

## ALL NEW ZEALANDERS WELL-HOUSED



### CHA Newsletter 6 April 2020

Welcome to the fortnightly newsletter of Community Housing Aotearoa *Nga Wharerau o Aotearoa*.

Included in this issue – progress being made on sector issues, meetings this week for providers, looking after our wellbeing, guidance for foodbanks, HUD update, and housing in the recovery.

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### Progress on sector issues



Stay safe everyone – it seems like the lockdown is achieving its aims in preventing the spread.

Good progress is being made on the list of issues you've identified as requiring clarification, and we're working through them with providers and with officials from the relevant government agencies.

We're also thinking about the practicalities of what our sector will be able to do when the Alert Level drops from Level 4 to Level 3. What kinds of activity will providers be able to do, albeit in line with safety protocols.

Further afield, this pandemic has made clear the importance of home as the best defence. We will be making the case strongly for good quality social and affordable housing as a key plank in our country's economic recovery.

Scott Figenshow, CHA Chief Executive

## Upcoming meetings for community housing providers

Providers are invited to two Zoom meetings this week to share information and discuss issues arising. They're being held from 2pm until 3.30pm on **Tuesday 7 April** and **Thursday 9 April**.

Please contact CHA Senior Programme Manager [David Zussman](#) or Deputy Chief Executive [Chris Glaudel](#) for Zoom links to the meetings.

The meetings are for community housing providers but you do not need to be a member of CHA to attend.

## All of Government Welfare Factsheet

A Government [factsheet](#) on welfare is now available online - feel free to share this widely with your employees, tenants and residents, and anyone else you are dealing with.

The factsheet provides advice on looking after ourselves and our whānau, and contact details for more information. Phone numbers for each region's **Civil Defense Emergency Management Group** are an important resource to support people who have an urgent need for essential supplies and they don't have the means or transport to get it themselves.

If you're not sure what assistance may be available, or you don't know who to contact for help, phone the Government Helpline on 0800 779 997 (8am – 10pm, 7 days a week).

## Free webinar on outbound calling

A 30-minute webinar is being offered free of charge to community housing providers to support your efforts to keep in touch with people.

The webinar is being facilitated by Duncan Holland, Director at [TotalRisk](#), and he advises that it will be available free for the duration of the Covid-19 emergency.

The session outlines strategies for successful outbound calling and keeping yourself safe, particularly when working with uncertainty.

He is also available free of charge for personal safety advice.

The webinar can be booked by [emailing TotalRisk](#).

## MSD guidance for foodbanks and community food services

MSD has issued [guidance and information](#) for foodbanks, food rescue and other community food services operating in the COVID-19 Alert Level 4 environment.

This is essential reading, and includes:

- Providing food as an essential service
- Guidance and information on safety
- CDEM support for foodbanks, including recovery of costs.

MSD is supporting [Kore Hiakai Zero Hunger Collective](#) to establish best practice guidelines for CDEM groups to work with the foodbank and food rescue sector. These should be issued by early next week.

MSD is also supporting Kore Hiakai to collect information on which foodbanks, food rescue and other community food services are operating, including trends and issues. Kore Hiakai will be reporting this through to MSD on a regular basis.

## How is your organisation maintaining services?

What creative things are you doing to continue providing essential housing services for your tenants and others you work with? We know this sector is determined, innovative and community-minded - and we'd love to hear how you're going the extra mile to both maintain services and keep staff safe.

Please email [Cushla Managh](#) at CHA with examples of what your organisation is doing, and we'll feature these in upcoming issues of this newsletter.

## HUD update on role and work



*Andrew Crisp, Chief Executive of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), has sent out the following message:*

"Kia ora koutou katoa. I hope that you and your whānau are keeping safe and well during these challenging times.

In recent days I've had questions from several of you, so I thought it might be useful to update you all on some of the key work that HUD has been involved in to give everyone visibility. What follows is not an exhaustive list and I would like to acknowledge that many of you, and your people, have also played an important role in this work, and in some cases more so than HUD.

