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EMAIL NEWSLETTER

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Dear Colleagues

Many ships yet to sail-

For those unfortunate souls who wanted to be on the maiden voyage of the Titanic, it might have been a better option to take the second or third sailing – once the bugs were worked out. My overall message is – don’t worry about being on the first ship – we have a long road ahead of us before we see settings in place that truly work for you, the heart and soul of the community housing sector. You have all been very prudent – at not jumping in when it’s not in the long term, best interest of the families you serve in your communities. That appears to be exactly the right strategy.

Government is listening. Many recent announcements indicate the Government is staffing up to implement the Social Housing Reform Programme. MSD is adding 12 case managers for tenancy reviews, 5 case managers for Work-Focused Case Management and signalled additional funding is required for the Auckland emergency housing database and the supported accommodation for you people RFP. Treasury is tendering for expert advice to facilitate the stock transfers. To date, no information on what support will be provided to community housing providers as the counterparty to these transactions has been announced. Hopefully this asymmetrical allocation of resources will be balanced soon. CHA is strongly pushing for a much larger investment in our sector – the resources we’ll need to put partnerships in action.

We are busy in trying to keep up to date on the many announcements concerning the Social Housing Reform Programme and potential stock transfers. The on-going release of information from MSD, Treasury and Housing New Zealand Corporation provides more data points to help understand where the sector may be headed. In addition, I have begun monthly meetings with Richard Braae, the Director of Social Housing, who is responsible for coordinating actions across MBIE, Treasury and MSD. In general, we are seeing a very good effort at trying to coordinate actions- and a much more open dialogue on where things

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still need to be improved.

-Scott

MSD Housing Assistance Reform Feedback Group (HARFG) – release of two papers

The Housing Assistance Reform Feedback Group (HARFG) met in Wellington on 26 February. We are pleased to report that the sector's requests have been heard for more openness about the content of papers and discussions at official feedback groups. The items discussed at yesterday's meeting of the HARFG included:

1. MSD IRRS Purchasing Intentions
2. Emergency Housing Funding Review
3. Housing Restructuring and Tenancy Matters Act
4. Social Housing Valuation/Investment approach
5. Social Housing Transition Package

On the first two items, MSD has agreed that we can make publicly available the papers utilised in today's discussions. CHA invites your questions, comments, and any suggestions you have for us to feedback to MSD.

MSD IRRS Purchasing intentions – a first step towards the IRRS Purchasing Strategy

The group considered a paper on the Ministry of Social Development's (MSD) preliminary views on its intentions to purchase Income Related Rent Subsidy (IRRS) places, now that MSD has the social housing purchasing role.

HARFG members were asked what information MSD could provide to community housing providers to assist them to make investment decisions and help with business planning.

Summary of points raised:

- The sector wants clarity on how IRRS works, including the cap - HARFG felt that on face value it appears that on one hand Government is saying it wants to increase places, but on the other hand IRRS is capped. This sends a mixed message if growth is the Government's intended outcome. MSD confirmed that the extra 3,000 IRRS places announced by the Prime Minister in the State of the Nation speech on 28 January were built into the funding cap and that growth in the number of IRRS places (in the right areas for the right amount of time for the right people) is the intended outcome.
- The true costs of providing housing and wraparound supports are not visible - the current total cost of providing places by providers is high. IRRS does not cover wraparound services or other intensive tenancy management costs. The cost to serve different

clients, especially high need clients, can vary considerably (which is not fully captured using a unit fee per client basis). Providing flexibility on how IRRS can be used will be very useful. MSD confirmed that this is one of the issues being addressed in the HRTMA review.

- The sector wants opportunities to work together - transferring clients between providers across regions (especially providers outside of demand areas) is something providers are interested in discussing further. Providers want to be able to work together and it will be important that partnerships can be accommodated in the contracting and funding model. This will become even more important as the sector becomes more diverse over time. MSD confirmed that it will work with operations to ensure that contractual arrangements do not inadvertently prevent partnerships from being formed.
- An increasingly commercial focus could make community providers more risk averse - a concern was raised that increasing the commercial focus and encouraging a competitive environment might make providers more risk averse. In other words, it may create an environment where wraparound services and community development become less viable, moving the market in the wrong direction with providers switching to just delivering housing. Members suggested that the RFP process signalled in Auckland to provide the additional 300 places include criteria around experience in moving clients through the housing continuum, and / or track record on community development, for example, to ensure that market does not move in this direction.

