



Community Housing
Nga Wharerau o Aotearoa

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Media Release

Permanent affordable homes still needed

Community housing groups have welcomed a government initiative to provide more emergency housing in Auckland, but say more permanent affordable homes are also needed to provide places for people to move to.

The Minister for Social Housing, Paula Bennett announced today that Housing New Zealand will deliver 51 homes for emergency housing on Ministry of Education land – available for seven years only –and will partner with a housing provider to operate the housing.

“The Government has responded fast to create these new homes and is making good use of temporary land resources for families needing housing,” says Scott Figenshow, Chief Executive of Community Housing Aotearoa (CHA).

However, CHA says emergency housing is only part of the solution.

“While the houses are being built we ask the government to work with existing contracted Auckland providers to get the operating model right so we don't build dependency on a short-term approach.

“We think this is a great opportunity to expand the Housing First approach – the reviewable tenancy period is three years in social housing at which point in time people are potentially able to move on. The Government should be open to working with providers to ensure a mix of emergency support services and Housing First approaches that can be tailored to the needs of families in this project,” says Scott Figenshow.

He also says that this is a good follow-on from the Government announcement on September 12 that the second round of funding for a share of \$33 million directly targeted at emergency housing, had resulted in 51 proposals from 30 providers across the country providing 3032 new and existing emergency places per year.

“The average length of stay in emergency housing is still seven months – that's still too long for families who've had their lives disrupted by housing instability. Let's get on to the next stage and build more permanent social and affordable housing, let's put housing first.

“We're starting to see the tide turn with Government being proactive. We encourage them to take the quantum leap and announce a commitment to a ten year pipeline of funding to deliver housing for 50,000 more New Zealanders.

“The real gain for families will be when we see a long term sustainable housing solution. We want people to be able to move from emergency housing into long-term housing that’s warm, safe and dry and where families can get their lives back on track.”

CHA estimates at least 15,000 permanent social and affordable new homes are required by 2020 to meet demand. Currently, the resources to deliver at this scale are not forthcoming.

Scott Figenshow says the Government's announcement of \$1 billion to fund infrastructure for new housing begs for a similarly scaled plan for new investment to deliver permanent social and affordable homes.

“CHA is hopeful the Government and all parties will work together to heed the call for additional investment to deliver more permanent social and affordable homes,” he says.

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