

**Minutes of the Christchurch Housing Forum**  
**31 July 2013**  
**Oxford Tce Baptist Hall**

**Present:** There was a full house.

**Facilitated by** Helen Gatonyi – Tenants Protection Association

**Presentations:** Glen Sowrey – CEO Housing New Zealand Corporation  
Ali Brunel - TPA Summary of Research  
Gail Brislaine – Depression Support Network

**Presentation from Mr Glen Sowrey CEO Housing New Zealand Corporation:**

Tenancy Services Team has done a really good job for caring for tenants around the city. However there is more we can do. I have briefed the leadership team of the need to elevate activity here in Christchurch to be one of the major priorities for the organisation in the next five years or so.

The senior leadership team are here today at this forum. It is important they are engaged with community to achieve all we can be.

Journey we have been on: April saw us conclude insurance settlement – major undertaking – 27 insurance companies provided cover – complex and large scale it is the single biggest insurance claim in NZ history. The Insurance Companies wanted to repair house by house (materially that would slow down ability to do repairs). We now have tremendous freedom to work with pace and speed to repair and rebuild in the city.

We looked at HNZN role in recovery – Big ambitions for HNZN role – I see a Government Agency getting on and doing stuff. Lots of people in need lots to do; we clearly have significant responsibility to lead that regeneration. Budget is 1.2B repairs and rebuilding in greater Christchurch and Canterbury area.

- By 2015 we will have 700 new houses built and repaired all our stock (this is a stretch target) – however monthly meetings to monitor progress show we are currently ahead of targets.
- Property holdings – houses – 215 red-zone properties (no repair) – removing those properties all will be cleared soon.
- We have 5,500 properties. Green zone 650TC1; 3400 TC2; 1100 TC3; Significant property out east ground damage quite challenging to repair foundations (Doing trials - quickest and most efficient way to do repairs, most cost efficient, partnered with Southern Response, MBIE and Arrow International to do a whole lot of trials). Trialling different methodologies, systems of repair to find out the smartest way of doing this part of our leadership role we believe that that IP or intellectual property that we generate is going to be every bit applicable to private home owners – what we learn we make available to everyone so all can achieve good outcomes.
  
- Insulation where we have a Brick veneer property and have to take brick off; insulate walls as well as ceilings. This is a complex job and significant part of negotiations with insurance companies.
- Repairs that we done to date: 27000 emergencies. 185 next Waimakariri District  
First of the new 700 new builds nearly complete. One of the big opportunities out of this

event is the ability to regenerate – we have an inefficiency of land houses that are uneconomic to repair. Insurance proceeds and our own balance sheet give us the opportunity to build new capacity. St Martins demolished 3brm replace with 2 two bedroom units – warm modern open next month by the Minister of Housing.

Rest of country typical HNZN stock is a 3 bedroom house average age 43 years old. NZ live in now a very different place – finding we have too many 3bedroom not enough 1-2 bedroom properties. 50% demand in Christchurch is for one and two bedroom units and the other end 4-5 bedroom homes for large families. Massive investment programme in Christchurch and right across the country to match changing customer demand. As an example, Manchester Street, large size land run down building. We demolished project – building a number of brand new apartments – construction in the next couple of months; 8-9 units were on the site, 26 new units, 11 for HNZN rest for third sector social/affordable housing as well. We are looking at mixed tenure developments salt and peppering of social housing rather than intensive population. I have spent time in Australia – looking at advances in the regeneration social housing – vibrant and growing community housing sector not for profit they often offer wrap around services – many do truly outstanding work.

**Questions re damp cold:** - Solar panels on new properties: Is HNZN looking ahead? One two bedroom units on back larger home to keep people in community?

**Answer:** Solar panels not at this stage – not completely out of the picture maybe in the future but not at the moment. Lots of properties are old cold and damp, we are spending 2.9B dollars over 3 years on improved maintenance and building new capacity. We are doing stuff. Not going to get where everyone would like in 3 years but will make progress. All new property double glazed insulation installed. Where possible new builds will take advantage of northern aspect, heat-pumps already where possible. *Solar – terms = Aussie make use of solar – (some discussion from the floor).* Have not said no at this stage – issues of cost to consider.

