

Media Release  
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## Representative body for housing providers assesses new Social Housing Fund

The proof of the new Social Housing Fund being rolled out by the Government's Social Housing Unit this week will be in the quality of the across-the-board platform it puts in place to provide long-term housing options for cash-poor and vulnerable New Zealanders and the communities they live in, says Community Housing Aotearoa, a representative body of not-for-profit housing providers.

"Working towards that goal Community Housing Aotearoa was pleased to see that various references to our Best Practice Guide and related quality assurance programme have been variously embedded into criteria for the Social Housing Fund," says David McCartney, Executive Officer of Community Housing Aotearoa.

"The opening of the \$13 million contestable round of grant applications for housing providers who are eligible under Rural, Maori and Niche provider categories is good news. It is a positive sign that the momentum slowly built up bit by bit since 2005 by the defunct Housing Innovation Fund won't be lost.

"Whether the replacement component funds of the new Social Housing Fund, including the \$22 million being tendered as a Growth fund, can be allocated appropriately and in the tight timeframes set down is an untested question.

"The immediate challenge for Niche providers is that they now have only 28 working days before the end of the year to put forward project proposals that must be both fully scoped and at an advanced state of readiness," says David McCartney.

"Moving at pace has its advantages but if the government wants to assure the stability of our sector of social and community housing into the future, it also has to give due attention to resourcing applicants to attain the state of readiness sought and to support sector-wide programmes such as accreditation. These steps are necessary to act as a bridge during this current transition for supporting a viable future of, for and by the sector.

"In welcoming the role of the new Social Housing Unit as a funder when it was established in July we placed high hopes on the emergence of a constructive framework that would support community housing organisations as a whole to gradually stand independently of government, separate to but alongside the public housing role of Housing New Zealand Corporation. Over time this has proven possible in Australia, so why not New Zealand?

"During this next phase of development we urge housing providers who are seeking supplementary information about the Social Housing Fund process, or opportunities for future collaboration, or who want to find out more about how best to engage with our quality assurance programme to visit our website at [www.communityhousing.org.nz](http://www.communityhousing.org.nz)," says David McCartney, Executive Officer of Community Housing Aotearoa. "We also look forward to engaging with the Social Housing Unit to a higher level on a much-needed collaborative long-term strategy".

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