



Kia ora, I'm Scott Figenshow, Chief Executive of Community Housing Aotearoa

I'm honoured to be with you today, to share our sector's journey to understand and use the Human Rights approach to adequate housing. We're building consensus that **this will help** New Zealand meet its commitment to achieving a number of the Sustainable Development Goals and see all New Zealanders Well Housed.



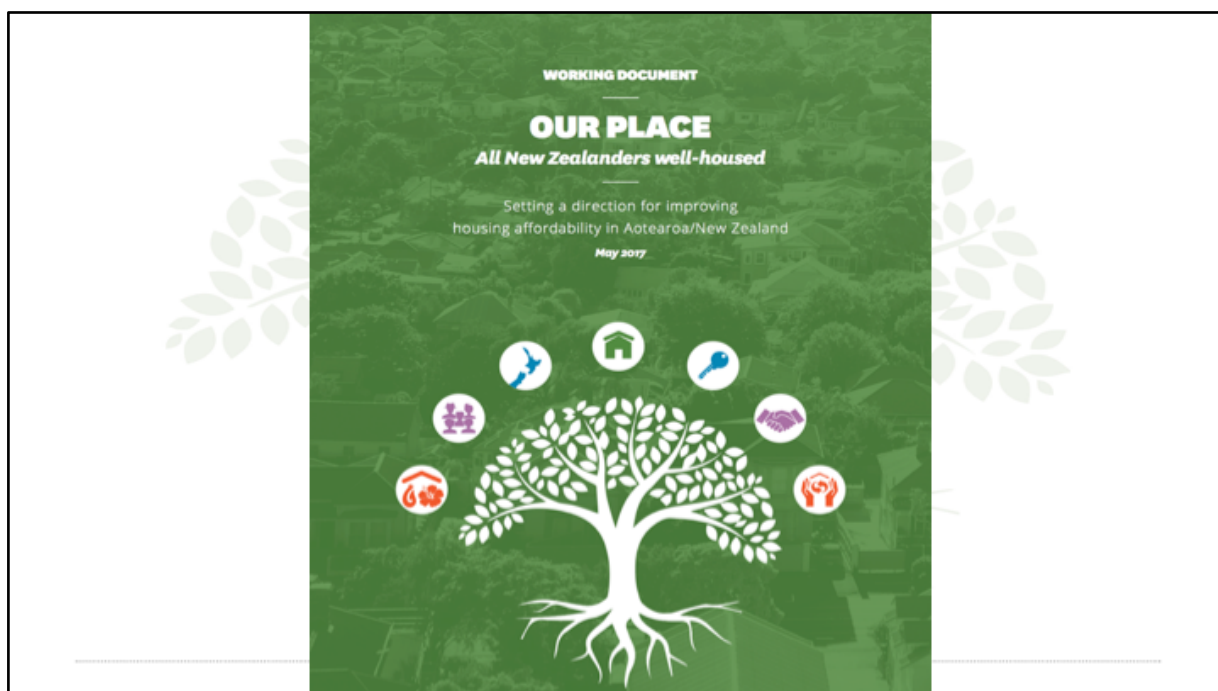
“ All New Zealanders
well-housed ”

Community Housing Aotearoa, the peak body supporting the growth and development of New Zealand's Community Housing Sector.

- 80 provider members house approximately 25,000 people nationally across 13,000 homes.
- 23 partner members include local councils and commercial partners.

We are driven by our vision to see all NZers well-housed, as we understand that good housing underpins people's wellbeing and gives them the platform they need to realise their full potential and live healthy, fulfilling lives.

We believe that the community housing sector has potential to play a far more important role in achieving better wellbeing outcomes.



In order to see all New Zealanders well-housed we have developed 'Our Place' - a plan to grow the sector and put the policy settings in place to support the sector deliver more homes contributing to all NZers well housed.

In 'Our Place' we use two frameworks – the Housing Continuum and the Human Rights definition of 'adequate housing'.