Andrew Booker - Accessibility – design we have flat access St Martins – easily change bathroom – right doors width handles to change mobility future proofing taking place. Apartments Manchester Street, 1<sup>st</sup> level fully accessible but not on the other floors. Mixed community model.

Glen Sowrey - People downsizing – need to be made comfortable about moving we need to make attractive for them –this is an issue we need to look at across the country. Two ways carrot or stick I am attracted to carrot idea – St Martins property 2bedroom – nicer than 3 bedroom create those new properties to attract people to move into – move into appropriate to create spaces for need.

What's going on from tenancy management perspective:

650 families housed – huge focus on repairs and back into circulation local team done an outstanding job. 68 still currently untenanted and under repair 1.2% doesn't have people in them which are pretty good. Intense pressure – failure is to have a house sitting empty.

Not perfect – waiting list starting to stabilize grew strongly this half of the calendar year demand grew significantly over 600 on waiting list 136 on A List 214 on B List . 350 on A or B . Even if everyone we have tenanted we are still challenged with numbers.

Developed a supported approach to proactively to contact applicants on wait list advising houses available other areas. No pushing but if you are mobile can move and have a need we have properties. Clearly not move people outside the city but the alternative is pretty grim over 20 people took up offer to move to South Island towns. Cases I have heard about the response has been positive about that opportunity. Many cases assisted with moving costs.

90 day notices – emotive for tenants; effectively it's a legal requirement – move out to repair or rebuild or redevelop we need to under law to provide legal notice and done in writing. If we rely on that as our communication beginning and end, then we need work with the tenants' one-to-one to discuss options and we need to manage each situation in a personal sensitive manner. We understand those are people's homes, not intended to come in a draconian manner. It is not a forced exit but is part of the process we need to adopt.

In March we close Linwood and relocated team to Papanui. In a meeting with Papanui office – appropriate to have some people in each in the community – relook at having our people in east – won't recreate the Linwood office, but we don't have that right, need people back and more connected with our communities.

0800 number – my view HNZA (easy to talk about when you were not involved) Lots of good things and some not so good. We have changed business model (went too far) moving back to middle ground. Reopening all our area offices, putting our branding back on the buildings taking frosting off windows, unlocking the doors and treating people like customers again (large clap) so that has happened right across the country.

0800 does have a place spent a lot of time in contact centres – listening to calls and customers – easy to have 'rose coloured glasses'. Lots of things we can do with 0800 that make sense e.g. repairs some aspects that work well – we can do better challenge to leadership team – answer the question and make decisions on the spot. Log job that generally requires doing – urgent someone will be there four hours if not urgent someone will be 7-14 days.

**Question:** Under 18 year olds are told they can't get a house- from the call centre – not true – inconsistency at call centre.

**Answer:** Appreciate feedback and take on board..... Issues contact regional manager Simon Leggett. Only way we can get a consistent service.

When we have disconnects please engage with the area managers – they should be transparent and available to you.

Terms of next steps covered off: Next 2.5 years ambitious build 700 repair 5000. 500B insurance 320B – land holdings regenerate rebuild refresh for more fit for purpose housing looking at Christchurch stock over the next decade 1.2B in the next decade.

Important things happening in Christchurch:

Partnering with Southern Response Canterbury show-home competition – technology design and construction features – will help reshape housing stock

Partnered with Corrections - do what we have been doing in Auckland take damaged houses send to prison – inmates get formal trade training work on our houses – inmates get training develop skills and HNZA get some fantastic product – recycle what would have been demolished. Quality is superb red zone houses will be put on HNZA land.

Working on demolish – repair foundation and work with Ngai Tahu. Canterbury earthquake team lead by Andrew Booker – committed team working well.

Above all else message – build houses repair houses easy – success or failure on how we manage our relationships with tenants – can have the most spectacular housing in the city but if we don't manage our relationships with tenants during what is going to be a period of change then we all know we will not have done our job as good as we could have. Value support of the organisations (how do we work together for the benefit of our tenants).

Helen acknowledges team of HNZA – both present and past. Result of past relationships created really strong healthy relationships David Griffiths; Carmen Lynsky; Bob Hardie and other members – thank you for that, you really did foster really good relationships.

