Building the Future: Towards a New Zealand Housing Strategy

Submission Form

The NZ Housing Strategy
Making a submission

We welcome your views on the discussion document *Building the Future: Towards a New Zealand Housing Strategy* and the proposals it contains. We encourage you to make a submission so a wide range of perspectives can be considered as we finalise the strategy.

To help with your submission we have developed a series of questions relevant to the issues outlined in the discussion document. You can choose to answer these questions or respond in your own format. All submissions will be analysed, individually and collectively, for their content as well as the weighting and frequency of issues raised. This will help us determine the level of concern about each issue across the range of submissions.

Your submission will be available to the public. If you do not want your submission to be available to the public (for example, it contains commercially sensitive information), you should indicate this. Any request for your submission will be considered under the provisions of the Official Information Act 1982.

All submissions must be in writing and should include the following information if applicable:

**Name**

**Address**

**Telephone**

**Email address**

If you are representing an organisation or group, please give the name and contact details of that organisation or group, and the position you hold. Please send submissions, to be received by 30 July 2004, to:

**New Zealand Housing Strategy**

**Freepost 184559**

**PO Box 3802**

**Shortland St**

**Auckland**

The discussion document, submission form and instructions on making an electronic submission, are available from www.hnzc.co.nz/nzhousingstrat/index.htm. Additional hard copies can be obtained by phoning Housing New Zealand Corporation on **0800 367 6947** (0800 FOR NZHS).
Information about your submission

Please provide the information below to assist us with the analysis of submissions.

Your personal details

Name:
Address:
Telephone:
  • Day:
  • Mobile:

Email address:

Are you representing a group or organisation? (Please bold one or circle one)

• Yes
• No

If yes:

Name of organisation: Christchurch City Council
Address: P O Box 237, Christchurch
Position held:
Number of members:
Do you object to your submission being publicly available? (Please bold one or circle one)

- Yes
- No

If yes, on what grounds?
Questions to think about

The following questions are intended to help you with your submission and to help us find out what people think are the most important housing issues. Knowing a little about your reasons for making the submission will help us get a better understanding of your concerns and perspective on housing issues. You may choose to use a different format, or include additional pages if you need more space.

Reason for submission

• Why are you choosing to send a submission on this discussion document (Building the Future: Towards a New Zealand Housing Strategy)?

CCC Comment:

• The Christchurch City Council has elected to make a submission as it is committed to contributing to the Community’s social well being by ensuring safe, accessible and affordable housing is available to people on low incomes including elderly persons, and people with disabilities.

Housing in New Zealand: where are we now?

• What should New Zealand do to plan for future housing need?

CCC Comment:

• The Christchurch City Council believes that housing cannot be considered in isolation. Many other factors and, therefore, many other individuals, groups, institutions and public and private bodies have a part to play. It is important to consider wider issues relating to community planning and social service planning. This is particularly important when considering social housing, where residents often have complex needs and issues.
Housing and social and economic well-being

- What areas of government policy and activity, other than housing policy, could be changed to improve housing outcomes? In what way?

**CCC Comment:**

- The Council believes that a more integrated and intersector approach is required and that the final housing strategy should include reference to how the housing sector will work with health, education, economic development and other sectors.

- The Council recommends that the Housing Strategy includes inter sector approach to tenant support, particularly for those with multi needs such as mental health support.

A proposed framework for the New Zealand Housing Strategy

The six areas for action have been identified as:

- improving housing assistance and affordability
- responding to housing markets under stress
- innovative home ownership programmes
- developing the private rental sector
- improving housing quality
- building capacity and capability across the housing sector.

- Are the six areas the right ones for a New Zealand Housing Strategy? If not, what should they be?

**CCC Comment:**

- The areas identified for action are appropriate

- Which of these do you see as the most important?

**CCC Comment:**
• From the social housing perspective it is considered that the following two action areas are of the highest importance:
  o Building capacity and capability across the housing sector
  o Improving housing assistance and affordability.
  o The remaining action areas could be seen as sub-sets of the two areas identified above.
AREA ONE: Improving housing assistance and affordability

- How do you think housing assistance and affordability could be improved for low-income and disadvantaged people?

CCC Comment:
- Account to be taken of barriers to housing affordability confronted by younger people particularly those new to the work force.

- Have you any other comments on this area (page 21)?

CCC Comment:
- No comment

- Have you any comments on the actions proposed to address this area (page 26)?

CCC Comment:
- The proposed actions do help address the problems of affordability but within the confines of the rental market only. The question of affordability from the ownership perspective is not addressed in this section of the document.
AREA TWO: Responding to housing markets under stress

• What kind of activities or policies will have a positive effect in housing markets under stress?

