

Member Profile: Tauranga Community Housing Trust



Tauranga Community Housing Trust (TCHT) was founded in 2003 in response to concern about the growing lack of affordable, appropriate housing for local disabled people.

TCHT operates in the Tauranga area and Western Bay of Plenty Region and now assists a broad range of people, mostly working with individuals and families with complex health, disability, financial and/or social needs in addition to a serious housing need.

Tauranga has been described as being one of the least affordable cities in New Zealand to live, both in terms of renting and home ownership due to the high housing costs relative to income. As a housing provider and landlord TCHT is helping to address this issue through providing housing at a social rather than market rent to those who need it, both in properties owned by the trust itself and through leasing and managing properties owned by the private sector.

TCHT believes that appropriate housing is fundamental to the wellbeing of individuals, families and the community as a whole and that suitable housing enhances people's ability to achieve independence and to participate in the wider life of the community.

Tauranga, in line with many places in New Zealand, has a general under supply of one and two-bedroom properties. Tauranga's population remains biased towards the older adult population, with almost 18% of the population aged 66 years or older (compared to 12% nationally), and a significant proportion of small households. In 2006 single households in Tauranga totaled almost 25%, and just over 37% of households consisted of 2 people. In other words 62% of Tauranga households consist of one or two people.

The under supply of affordable housing is exacerbated by lack of social, crisis and transitional housing in Tauranga and the Western Bay of Plenty. Most that is available is targeted to sub groups, e.g. older people. Unfortunately local housing supplied by councils and/or the RSA for older adults, tends to be old, not insulated and inaccessible. In effect this housing is not suitable for the people it is targeted to.

In 2014 TCHT completed two projects to address these issues:

The Clarke St Village/Te Whango

A development of 14 brand new one and two-bedroom units that can comfortably house over 20 people including children, if need be. The 2500sqm site which included eight ageing one-bedroom properties was purchased by TCHT in 2012 from Tauranga City Council's pensioner housing for redevelopment. TCHT applied for and received a grant from the Social Housing Unit to build this age friendly development as part of a sustainable, secure village that is functional for people with mixed ages and abilities.

The land was intensified (14 units where there was eight) whilst achieving green space, communal areas (including a BBQ area for tenants to enjoy with friends and whanau), storage sheds, adequate car parking, and communal gardens. At least 50% of the dwellings are wheelchair accessible and the village has provision for vehicles and mobility scooters (secure storage with electricity to recharge scooters) whilst being in close proximity to public transport, shopping facilities, health services and recreational services. TCHT identified the housing need for these residents who have a range of physical, intellectual or financial barriers and forged ahead with help from various partners to make it possible.

“We couldn’t have done this without a capital grant from central Government and the high level of support from local funders such as Bay Trust and TECT. This project demonstrates what can be achieved through partnerships between central Government, local Government, the non-government sector and local funders,” says Manager Chris Johnstone.

