

MEDIA RELEASE

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Government's housing Budget announcement is half of what is needed

"The Government's announcement of an additional 8000 public and transitional houses falls well short of what's needed to fix New Zealand's housing crisis," says Scott Figenshow, Chief Executive of Community Housing Aotearoa (CHA).

He was commenting on the Government's housing Budget announcements released this afternoon (<https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/8000-more-public-houses-be-delivered>).

Mr Figenshow says the money allocated for additional public housing is half of what's needed to make sure all New Zealanders are well-housed and, at best, it should be viewed as a down payment on the Government's Homelessness Action Plan. It needs to contribute to an affordable housing-led economic recovery by being matched with a commitment to bringing forward the country's construction spend for major housing upgrades as well new affordable and social housing supply.

"What's needed is a permanent housing investment fund of \$2.5 billion over 10 years to allow community housing providers to work with iwi, churches, philanthropic investors and communities to turn land into neighbourhoods where people can thrive.

"It's not about competing with the work being done by government agencies such as Kāinga Ora. It's about recognising the gaps where Māori, Pacifica and community housing providers can provide good, affordable homes for people in need.

"Many families will have experienced job losses, evictions or other forms of material hardship during New Zealand's COVID-19 pandemic lockdown and the number of people on the waiting list for social housing will almost certainly have risen.

"We've been calling for 15,000 additional social housing places since 2014. If we had those places now, that would go some way to reducing the misery of homelessness that we are continuing to see. The UN Special Rapporteur on the right to adequate housing, Leilani Farha, emphasised the importance of good homes as a fundamental human right during her visit to New Zealand in February – and, sadly, today's announcement doesn't get us where we need to be."

Mr Figenshow says the success of New Zealand's public health response to COVID-19 showed the importance of having a home, somewhere people could live safely during the lockdown period.

"The Government acted in a humanitarian way to ensure everyone had somewhere to stay, and the challenge now is to transition that commitment into ongoing permanent homes. The answer to our

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housing problem is to increase the supply of permanent, affordable good homes across the entire continuum of housing need, whether that's through renting or home ownership."

Mr Figenshow says the community housing sector has begun identifying 'shovel-ready' housing projects.

"With just 12 of the 57 registered community housing providers polled, we have already been able to give the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development preliminary information on 63 housing developments across 13 regions, totalling 2638 homes with a total development cost of \$783 million – and we're just getting started. We are optimistic that as more providers come forward with their local supply solutions we will be able to assist Government in delivering the homes in today's announcement so that next year's Budget can further the job."

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