



**ALL NEW
ZEALANDERS
WELL-HOUSED**



**CHA Newsletter 16 April
2020**

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CHA Newsletter 16 April 2020

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

Included in this issue – Government describes what alert level 3 will look like, upcoming meetings for community housing providers, and we hear from providers keeping in contact with tenants.

How an affordable housing-led recovery would move us toward all New Zealanders well-housed



Covid-19 has challenged the way we support people at home, and I want to acknowledge the way all of you have risen to this challenge. The rapidly changing circumstances have meant finding new ways of engaging with tenants and residents while protecting everyone's health and safety.

In a few days we will find out what the Government's planning for the next stage of our collective response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Your actions to date, in these hard first weeks, have laid an excellent foundation for the work to follow. Here at CHA we will continue to support your work to provide good homes for people in need.

available

Free webinar on
outbound calling

Invitation to participate:
survey on green building
design

In the news

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We are keeping one eye on the country's future recovery. Without doubt, affordable housing needs to be a key plank of the Government's recovery strategy. People need homes they can afford, and this is critical to New Zealand's future wellbeing.

That means:

- ensuring that everyone housed during this crisis is able to stay housed, and is not allowed to move back into homelessness
- rebuilding of our housing system through permanent affordable homes to replace short-term accommodation
- boosting the number of permanent affordable homes delivered by the community housing sector
- providing 'shovel ready' affordable and social housing developments ready for blended public, philanthropic and private investment.

Scott Figenshow, CHA Chief Executive

Upcoming meeting for community housing providers

Providers are invited to a Zoom meeting at **2pm on Friday 17 April** to share information and discuss issues arising.

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

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

Government reveals detail of moving to alert level 3

Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern has detailed today what moving from alert level 4 to alert level 3 will mean.

The Government will announce on Monday 20 April what will happen when the current lockdown - alert level 4 - is due to expire on Wednesday 22 April. There is still no indication whether the country will move to level 3 at this point.

The major difference between alert levels 4 and 3 involves a shift between essential activity to safe activity.

The Prime Minister's media release is [available here](#).

Detailed information on level 3 is [available here](#).

The Government's updated chart of the different alert levels, including more detail at each level, is [available here](#).

Media coverage includes:

- [Radio New Zealand](#)
- [Stuff website](#)
- [New Zealand Herald](#)
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Video: Ōtautahi Community Housing Trust in touch with tenants

Martin Pearce, Tenancy Operations Manager at Ōtautahi Community Housing Trust, [talks in this short video](#) about the work underway to stay in contact with tenants during the Covid-19 lockdown.

More than 2400 calls have been made to tenants to see if they have plans in place and are well-supported in their communities. Contact has been increased where needed, and OCHT has also created a mobile wellbeing service as well as sending regular letters and information to tenants.

Connected and providing support to tenants



Stephen Hart, Operations Manager at CORT, says his organisation swung into action as soon as it knew the lockdown was coming.

As well as paring its maintenance work back to the minimum so that only urgent work was undertaken, it identified tenants likely to be more vulnerable than others, either physically or because they might find it difficult to communicate or to understand, or because they had few other supports.

CORT then focused on making sure its 360 tenants spread across Auckland understood what was going to happen under Covid-19 lockdown. It wrote to all tenants beforehand and followed up with phone calls and text messages to make sure they had received the information and knew what support would be available.

“We called everyone in the first week of lockdown and then we’ve just been starting again from the top of the list,” says Stephen Hart. “Where we’ve got tenants who are vulnerable, we make a point of calling every couple of days to see how they’re going.”

CORT also checked in with various support agencies to confirm if their services were continuing during the lockdown and how tenants could access these. Any rent arrears have been put to one side during the crisis.

“We understand the situation people are in. It’s hugely stressful so we’re just focusing on providing as much support as we can.”

Stephen Hart says CORT has also arranged food deliveries for people unable to get to the supermarket, and has created a fund to support tenants.

“We knew that government agencies were being overloaded with calls from people needing assistance and there are a lot of people who don’t have a community landlord who are now in a position where they need to draw on public services. We didn’t want our tenants to be short of food because they couldn’t get a food grant so the fund we’ve set up means we’ve been able to make a payment to them overnight when needed. Just a small percentage of tenants have taken it up but it’s one of the ways we’ve been able to support people.”