HUD's role in providing stewardship for the housing and urban development system continues, as does the work that we do in partnership with others (agency-partners, housing and service providers, iwi and Māori organisations) to ensure that the most vulnerable people in our communities receive the assistance they need.

Together with the Ministry of Social Development (MSD), Kāinga Ora, Te Puni Kōkiri, iwi and Māori groups, we have been working at pace to find more accommodation for homeless people and whānau to provide them with safe and secure housing during the COVID-19 lockdown. So far, working with Housing First and other community providers, we have found more than 700 places across New Zealand for people sleeping rough or in unsafe accommodation and are providing appropriate support for them while in those places. We are continuing to work with our partners to find more places to enable our most vulnerable people to practice physical distancing or self-isolation.

Together with MSD and housing and service providers we've developed [FAQs](#), [provider guidance](#) and [a letter of proof](#) for providers' staff, to ensure those supporting this work can continue to operate safely as Essential Services.

Through the Community Housing Regulatory Authority (CHRA), we are taking a flexible approach to reporting and monitoring of registered Community Housing Providers so they can focus on the critical work to house and support vulnerable New Zealanders.

As a priority we are working alongside iwi and Māori providers to attend to housing needs for our most vulnerable people in communities and connecting with whānau, hapū, and iwi to increase the safety and wellbeing of all.

We have developed policy and legislation to support the Government's announcement of a residential rent freeze and greater protection for tenants. [These changes](#) came into effect on 23 March and are key to ensuring people and whānau can stay housed and supported during the lockdown period.

Through the [Construction Sector Accord](#) and alongside MBIE, we are working with construction industry leaders on initiatives to support the sector and its workforce so when the pandemic is over, key construction and infrastructure projects can be progressed quickly to help with the nation's recovery.

We continue to work on the development of a [Progressive Home Ownership](#) scheme. The work to develop a [Government Policy Statement](#) on Housing and Urban Development has been put on hold as it requires extensive community engagement, which is not appropriate in the current environment.

It has been heart-warming to see people, communities and workplaces come together to support each other in these challenging circumstances. I am aware that much work still needs to be done to support vulnerable people and whānau and you will have initiatives and ideas that can make an impact in your community."

## Kay Saville-Smith takes up HUD role

Congratulations are in order for leading researcher Dr Kay Saville-Smith, who has been appointed as HUD's Chief Science Advisor. She has accepted a two-year appointment for two days a week, and will remain director at CRESA and also lead the Affordable Housing for Generations, Building Better Homes Towns and Cities National Science Challenge.

## Housing in the recovery: Advancing your 'Shovel Ready' developments

HUD has advised that the community housing provider sector will have a separate process for evaluating advancement of 'shovel ready' social and affordable housing developments, and that we should not use the Construction Sector Accord process announced for infrastructure projects last week.

As a first step, CHA is working with HUD to prepare a list of your social and affordable housing developments which could broadly fall into two camps:

- new builds, for social or affordable housing which are not already under consideration by the HUD new supply team;

- attracting existing stock into social or affordable housing supply eg, from Air bnb.

Please email [Scott Figenshow](#) or [Ken Allen](#) if you're able to share information about your projects. Scott and Ken Allen will want to engage individually with providers to collate information that will enable us to prepare a sector view of projects.

While many of you will have projects that the HUD New Supply team are already aware of, we also want to include project-level information on those that haven't fit within the existing criteria. At present, the purpose of this exercise is to assist government in understanding both the volume of investment that may be required, but also the nature and shape of potential investment. There will then be a process to evaluate specific proposals and HUD will communicate more information on how organisations can be involved with this.

We see this as a good opportunity to assist with the advancement of housing as an essential part of our nation's economic recovery from Covid-19. After all, this crisis has highlighted the primacy of home as a front line defense against the pandemic.