Question and Answer Session:

**Questions:** K Potter: Human Rights Commission

Accessibility – not that much different from 3 years ago universal design elements to allow access to people with disability and older people but not complying fully with universal design or Lifemark standards – Have I got that right?

**Answer:** Lifemark stand most would come up to Im 4 majority up to at least 3 on all new builds Im standard 5

Apartment level 2/3 not making to accessible full stop – ground level accessible but cost limits upper level.

Insulation – indicated when brick off build is there a programme or ambition to fully insulate all HNZN houses?

**Answer:** No not planning on insulating walls. Houses where repairs make it possible we are – we have done ceiling and under-floor when we can across the country – cost of removing cladding wall linings cost prohibitive. Insulated all floor ceiling where possible will be insulated

Paul - Waipuna

Proportion 1.2b being spent in Christchurch is insurance monies?

**Answer:** 320m insurance 900m coming off own balance sheet.

Jill CEO the Healthy Homes CEA

How do we fast track when working on prioritises to get things done in homes? – Prioritising high health needs – how can we get a priority system going to prioritise high health care needs ?

**Answer:** Andrew Booker – doing work on stuff with knowledge we have – Tenancy Services staff identify houses that need to be prioritised. We have asked community who identify people get in touch straight away – we don't always know change of circumstances for people straight away – so bring it to our attention. If you don't think house is right let us know.

Robin Mason & Frazer Benson are Areas Managers Christchurch – contact direct with problems and priority.

**Question:** Talk about MSD taking over tenants/HNZN asset?

**Answer:** This is only about the transfer of needs assessment. MSD is taking responsibility for the assessment. Housing need currently 0800 then tenancy advisor. We will have a one stop shop. Future as social housing sector can provide housing and attract income related rent, so what's changing is that MSD will do the needs assessment. We are working with them at the moment to do that. We don't want that not to work well.

David Griffiths – MSD working on project with MSD to transfer that over – going to take some working through – Assessments will be through the Work and Income Service.

D Griffiths invited to present at Housing forum for an update. More info to come – currently working on it early days yet.

Anni Watkin – Project on Manchester street – interested in the other 15 units for the 100 young people homeless at risk in Christchurch – Commitment with organisations to push something forward get buy-in to help, with a robust group of people who could manager it. Am interested in a HNZC partnership emergency transitional learning for young people.

Paul Cottam City Council – Repair and rebuild does that mean HNZC will return to pre-earthquake stock level provision, what’s the Government thinking national level transfer HNZC stock.

**Answer:** One thing government thinking very seriously about is the transfer HNZC stock to accredited third sector providers – quality control = housing provider/association attract income related rent or SHU funding to buy property – Government wants to ensure that the quality of service you provide is good and that you are going to be sustainable. Australia do that very well, feedback from providers it works very, very well.

Anna - Shirley Community Hub 90 day notice (what do you do to help tenants when you are repairing)?

**Answer:** HNZC don’t fit criteria for villages – number strategies for helping people – permanently another HNZC property to go to. Work around people, if possible go to family and friends, can accommodate if necessary try to work around tenant as necessary.

Comment from the floor: This is a good opportunity to use solar panels encourage you to reconsider decisions around this.

If they are more questions – please send them in (Housing Forum Planning Administrator will forward them to HNZC.

Presentation ends with thanks from Helen Gatonyi on behalf of participants of the forum.

**Presentation 2: Ali Brunel on TPA Rental Housing Survey.** (As Ali was the note-taker at this meeting the presentation was not recorded. However the research can be found on [www.tpa.org.nz](http://www.tpa.org.nz) TPA is happy to send anyone who is interested a copy of the summary notes.

Discussion followed with the forum members thanking and congratulating TPA on the survey.

Helen advised TPA Table Debate Meetings to advance recommendations from the report. The first table debate meeting will be about Warrant of Fitness. 28<sup>th</sup> August.

**Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment (MBIE)** Reported the Compliance Units keen to see this unit get a bit more active in investigation breaches of the Residential Tenancies Act. So we are interested in hearing from anyone if your clients do have concerns or issues with one landlord, pattern of breaches, can ring 0800 tenancy (0800 636 262) and ask for compliance unit and an investigating officer will discuss issues with them. This is not for every tenancy breach; if there are particular issues or a landlord who comes to your attention for larger or persistent breaches we are happy to look into those issues.

