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CHA Newsletter 18 May 2020

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

Included in this issue – Budget 2020: what does it mean for CHPs? Operating safely at Alert Level 2 - guidance and video resources. And life during lockdown at He Korowai Trust.

Budget 2020 - what does it mean for CHPs?



As you all know, the Government's 2020 [Budget was announced](#) last Thursday (14 May), including the Government's housing spend.

Here at CHA we've been doing some work to understand what the Budget might mean for community housing providers, and [in this short video I outline some of the opportunities for our sector](#).

Media coverage of Budget-related housing includes:

- [Radio NZ](#)
- [Stuff](#)
- [NZ Herald](#)

The Homelessness Action Plan is [available here](#).

Scott Figenshow, CHA Chief Executive

Budget 2020 - CHA analysis



The housing appropriations for the 2020/21 financial year are a continuation of the previously announced approaches and priorities. No transformational changes are indicated at this time.

The implementation of the Homelessness Action Plan is a clear priority and CHA supports this effort to ensure homelessness is rare, brief and non-recurring.

High level numbers include a commitment to 6,000 additional public homes and 2,000 transitional housing places. How many of these 8,000 are targeted for new builds is not indicated.

[In our media release](#) last week, we indicated our initial assessment of the housing Budget is that it was half of what is needed to see all New Zealanders well-housed. With the opportunity to further review the details, our assessment appears to be correct.

You can read the full analysis [here](#). To review the numbers yourself, visit the Treasury's [budget page](#).

Operating safely at Alert Level 2 - guidance and video resources

CHA has developed updated guidance for community housing providers operating at COVID-19 Alert Level 2.

[The guidance document is available here](#).

We have also prepared a series of short videos to assist you at Alert Level 2. The videos feature CHA Programme Manager Clare Aspinall providing best practice advice across a range of topics.

As many of you know, Clare Aspinall is a public health researcher specialising in homelessness, housing and health. She has previously worked as a public health advisor in homelessness, housing and health, and as a public health nurse specialising in communicable diseases has experience of planning for and responding to pandemics.

The videos reiterate the importance of recording the right information about people on your premises - including staff, residents/tenants, tradespeople and visitors. That includes **names, phone numbers and email addresses**.

Please feel free to share the following videos within your networks.

- [Health and safety in your workplace](#)
- [Moving into shared accommodation](#)
- [What to do if someone becomes unwell](#)
- [Information for visitors](#) - a video you might like to share with visitors to your premises.

For more information, contact [Clare Aspinall](#).

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has developed this [guidance for operating at Alert Level 2](#).

Upcoming sector meeting

Providers are invited to the following online Zoom meeting this week:

- **2pm Friday 22 May** - General discussion: operating at Alert Level 2

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

Sector meetings are being held each week. They are for community housing providers but you do not need to be a member of CHA to attend.

He Korowai Trust: Life during lockdown in emergency accommodation

Ricky Houghton, Chief Executive of He Korowai Trust, lived in a 40-bed emergency house in Kaitaia during the COVID-19 lockdown period – and says he learnt more about people’s housing needs in those four weeks than in the past 40 years.

[He talks in this video about what life in lockdown was like.](#)

As a result of the discussions that took place during lockdown, Ricky Houghton says he’s developed a business case which he believes offers a real solution for families in housing need.

[In this second video](#) he talks about how the business case would create a pathway into permanent affordable home ownership for very low income families, with the right supports in place to ensure success.

The business case requests a \$22 million loan from Government to turn the vision into reality, and it has been sent off for consideration.

Being mindful of tenant wellbeing

Now that we are in Alert Level 2 please be mindful of the potential stresses and strains that may be experienced by people engaged with your service, residents, tenants and staff. As a starting point, it's good to think about the common causes of stress, such as (Mental Health Foundation 2020):

- Catching or spreading COVID-19
- Concerns about how long the pandemic will last
- Work and home and parenting stressors and leaving the mirumiru/bubble
- Feelings around isolation and redefining connections to various communities, including work
- Loss of extended supports
- Fears around whether they can cope during this time
- Worries about finances, job security, unemployment, and feeding the whānau/family.

Day to day, watch out for the signs and triggers of (mental) distress. Be kind when discussing rent arrears or other payments that may be required by your organisation. Monthly bills such as rates, water rates and electricity may be a shock and difficult to deal with – they are likely to be higher than normal because everyone has spent so much time at home.

Make sure that you know where to go to if you or another person needs additional help or support. In CHA's [Alert Level 2 Guidance](#) there are links to resources and contact points to help you and your organisation promote wellbeing and access support if required.

The links below are good places to start:

- **Getting through together** – Whāia E Tātou Te Pae Tawhiti is a national mental health and wellbeing campaign brought to you by the team at All Right? – Community and Public Health (a division of the Canterbury District Health Board) and the Mental Health Foundation of New Zealand. This campaign will help New Zealanders get through the COVID-19 outbreak – together. [More information is here.](#)
- **Workplace leaders:** Guidance and tips on how you can talk about work and COVID-19 with staff; effectively communicate; reduce and minimise stress; and how to care for yourself and your employees who may or may not be distressed. [More information is here.](#)

NILS extended to include migrants working in New Zealand

Good Shepherd has advised that they have been able to extend their COVID NILS no interest loans further to include migrants working in New Zealand. This is in addition to an earlier change that allows COVID NILS to be used for bills and debt.

"We know there are many migrants in New Zealand on work visas who have found themselves in extremely difficult circumstances with significantly reduced incomes, and we are keen to support them. These people can now apply for a loan for essentials such as car repairs, and urgent relief such as bills. If approved, our loan workers will work with the clients to make a plan to repay their loan when they get back to work."

More information is available here on NLS programme is on the [CHA website](#) including a factsheet and a flier to promote the programme.

Public housing funding report

Community Housing Aotearoa hosted a Zoom meeting for all registered community housing providers on 13 May. The purpose was to introduce the key points from the Public Housing Funding Review 2019 report in advance of a follow up meeting with HUD on 27 May. We were pleased to have representatives from 25 of the 54 registered providers attend. You can review the [report here](#) and the [presentation here](#).

We were joined by our colleagues from HUD, with Helen Potiki (DCE - Housing and Urban Settings) providing an update on staffing and workstreams. Eleven officials across policy, funding, regulation and communications also listened to the discussion of the report findings and CHA's new supply workstream.

Julia Pearce with HUD said the meeting with community housing providers to talk about the Public Housing Funding Review was valuable in highlighting the findings of the report, understanding the issues as they see them and gaining insights to help inform the policy adjustments HUD is looking at.

Scott Figenshow introduced the workstream on identifying new supply projects. The collection tool was refined with 12 providers and distributed to all registered CHPs last week. The responses from those 12, plus a lender and developer, documented 63 projects with 2,638 that could provide urgently needed social and affordable homes across all tenures.

Chris Glaudel provided an overview of the Public Housing Funding Review 2019 report and some of the key points including:

- Total cost of new PH exceeds market rent
- Upfront Funding and Operating Supplement have a similar cost per unit
- Data limitations do not allow benchmarking
- Five policy areas for further consideration

The group was then asked for questions and feedback to inform HUD for the follow-up session. If you have any comments for CHA to pass along to HUD, please send them to [Chris Glaudel](#).