This strategic approach has been one of the unifying actions of our work as a peak body over the past 3 years. It is bearing fruit, in that the current government is starting to pick up several aspects that come from the sector, including Housing First, and the housing affordability continuum




The housing continuum helps to simplify the housing ‘ecosystem’ and identify the roles the community housing sector plays well, as other interventions that are needed to address housing need and achieve adequate housing.

The new language used by our current Minister of Housing and Urban Development, Hon Phil Twyford, refers to “Public Housing” to cover housing with an income related rent subsidy, whether provided by a community housing provider or the state through Housing New Zealand.


MEASURES FOR WELL-HOUSED

Goal
15,000 new social and 85,000 new affordable homes by 2030.




Habitable

- Severe housing deprivation reduced to zero by 2022.
- All housing to meet a habitability standard.




Affordable

- Households pay no more than around 30% of their gross income in rent or mortgage.




Accessible

- Every household is able to secure permanent, accessible housing appropriate to their needs.



Security of Tenure

- Households are able to maintain housing for the duration they choose.



Culturally Appropriate

- All households have a choice of housing appropriate to their cultural needs.

The Human Rights framework of adequate housing with the seven dimensions gives us an internationally agreed standard against which to judge ‘well-housed’ – the five main ones show up on the slide, and area accompanied by location and access to services.

We use the Human Rights definition because:

- As an internationally agreed benchmark to which NZ has signed-up to, it gives us a strong moral mandate
- It covers a broader range of factors than just physical condition of housing or affordability
- It creates a framework against which indicators can be developed and which can therefore be tracked and reported against

The SDGs create a framework around the implementation of a number of key Human Rights commitments – including the right to adequate housing. We find this to be a practical way to engage. For example we are working with the NZ Green Building Council, Lifemark and Prefab NZ on how their rating systems for Homestar and Lifemark can be the measurement tools we use to assess our performance on “Habitable”.

We know we have a rights-based strategy when...

Legislation is in place that makes housing a legal right

It acknowledges and addresses inequalities experienced by Māori

It prioritises those in greatest need; ensures adequate supply across the continuum

The people and communities we serve would say they are involved in its development

Iwi, local government, civil society and business affirm partnership with Govt

It includes goals and timelines that are monitored and reported on independently

It affirms the roles that each actor is to play in meeting housing need

The coalition Government in New Zealand is making some great inroads into tackling the housing crisis in NZ that sees 41,000 people homeless or living in substandard housing, and it is pledging to develop a New Zealand Housing Strategy.

Whilst CHA and the sector welcomes this, we call on the Government to follow the example of Canada and develop this housing strategy using a Human Rights framework and building on the recommendations of the UN Rapporteur on Adequate Housing.

Adopting the Human Rights approach would require the Government and its officials to adopt a very different approach than used in the usual policy process.

If this is truly a “New Zealand Housing Strategy” it needs to involve all of New Zealand in its development – including those that are the victims of the current failing system. It needs to be developed as a true partnership between all the key stakeholders

Only by developing a Human Rights based NZ housing strategy and developing it through genuine partnerships, especially with those with lived experience of homelessness and inadequate housing, can New Zealand hope to meet the SDG

Target of ensuring access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing.



Bringing it all together- this is shaping our new Strategic Plan for CHA as an organisation. Think of a large circle for our yet to be created national housing strategy. Our Place is the community housing sector’s part inside that bigger circle, offering a vision, and a rights-based approach plus a set of key principles to build a solid policy foundation, along side all of the genuinely affordable homes our providers deliver

And within the sector, you have a peak body, convening conversations and supporting its development. With aligned vision across all three layers.



And this is our Why

Thanks to the kids at Waimahia Inlet in South Auckland, who opened a new playground last Saturday. This new neighbourhood of 280 homes, from market through to affordable shared ownership and rent to buy, along with social rentals. This is the reality of mixed tenure communities, when they are delivered by community housing providers leading the development.

Thanks for your time today. I look forward to the discussion.