cuts across all sizes of local Government – local Government needs to resolve role re social housing as have contribution to make to social housing – need to recognise what can bring: social design and environmental standards within remit - eco refit we should be given grants for WOF for landlords to rent a house – body of people (Councils) yes, you can rent this house – licensing of private rentals like food establishments by and large licensing in other areas not done by councils now – would add cost, add quality, add cost to those who aren't doing it.
- Growing number of people owning homes who aren't *able or willing to maintain them – not always about standards but tenancy managers social wellbeing* role – need a lead agency – Policy work made around number of people who churn in and out of different properties.

### **Private Rental Market**

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- W.O.F. for houses
- Cycle of rent and bonds and debt
- Rents high in New Zealand
- Are they artificially up because of Accommodation Supplement?
- What are reasons for moving into renting?
- Overseas - can take up a 20 year lease – high amount of property investors in New Plymouth – many buy without knowing responsibilities of buying a home.
- Because employment increasing, uptake lower but more taking maximum – number hitting maxima, household type higher.
- Whether accommodation supplement faces landlord capture – impossible to prove.
- Trends 97/98 – rents levelled up 2001 – climbed again – accommodation supplement always playing catch-up transfer to private investors.
- Follow on effect into economy – if do this how will affect parts of community
- What is Government's role? Who is responsible? If local Government/community and local Government think should be central - need to come to an agreement – need to convince communities have a role to play.

### **Diversity of housing needs**

- How to meet diversity of housing need – some local government providers elderly first preference, then to others. Under 55/65's then over because elderly first priority – invalids/sickness beneficiaries nowhere to go as a priority because don't fit criteria – creates problems – those with multiple needs – accept have social responsibility – about connections to other agencies – gaps those with multiple needs 60/70 on waiting list – priority don't meet need.
- Capacity gap
- Context of country – New Plymouth low waiting list – 150
- New Plymouth – A's are dealt with fairly quickly with churn in stock – higher turnover – transients – income related rents have brought down turnover.
- Case management referral MSD – HNZC –3 and 4 always in urgent – those living in unacceptable situation – don't meet needs on list but until get worse can't offer a solution.
- LDRL coming to Taranaki – why can't it? Need to challenge – HNZC and government need to take a closer look at Taranaki – need to challenge frameworks – who will deal with it? Do more than required to do often.

### **Housing Quality:**

- W.O.F – backdoor – options on choice – forego quality
- Look into future – regulations housing quality - encourage, do the education
- Fundamental education – have responsibility, acknowledge something needs to be fixed. TV/radio ads let people know what it means in simple terms.
- If have knowledge, would people be strong enough to communicate to landlords
- Teach people better communication skills regarding rent etc (tenants/landlords)
- Quality – risk being homeless if have a go at landlords - standards there now - Councils ability to enforce – Building Act, Health Act, end result – somebody has closing order on house and gets turfed out – ok because about improving people's standards of living additional costs to health, education: Councils only do it if very bad.
- Asked assistance from Council and not interested – rather something put on house don't live here – Councils running away.
- Local Councils have done it – has to be reported – once a health issue – Councils will act.
- People need to be aware of housing rights – how if there to act/advocate on your behalf.
- Morrinsville – Government response Public Health Officer finally blew the whistle on 15 houses built in swamp gone unreported for years – moral - can't live – elevated – something was done.
- UK revised standards upwards – NZ dragging the chain – each generation revises its standards upwards – not about reporting it – responsibility of DHB's and Councils to notify instances – responsibility to this community.
- Advocacy runs alongside education who advocates on behalf of family, prepared to educate and intervene – about challenging the rules.

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- Can't just educate of rights, ACC role changed to prevention – education focussed on employers and employees based on morals and values – about self-worth – not just about housing prices and low incomes - holistic approach – not just new by-laws – drink driving – understand why it's wrong. Drink driving programmes about teaching people values – public health approach – whole of population can be victim of one person's behaviour.
- These involved need to take responsibility between part of values – landlords - Councils– number of regulatory actions – few cases where landlords are problem.
- Trash places a mental health problem.
- Obligations and responsibilities on both sides. HNZN number of programmes education component - why HNZN role – 61-370 (LDRL) – 3 workshops - education component wasn't large, more about home ownership outcome, redesigned it with education as mortgage component and didn't care about outcome about getting message out to people – about responsibility to educate others – expected outcomes would come anyway – housing became secondary to education but outcomes came anyway – need to advocate.
- Education critical component – education in round about way in different areas in strategy.

#### **Looking at Six Areas:**

- Are they the right areas?
- Nothing missing but what do underneath
- Need some risk assessment process (because trip over people in process) – collaborative process – free flowing of information as well as risk assessment indicators.

#### **Priority question: What is the one thing you would do?**

- People around the table to share and find solutions (priorities different for different groups of people).
- More resources to HNZN under budget – once a major Government Department and now downgraded – elitist organisation.
- More resources at heart of focus.
- Other groups approach HNZN through collaboration but funding has to be there to stop overlapping - partnerships and more resources.
- Short term funding – HNZN long-term scheme to allow young ones to own own home because issues with rental accommodation (growing disparity between rich and poor) many people owned own home through HNZN loans.
- Find focus – generation education do so without Government funding or assistance – values and education – community in place understand have responsibility.
- Comprehensive and good but need new longer term solutions as well as short term solutions -teach tomorrow's home owners what responsibilities and values are.