

Doorways

A publication of Community Housing Aotearoa

2011
AGM
Special

Entering the next era ...

Since the publication of our inaugural issue of "Doorways" - *timed to coincide with Community Housing Aotearoa's successful national conference held in Auckland on 22-23 March 2011* - a lot has been happening on the housing scene for community housing organisations represented by Community Housing Aotearoa (CHA).

Following on from recommendations made by the Ministerial Housing Shareholders' Advisory Group in 2010 much about the surrounding government policy settings for social housing has shifted, as seen by the new direction being taken by Housing New Zealand Corporation (HNZC) and the new roles established at the Department of Building and Housing (DBH) - including the formation of a new Social Housing Unit (the SHU).

Changes associated with the low-profile Social Housing Reform Programme being run out of the DBH have started to have a fundamental impact on the way our sector needs to plan for the future if we are going to be seriously resourced for the role of making an ongoing and growing contribution to the provision of affordable housing options for those sections of New Zealand society most in need, and for future generations.

This issue of "Doorways" is timed as a supplement to CHA's Annual General Meeting taking place in the Salvation Army Hall in Manukau on 30 November 2011, where CHA members will have the opportunity to take part in a loosely structured forum in three

parts: State of play; Future trajectory; and lastly an open discussion on points such as what it would take to increase levels of collaboration amongst community housing organisations - for instance in their responses to the new Social Housing Fund - and the potential for participating in consortia with private and/ or public sector partners, be that through PPPs or other forms of consolidation and partnering being explicitly encouraged by the SHU.

In the brief overview that follows of activity CHA has undertaken during the year on behalf of its 100+ members, one of the highlights was the exploratory trip made to Australia to look at large scale social housing partnership projects there.

The potential of such partnership approaches for social and community housing developments in New Zealand was also the basis of a research project I have completed towards an MBA at Victoria University's

Management School this year with Dr Jim Sheffield. One of the affirming results of that research - based in part on interviews with multiple key players from all three sectors - is that while there is no mistaking the distinct roles played by community, private and public players a key to any successful scenarios for social housing has to be an agreement to work together for community development.



David McCartney, Executive Officer
of Community Housing Aotearoa

Note: The new housing units pictured at right, and the sequence of site photos that appear at the top of the centrespread that follows, were photographed at the Berhampore site of the Wellington Housing Trust's most recently completed project opened in September 2011.





A Year of re-building relationships

The successful “**Doorways to Community Housing**” conference held on 22-23 March 2011 was the first national conference held by CHA since 2008 - with many participants calling for more regular events to ensure the building of strong relationships and strategic direction setting amongst all stakeholders in community housing.

Our impressive line-up of guest speakers included the Hon. Phil Heatley, Minister of Housing; new Auckland Council Mayor, Len Brown; Jeremy Gardiner, chief executive of Te Runanga o Ngati Awa; Michael Lennon, CEO of Housing Choices Australia and a former CE of Housing New Zealand; researcher Kay Saville-Smith; and David McLean, Westpac’s General Manager of Wealth, Insurance, Private & Institutional Banking in New Zealand. Added features of the event were a presentation about the accreditation programme being developed by CHA (*see also opposite*) as a preferred doorway to self-regulation in the sector, and a Cafe-format session of facilitated discussion on elected topics. On the first afternoon of the conference members of local advocacy group Housing Call to Action had organised an “Outrageous Bus Tour” of community housing projects in West Auckland. Subsequently CHA assisted in the funding of a DVD based on the bus tour (as filmed at a discounted rate by Sunyard Productions). Chapters from the DVD, which features CHA members VisionWest, the Monte Cecilia Housing Trust and the New Zealand Housing Foundation, can also be viewed on YouTube. A small stock of the DVD is still available and can be requested from our office by sending an email to doorways@communityhousing.org.nz



Any further leveraging of this year’s conference soon had to take a backseat to calls being made on CHA’s small team (one full-time Executive Officer and two part-time staff) to liaise with stakeholders such as the Department of Building and Housing as they prepared to inherit the social housing policy role previously situated within Housing New Zealand.

The next major outreach initiative taken by CHA was to run a stand at this year’s Local Government New Zealand conference - “Future Focus” - held in July in Wellington (*as seen in the two photos on the bottom left of this page*). This proved to be an ideal way to make new contacts and some inroads on important discussion topics such as development levies, the place of housing in Long Term Plans, community housing as social infrastructure, rating policies and consent processes.

Throughout the now re-elected National government’s first term in office CHA enjoyed a positive relationship with the Minister of Housing Phil Heatley (*pictured in discussion with CHA’s Executive Officer David McCartney below*). Indeed when the Minister spoke at our conference in March he praised CHA for the key role it plays as the only non-government peak body specifically dedicated to the sector, and made the statement that CHA’s advocacy on behalf of the sector has “clearly defined the challenges you face and has helped to shape the Government’s vision for social and affordable housing in New Zealand”, adding “If (your sector) didn’t provide houses for people, we would need to”.

Meeting with visitors such as US housing expert Barry Zigas (*pictured bottom right*) has also added to the wealth of productive relationships CHA has built in 2011.





LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

One of the interesting things to look at and consider during the 2011 Election campaigning was a noticeable level of cross-party support being given to the growth of a viable third sector for housing, generally not seen in 2008 when declared policies on housing were almost exclusively focused on Housing New Zealand's State housing stock and common issues such as rental levels and planning regimes.

The policies of the National, Labour and Green parties in relation to community housing respectively read:

- To work closely with social housing providers and Community Housing Aotearoa to grow the total amount of social housing available, in areas of most need.
- (To) work with the community housing sector to develop it in ways that will see it complementing an increase in HNZA social housing stock through access to capital and land.
- Expanding the third sector ... By funding a diverse mix of housing options in the public and community sectors (to) better meet the needs of our diverse society.

As we head into 2012 this gives our sector a good measure of encouragement that the nation's politicians recognise that a better long-term future for housing requires support for the community sector to grow its overall capability and strength, as has occurred in Australia where organisations that focus on community development outcomes alongside economic imperatives are delivering improved social housing.

The NZ Council for Infrastructure Development (NZCID) has taken a strong interest in promoting more knowledge and awareness of what it will take for such transformations to work. In November CHA was fortunate to co-host a talk with NZCID's Stephen Selwood (*pictured above, at left*) about the best practice Kensington development in Melbourne by leading practitioner George Housakos of Urban Communities (*pictured centre*) at Wellington City Council. We intend to convene more of these high-level, focused sessions to ensure policymakers and funders understand more clearly the critical factors needed for charitable not-for-profit housing developments to succeed.

The arrangements that CHA is continuing to put in place for a Quality Assurance and Accreditation Programme are definitely of critical importance for our sector. This programme took another significant step forward through an MOU this year with the Te Wana Quality Programme managed by Health Care Aotearoa (HCA), as signed by HCA Chief Executive Jon Royal and CHA's Executive Officer David McCartney (*pictured right*).





Note: This 'mini-poster' was designed to illustrate some of the inputs, outcomes and characteristics (roots and branches) common to housing developments that are capable of delivering the best possible conditions for a successful & healthy community. What words would you add or replace?