CORT has a network of volunteers who can phone for a weekly chat with tenants, just to see how they are going without their usual routines. It also sends out a newsletter and a poetry competition.

“The social side is important. Many of our tenants don’t have email, so mail and texting is still the best way to reach them.

Around 90% of CORT’s tenants are in one-bedroom units, although CORT also provides some homes for young families. Stephen Hart says the organisation had just finished building 19 homes prior to lockdown, and it is slowly filling them in very urgent situations, including a family who were living in their car.

CORT has 10 staff, with one person working from the office to look after administration and the others working from home. Stephen Hart says staff are using Microsoft Teams to stay connected. There is a catch-up each morning, where staff members will present on something close to them, perhaps share their whakapapa, share recipes or a joke, or offer a virtual tour of their home.

“We’ve been doing some of the things that might happen in the office,” he says. “For instance, encouraging people to take some time out during the day to go for a walk, or to video chat with their colleagues on things that aren’t related to work. We’ve also called in some external support, someone that each of us can bounce ideas off, discuss things and reflect on what’s happening.”

He says all of the organisation's systems were in the cloud by last year, which has made responding to the pandemic easier. CORT also had an emergency response policy in place well before the pandemic, which laid out the actions CORT has since undertaken.

More information about CORT is [available here](#).

Below: photo of CORT housing.



Kāinga Ora's contact with tenants

Kāinga Ora has provided the following update:

Although Kāinga Ora offices are closed, they are still open working remotely and here to help their customers.

They are calling all customers to check on their wellbeing. In the call they are having a chat to them about COVID-19 and how it may be impacting them. If they need additional support, they are working with partners to connect them to services that may help.

The feedback from customers is positive and they are happy Kāinga Ora is calling. If customers need to get in contact with Kāinga Ora they should call the Customer Service Freephone 0800 801 601.

Some of the great feedback Kāinga Ora has received from customers:

“I got a courtesy call from my Kāinga Ora manager. She's the best, our 1st day in lockdown.”

“My nana got a lovely call from her TM today. He has been in touch with her regularly since he became her manager but since the lockdown he has been checking in on her every few days.”

“Just got a lovely phone call from my tenancy managers. I'm a single mum and she just wanted to check in with us and make sure we are ok.”

CHA and Te Matapihi presentations to parliamentary select committee

CHA and Te Matapihi had an opportunity to present their thoughts on the Government's Urban Development Bill to Parliament's Environment Select Committee last week.

Thirty years of a lack of investment in genuinely affordable housing has given our country homelessness and housing stress at an unprecedented scale. CHA believes the Government has a real opportunity to turn this around with its Urban Development Bill - but in its current form we fear it will not achieve its stated aims.

The written CHA submission is [available here](#).

CHA Chief Executive Scott Figenshow appeared by Zoom before the parliamentary select committee, followed by Te Matapihi General Manager Wayne Knox.

Their presentations start at 2 hours 36 minutes (2'36") into the recording of the select committee submissions, and end at 2 hours 52 minutes (2'52"). They are then followed by a submission from The Salvation Army.

The full recording is [available here](#) - you will need to scroll through to the point where the CHA and Te Matapihi presentations begin.

Construction resource available

CHA is a member of the Construction Industry Council and this resource should be useful as providers engage with their construction teams as alert levels reduce.

The Construction Industry Council has published an initial working copy of the COVID-19 Standard for New Zealand Construction Operations earlier this week. Protocols to help action the Standard are intended to be published by the end of the week.

[Details are available here](#).

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](#).

Invitation to participate: survey on green building design

A PhD student at the civil and natural resources engineering department within the University of Canterbury is seeking survey responses.

Fatma Abdelaal, who's also working at the New Zealand Green Building Council, is conducting a survey on green building design and assessment in New Zealand, and Building Information Modelling (BIM) and/or Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) methodology practices in the industry.

She is keen to develop a clearer picture of current practices. She says the survey will take less than 10 minutes to complete and is anonymous, unless a participant is willing to be interviewed.

The survey, including Fatma Abdelaal's contact details, is [available here](#).

In the news

- [Megan Woods: Homeless and vulnerable getting housed](#)
- [Accommodation secured for 50 homeless Northlanders](#)
- [\\$650 million 'shovel ready' project list submitted to Government](#)
- [Wellington City Mission to support Wellington Night Shelter during pandemic](#)