Today's discussion broadly endorsed this first step – an outline of the purchasing framework, what it includes, and how it will progress. We applauded MSD's approach that this should go through many versions, with each one informed by new information and practices learned since the last one.

MSD is seeking feedback from the community housing sector on a paper that outlines the proposed approach to the preliminary information release [found here - [HARFG Paper on Purchasing Intentions \(PDF 483KB\)](#)]. In particular, MSD wants to know what specific information you need to make investment decisions. Your comments will help shape MSD's approach. Please provide your feedback to director@communityhousing.org.nz by 13/3/15. MSD intends to release its purchasing intentions publicly in April 2015.

Emergency Housing Funding Review

A presentation - [MSD Emergency Housing Funding Presentation \(PDF 1419KB\)](#), was delivered by Jon Saunders (contact: jon.saunders004@msd.govt.nz) at the NZ Coalition to End Homelessness conference yesterday 26 February in Wellington, with the same points delivered to the HARFG alongside the discussion paper on its draft terms of reference - [Draft Terms of Reference for Emergency Housing Review \(PDF 2639KB\)](#).

The HARFG broadly endorsed the terms of reference today, and we understand they will be reviewed by ministers with this feedback and confirmed over the next few weeks. The main discussion was whether the two phase approach was necessary given the short timeframe (recommendations needed by July). We applaud MSD for fronting this and taking action. Please let us know what messages you would want CHA to be putting forward.

Items 3-5 do not yet have ministerial clearance; we thank MSD for agreeing that we can be more open in letting the sector know that we are engaged in conversations on these topics.

Housing New Zealand Stock Data Available

Portfolio statistics for Housing New Zealand Corporation properties were released on 13 February. Information contained in the spreadsheet includes three worksheets of data. The first provides a portfolio overview by geographic areas including number of properties by bedroom, occupied and vacant units, and the average weekly market rent. The second provides Household composition characteristics and the final provides tenant age profiles for the geographic areas.

To download the data please click [here](#) and scroll down to the “data on social housing” section.

Treasury Tenders for “Technical Advisors – Social Housing”

The Treasury released an [RFP through GETS on 2 February seeking a technical advisor](#) to advise the Crown on property and tenant management matters. The three areas of technical expertise sought are; 1) Property and Asset Management Advisor; 2) Development Advisor; and 3) Tenancy Management Advisor. According to the RFP timeline, responses are due 12 March and the notification of successful proposal will be provided 26 March.

The advisor(s) will be engaged to provide advice on the procurement process for the initial transactions and a redevelopment transaction; the development of a pipeline of potential future transactions. The initial transactions have been estimated between 1,000 to 2,000 units over a 12-18 month timeframe. Specific details on the advice requested is in Appendix 2 of the RFP. One item of note is that it does signal that property condition assessments will be conducted on HNZN properties being considered for transfer.

We are thinking there is a need for a set of sector-wide data on costs that the Technical Advisor(s) appointed can access. We have also thought that we should go to Treasury and ask that the Technical

Advisor(s) is directed to talk with our sector across the country through CHA. We are nervous that some CHO's are being asked by potential bidders about their operating costs, to demonstrate a level of understanding about social and affordable housing. Our concern is that such limited data may not accurately reflect the complexities of delivering high quality housing across regions and populations.

Register your interest for state housing stock

There are two avenues for pursuing state housing stock. One with HNZC as part of their normal asset sales process and the other with the Transactions Unit of the Treasury as part of the Social Housing Reform Programme. In general, the HNZC sales are empty homes with no tenants involved. It is anticipated that the Transactions Unit will generally be involved in the transfer of tenanted properties.

If you are interested in acquiring empty, surplus state houses email Housing New Zealand directly at acquisition.enquiries@hnzc.co.nz for information on their business-as-usual sales transactions. These are handled directly by HNZC as part of their ongoing asset management strategy.

If your organisation is interested in acquiring or redeveloping state houses for social housing purposes you should complete and submit the form to the Transactions Unit of the Treasury. The form can be found [here](#).

