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**MEETING THE HOUSING NEEDS OF
VULNERABLE POPULATIONS IN NEW ZEALAND**

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND PROJECT AIMS

The community housing of people with vulnerabilities is a significant challenge in New Zealand. Political concerns about housing in recent years have tended to focus on housing affordability for home buyers rather than on rental prices, social housing or, until very recently, housing quality. State housing has been in decline for a number of years and, in comparison to other jurisdictions such as Australia and the UK, the social and community housing sector in NZ is fairly small (Capital Strategy and SGS Economics and Planning, 2007). Housing is becoming a major social problem for most New Zealanders (Statistics NZ 2013; Basset and Malpass, 2013; Collins 2013), exacerbated by rapid population growth in Auckland and earthquakes in Christchurch. On an international scope, NZ has been reported to be one of the most expensive places to live amongst developed countries (Sanyal, 2013). The cumulative effect of all of these factors can be particularly devastating to vulnerable populations. Research into social housing in NZ, however, remains sparse, and there has been little discussion about the housing needs of vulnerable groups and how they might be addressed.

Vulnerability is multifaceted and provides a broader catchment for those experiencing numerous hardships. Vulnerable groups include, amongst others, those with mental health problems, addictions or physical impairments, rough sleepers, refugee populations, victims of family violence and those leaving institutional accommodation such as prison. Vulnerability is often linked to economic and social marginalisation, and disproportionately affects Māori.

This project aimed to fill the gap in knowledge on housing for vulnerable and marginalised groups by bringing together an interdisciplinary group of researchers and a network of interested stakeholders. Specifically it aimed to:

- Explore the housing needs of vulnerable groups
- Examine what provision currently exists for vulnerable groups in New Zealand
- Identify gaps between needs and current provision.
- Build collaboration with external agencies, including community organisations and external researchers.

In order to meet these aims, a comprehensive literature review of housing for vulnerable populations in the New Zealand context was undertaken and three workshops were held in Auckland, Christchurch and Wellington, with a variety of stakeholders including representatives from housing-related organisations and those who work with vulnerable groups. Each workshop had at least one keynote guest speaker and also involved a series of small group tasks and activities. This report firstly presents the literature and then provides a synopsis of the workshops before finishing with a series of recommendations of how housing and housing services for vulnerable populations could be improved.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

The aim of this literature review is to explore policy, practice and research related to housing provision for the most vulnerable populations in New Zealand. Taking an inclusive approach to marginalisation in New Zealand, the review considers housing support for people who may be considered homeless, experiencing mental health and/or addictions issues, leaving institutional accommodation, escaping violence, and families in need. The review of literature begins by providing an historical overview of housing and housing policies in relation to the vulnerable followed by a review of the current literature.

Historical overview

Historically New Zealand's housing policies have focused on owner occupation. Ferguson (1994) identifies this as a reflection of the New Zealand dream and the ideal of the family home:

Advocacy of 'the dream' overshadowed and profoundly influenced all other aspects of government intervention in the housing market. New Zealand governments provided cheap, easily accessible loan finance to the more affluent, skilled or semi-skilled and 'respectable' workers and their families from 1906 (Ferguson 1994:7)

The origins of this 'dream' can be traced back to the days of early settlement and the upwardly mobile aspirations of the early settlers. Settlers aspired to ownership of land and many had been enticed to migrate by the promise of land. They were leaving behind the poverty and poor conditions of the rapidly industrialising 'Old World' and did not desire to replicate them (Ferguson 1994:13). Ownership, not renting was their goal. The 'dream' was premised on the concept of family, or the individual and 'his' family as the builder of the farm or unit of production. This family was nuclear, especially in the early days of settlement, and laid the foundation for the concept of family that endured well into the 20th century.

From the 1860s there were signs of slums developing in Auckland (in central gullies) and Wellington (Te Aro Flat) and these subsequently developed in other centres (Ferguson 1994). As a result, by the 1880s the more affluent town dwellers (the emerging middle class) began to move to the outer urban edges to seek space and build larger houses. The growth of suburban transport in the form of trams and ferries made this possible (Ferguson 1994). The added cost of travel made it unaffordable for many working class people to follow this trend and they remained in the inner urban areas. Slums had become a fixture of urban centres by the 1880s and a period of economic downturn led to increased unemployment, making access to shelter difficult for the unskilled and semi-skilled. By the 1890s an underclass had arisen (Ferguson 1994:34).