CCC Comment:

• A more transparent recognition of the issues being experienced in centers other than Auckland and Nelson. Whilst the document highlights the impact of high housing demand and rapidly rising prices in these centers and describes the experiences in substandard housing areas such as Northland and Tairawhiti it makes little mention of the issues being faced in other centers such as Christchurch where numbers of people are affected by an inability to access adequate and affordable housing.

• Have you any other comments on this area (page 28)

CCC Comment:

Indicators in Christchurch of a housing market under stress include:

• Shortage of inner city accommodation for single males and females
• Pressure on existing emergency accommodation
• Shortage of suitable accommodation and support services for people suffering from mental health illnesses
• Pressure on existing night shelters and refuges.
• Need for additional, affordable and accessible, sheltered accommodation

• Have you any comments on the actions proposed to address this area (page 35)?

CCC Comment:

• Central Government should develop and display a more transparent willingness to listen to the concerns of local communities.
AREA THREE: Innovative home ownership programmes

• Should the government be assisting people to buy their own homes? If so, how?

CCC Comment:

• It is this Councils view that assistance should be given to first home purchasers through schemes targeted at low income earners and those whose disposable income (after tax) is below an established threshold.

• Have you any other comments on this area (page 37)?

• Have you any comments on the actions proposed to address this area (page 41)?

CCC Comment:

• A possible addition could be a form of lease to purchase scheme
AREA FOUR: Developing the private rental sector

• What are the strengths and weaknesses of New Zealand’s private rental sector? How could it be improved?

CCC Comment:
  ▪ The private rental sector is less able to deal with problems associated with tenants suffering from mental illness. This could possibly be addressed through education programmes and integrated mental health support provision. Some form of incentive to encourage an uptake may be required.
  ▪ Significant rent increases which impact upon the tenants disposable income and often cause tenants to look for alternative housing

• Have you any other comments on this area (page 42)?

CCC Comment
  ▪ No comment

• Have you any comments on the actions proposed to address this area (page 45)?

CCC Comment:
  ▪ Whilst not advocating rent control some form of mechanism to discourage significant rent increases where the quality of the subject housing is not improved commensurately may be an option.
AREA FIVE: Improving housing quality

• How effective is the current system for promoting and regulating housing quality? How could it be improved?

CCC Comment:
- No comment

• Have you any other comments on this area (page 46)?

CCC Comment:
- This Council is concerned to ensure that appropriate and achievable house insulation and air movement standards are promulgated and required to be observed, particularly in rental properties.

• Have you any comments on the actions proposed to address this area (page 50)?

CCC Comment:
- A suggested addition is to provide incentives to private landlords to insulate existing rental properties.
AREA SIX: Building capacity and capability across the housing sector

- What are the main issues relating to the capacity and capability of the housing sector? How could they be solved?

CCC Comment:
- Shortage of skilled workers in the construction industry
- Lack of appropriate recognised tenancy management education / qualification

- Have you any other comments on this area (page 52)?

CCC Comment:
- No comment

- Have you any comments on the actions proposed to address this area (page 59)?

CCC Comment:
- The action proposed is appropriate but further actions require development to cater for the issues above in the Christchurch area.
Meeting diverse housing needs

- Have you any comment on the particular housing needs of each group identified in these sections?

CCC Comment:

The following comments are in addition to the recommendations contained in the discussion document:

- Older Peoples Housing
  - Further development around the concept of Ageing in Place
  - Development of lower level supported housing for older people who do not require total residential care but would benefit from oversight

- Women’s Housing Issues
  - The proposed actions appear appropriate to the needs of women.

- Disabled People’s Housing Needs
  - Adequate and appropriate support systems be instituted for people suffering from a mental illness

- Children, Young People and Housing
  - The actions proposed appear appropriate although there may be a gap in that the need for emergency accommodation for young women may require consideration in the same way as is proposed for young men

- Housing Needs of Maori Communities
  - Support the formation of partnerships between Maori and Local Government housing providers

- Pacific People’s Housing
  - Support the formation of partnerships between Pacific Islands communities and Local Government housing providers

- Other Ethnic Minority Communities and Housing
  - Educate refugees about the style / standard of housing in New Zealand and its availability. Currently it is common for refugees to apply for
housing with the expectation that their particular needs will be met immediately.

Other issues
• Please comment on any relevant issues not covered in the submission form (or the discussion document) that you feel are important.

Thank you for considering the issues in this discussion document and the proposals for a New Zealand Housing Strategy. We look forward to receiving your response.