



## **Life When Renting Mid-term Summit**

'How do we generate a rental sector and rental stock that is responsive to older tenants?' was the theme of the summit held on 30 May 2017 in Tauranga. Over 60 people attended, including older people and others from a wide range of organisations from the Bay of Plenty, Hamilton, Auckland, Wellington and Marlborough. The summit was an opportunity to report back on early findings.

The highlight of the lively day was the guest address by Dr Rob Wiener, Executive Director of California Coalition for Rural Housing and Continuing Lecturer in community and regional development at the University of California, Davis. Rob presented four best practice case studies of Californian rental housing for very low-income older people. These showcased universal design and adaptability, services and amenities enriched housing, intergenerational housing and housing for special-needs seniors. Rob also spoke about the National Neighbors Silver programme, which helps older people deal with economic insecurity, financial fraud and abuse.

Dr Natalie Jackson's cohort analysis of changes in home ownership and renting based on census data from 1986-2013 showed the clear decline in home ownership and rise in renting in every territorial authority area. Among the greatest declines in home ownership and increases in renting, particularly for the 65+ age group, are in Tauranga and Western Bay of Plenty, case study areas for the Life When renting project.

Professor Jackie Cumming, Dr Janet McDonald and Megan Pledger's analysis of NZ Health Survey data showed older renters are more likely than older home owners to report chronic conditions such as diabetes, asthma and angina. Renters are also more likely to report depression, anxiety disorder and chronic pain.

Interviews with older renters and service providers in Tauranga, Western Bay of Plenty and Auckland are continuing, with Dr. Bev James, Prof Robin Kearns and his team, and Dr. Fiona Cram. Early findings are that moving from home-ownership to renting is common, mainly due to financial or personal 'shocks'. Most rent from private landlords, and they have varying experiences. The majority are on limited, fixed incomes and rely on the Accommodation Supplement to assist with their housing costs. Some struggle to find warm and suitable housing that is affordable and accessible. Others do not feel secure. The most

common reasons for having to move are unaffordable rents, and the house they are living in is sold.

Fiona's work with kaumātua highlighted how housing is part of the 'cultural positioning system' for kaumātua. She noted kaumātua input into designing papakainga housing and the use of innovative lifetime design.

Dr. Elsie Ho and her team are conducting interviews with older Asian new settlers. Elsie noted the importance of cultural concepts of elder care, as well as older Asians' appreciation of living close to services, public transport and family.

Dr. Kay Saville-Smith talked about the challenges and opportunities the ageing population pose for landlords. Many landlords are not aware of the demand for housing from older tenants, the subsidies available to assist older tenants, and how landlords might be able to work together with service providers. Those housing providers and property managers interviewed so far are interested in developing good practice around providing accommodation for older renters.

Adrienne von Tunzelmann, member of the Ageing Well Governance group, closed the summit, setting the research in the context of Ageing Well National Science Challenge. She congratulated the Tauranga/Western Bay of Plenty community in leading the way in contributing to and leveraging from the Challenge.

Over 60 people attended the event, which was supported by Priority One, the Population Ageing Technical Advisory Group (PATAG) and SmartGrowth. The Life When Renting team has prepared six working papers for PATAG, available on <http://www.smartgrowthbop.org.nz/research/new-research/>

These are:

- Older People and the Rental Market in the Western Bay of Plenty Sub-region
- Older People and the Rental Market in the Western Bay of Plenty Sub-region: emerging themes and issues from in-depth interviews
- Home Ownership, Renting and Residence in a Home Owned by a Family Trust WBOP & Total NZ by birth cohort
- The Housing Older People Would Choose: A review of selected NZ research
- Tenure Security for Older Tenants: A Country Review of Policy, Programmes and Regulation
- Cohousing: An enduring idea but is it a new opportunity for older people?

Presentations from the summit will be available on <http://renting.goodhomes.co.nz/>

Or, directly contact Nina: [nina@cresa.co.nz](mailto:nina@cresa.co.nz) for copies of the presentations.