In response you will receive a form letter acknowledging receipt of your submission and will be contacted by the Transactions Unit once the areas for stock transfers are announced. If you would like to make sure you are receiving news updates from the Transactions Unit directly, submit an email to transactionsunit@treasury.govt.nz

AHI/CHA Event with Social Housing Minister Paula Bennett

The New Zealand Branch of Australian Housing Institute (AHI) and Community Housing Aotearoa (CHA) would like to invite you to a relaxed evening discussion with Social Housing Minister Paula Bennett, where she will share with us insights on the Social Housing Reform Programme and reflections on her time as Social Housing Minister. There will also be a Q&A session, so please bring along your questions. Topics may include; The role for housing professions in this new landscape; How can we partner for better community outcomes?; What are the biggest challenges for us to overcome?

CHA and AHI have recently signed an MOU. This partnership will assist in co-ordinating the learning and development for both individual and organisational members to grow and develop the capability of the

sector in NZ.

CHA will focus on the development and support of organisations that deliver social and affordable housing and related services.

AHI will focus on the professional development and formal recognition of individuals working in the social and affordable housing sector, including government and other sectors.

We look forward to seeing you on the evening of 17th of March. Exact location in Wellington tbc. Register your interest to

support@communityhousing.org.nz

Finance Minister's Speech on Tāmaki Housing

In a speech today, Finance Minister Bill English announced the governments plans for around 7,500 new homes in Tāmaki over the next decade.

Read more [here](#).

An Insight into Rough Sleeping: Central Auckland

Lifewise, Auckland City Mission and Council have launched the research document - An insight into the experience of rough sleeping in central Auckland.

View the document [here](#).

Thank you Natalie!

We send our heartfelt thanks and best wishes to Natalie Jameson – as she takes leave to look after her health. In the near term, Chris Glaudel is picking up several pieces of her work, and we are contracting for short-term pieces of work to fill the tremendous gap while Natalie is away.

MEMBERS IN THE NEWS:

Clearing the Way for New Housing

The Government's social housing policy is in action with the demolition of a block of three state houses in Orchard St, Stoke, which could be the start of a regeneration of the area.

The homes were demolished yesterday, and the Nelson Tasman

Housing Trust wants the site to build five new homes, the beginning of what it hopes will be a much bigger project.

Read the full Nelson Mail story [here](#).

Congrats to Nelson Tasman Housing Trust on the opening of their new development

The three new homes on Nelson's Kawai St were officially opened by Nelson MP and Building and Housing Minister Nick Smith on February 20. They are the culmination of a partnership between Nelson Tasman Housing Trust, Jennian Homes, Housing New Zealand and the Nelson City Council.

Read the Nelson Mail story: Three families get keys to new homes - [here](#).

Auckland Council to Take Closer Look at Boarding Houses

Monte Cecilia Housing Trust's David Zussman and Clare Aspinall from Te Kainga Oranga comment in Radio New Zealand's Morning Report story - listen [here](#).

Is Regional NZ Being Overlooked by the Bigger Centres

Nelson Tasman Housing Trust Director says regional New Zealand is once again being overlooked in favour of Auckland and Christchurch.

Listen to the full story on Radio New Zealand's Morning Report [here](#).

Trust on State Houses: We Won't Buy Unless They're Free

Neil Binnie of the Bays Community Housing Trust on Auckland's North Shore told Cabinet ministers Bill English and Paula Bennett at their first consultation meeting on state-house sales that a price of zero was the only way to fund both buying houses and redeveloping them.

Read the NZ Herald article [here](#).

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More details to follow in the next issue – an initiative to put the wheels on Retained Affordable Housing.

DIA Charities Services Reporting Workshops

New reporting requirements for registered charities become mandatory from 1 April 2015. DIA Charities Services is holding workshops throughout New Zealand from the beginning of March until the end of June, to help registered charities understand how to apply the new requirements.

Find out more [here](#).

Seminar: Housing Options for Older People in Auckland

Hosted by Auckland District Council of Social Services.

Friday 13th March, 10am-3pm (lunch provided)
Western Springs Garden Hall, 956 Great North Road, Western Springs

Find out more [here](#).

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