**Presentation 3: Gayle Brislaime – Manager of Depression Support Network**

Gayle opened by asking who had in the room suffered from Depression or knew someone who suffered from depression – Highlighted how the earthquake was a great leveller and contributed to a greater understanding of anxiety and depression.

Depression support Network offer Peer support for those suffering from depression, so the board and staff all have a lived experience of depression. Not clinicians or counsellors, we are peer support workers and advocates.

Particular message re housing is that since the quake our staff are hearing about serious housing issues like never before, that is in Ashburton North Canterbury and here and I think that it would be fair to say – I am glad to see the Health people here, our organisation has relied significantly on the services of David Kemp the Suicide Prevention Co-ordinator. We have a regionally specific problem, it is not all over the country it is in Canterbury and we must talk about these things. We must talk about prevention and I would recommend anyone contact David or Pegasus Health, they are attempting to provide a particular suicide prevention training QPR in Christchurch (500 trainees) encourage any community workers to undertake this training. Short-term course that may give you some skills when dealing with those situations.

Was heartened to hear the HNZN CEO talk about relationships, We in the NGO sector are told to collaborate, collaborate, collaborate, and it is difficult when we all have our jobs to do, and I am encouraged to hear that there is some talk between MSD/WINZ and HNZN. It is all about collaborations, and it has to happen at the top first, I think heaps of it is happening on the ground, this meeting is a perfect example – congratulations on doing that research it is extremely helpful for all of us.

In the past two years my staff has had to deal with things they never used to. For example in the past we never had to deliver Red Cross Winter Warmer Packs to camping grounds and families we have gone back to the same families for the second year this year. It does not make me too happy and it is something I will continue to bring up as it is still happening in my community. Acknowledge Anni Watkin comment youth homelessness, there are homeless people in this town that no-one wants to talk too much about.

We are coming across people who are not navigating the WINZ changes, they are not getting to their first case meeting and then without doing it within a month they are off the books. Let us not underestimate the impacts of the changes on the 15<sup>th</sup> July and the implications of what they are. There have been massive changes for those on low incomes and it is further complicated with not enough adequate housing.

I could talk about depression generally, but there are hundreds of websites and lots of information about that. I will talk about the pressures in a post disaster environment; the crunch time is this year and next year, things are very difficult for people. New Zealand has doesn't have media reporting on suicide, for very good reason, because of the copy-cat, however it does not mean we don't speak about it, with each other. We have a bereaved by suicide group that's been re-established here. North Canterbury – Double the suicide incidence. It's a regionally specific problem and we need to have our staff and community agencies trained. Our mental health facilities are at quite a high capacity, if you think you can turn up at Psyc Emergency and be admitted, think again. Home based care is what is happening, if you don't have that support you are the self-carer you are unwell. That is the reality.

Those are the things that I think about that impact housing on our community and mental health. Relationships are important, TPA staff, my staff, the MAPS staff someone who has the mental health role; the opportunity to have a discussion around tenants/landlord issues, where you are actively listened to can help alleviate the drama and crisis driven communication (Depressed people will often not open the mail, and are then confronted with crisis situations – it's part of not functioning properly).

We are in Community House along with other community agencies; we are there to provide support and confidential advice.

**Question:** What does QPR mean?

**Answer:** It is Question, Proceed Respond – It's essentially suicide first aid, how do I respond if presented with someone who is talking suicide - Contact details – Contact MHERC \_ Mental Health Education & Resource Centre or myself Gayle Brislaine at Depression Support Network - quite affordable – aim to have 500 people in Christchurch trained in the same method.

Lisa Coulter announced that Gayle Brislaine was on Tenant Time on Plains FM. Podcasts can be listened to from Plains FM or through the TPA Facebook page link. [www.facebook.com/tpachch](http://www.facebook.com/tpachch)

Helen also advised that Lisa Coulter from Tenants Protection Association received the Community Engagement Award from Plains FM for the monthly broadcast Tenant Time.

Helen acknowledged Andrew Booth and Housing Team at CCC and thanked them for continuing to offer support and help to their tenants under what have been very trying times for them (the staff) as well as the tenants.

Meeting Closed at 3pm