Attempts were made to address substandard, unhealthy housing in the form of the 1872 Public Health Act, which set up Local Boards of Health, responsible for monitoring and improving health in their areas. Although they attempted to control overcrowding and to have filthy houses cleansed and whitewashed, the Act did not set housing standards and did not provide powers of enforcement (Ferguson 1994). Later in the century, slums were cleared but housing was not replaced and tenants were frequently made homeless (Ferguson 1994).

During the 19th century those unable to fulfil the home ownership 'dream' or afford the rents, received minimal charity in the form of money for rent, food, clothing and fuel. This assistance, however, was given only to those deemed worthy to receive it, that is people of good character. Women alone, for example, were not assisted if it was thought, "... she [a woman] had driven her husband away through inadequate housekeeping or unsuitable behaviour" (Ferguson 1994:16). Colonial governments provided emergency accommodation for families made homeless by war and natural disaster and sometimes to newly arrived immigrants. However, it was left to private institutions to provide shelter for the urban unemployed, especially during the depression of the 1870s and 1880s. Farmers gave the rural (frequently transient) unemployed shelter and they stayed in boarding and lodging houses when in the towns. There were no government run rental housing schemes during the 19th century apart from some land being set aside for hostels for urban Māori, a policy which continued until the late 1940s (Ferguson 1994).

After the election of the Liberal Party in 1891, attempts were made to improve the housing conditions of the respectable working man and his family as it was feared 'he' might become disillusioned with the 'dream' (Ferguson 1994:39). A scheme was launched to develop working men's hamlets on the edge of towns with trains to link them with town centres, to remove 'deserving' workers from the unruly underclass in urban centres. Problems arose, however, with some people unable to afford the travel costs and the scheme contributed to land speculation, both of which inhibited the success of the scheme (Ferguson 1994).

During the 1890s the 'family wage' was introduced in an attempt to indirectly provide housing for the respectable working man and 'his' family. The 'family wage' ensured workers were paid sufficient money to cover the living costs of nuclear families. The concept of the 'family wage' helped to further legitimise the nuclear family as the norm in New Zealand society. However, wage improvements were not maintained, which ultimately led to workers pressurising the government for improvements on housing and some labour organisations to press for a direct state presence in the housing market (Ferguson 1994:45).

By the turn of the century housing issues of more vulnerable members of society remained neglected in favour of the deserving and respectable. The first direct state involvement in the supply of housing for urban dwellers came early in the 20th century as a crisis point was reached with a bubonic plague scare. The government of the day responded with the Workers' Dwellings Act of 1905 to provide 5000 houses for low-income families. These were targeted at skilled and semi-skilled workers, while those on lower incomes were expected to benefit from the construction of these houses, which it was believed would lead to the raising of housing standards generally. There was an expectation that the very poor and vulnerable would continue to rely on charity (Ferguson 1994).

In practice, only 646 houses were ever built, and even families on modest incomes had difficulty affording the rents. After the passing of the Workers Dwellings Act 1910 and the Workers Dwellings Amendment Act in 1914, it was possible for tenants to buy the houses or apply for loans to have a house built and rental provision ceased to be a priority of the state (Ferguson 1994). Providing loans for home ownership and subsidising construction companies became the main state

involvement during the 1920s and early 1930s, thus addressing the needs of the skilled worker and 'his' family, but not those of the more vulnerable.

The only other attempt at rental housing provision for workers on low incomes came from the Railways Department, which built kitset houses for workers during the 1920s. A factory was set up in Frankton to build them and produced 1,591 houses between 1925 and 1928, including 306 for a project instigated by Prime Minister, Gordon Coates, in the Hutt Valley. The scheme, however, was cancelled in 1929 as it was said to be undermining the private sector and the building industry successfully lobbied to discontinue it (Ferguson 1994).

Policies prior to the mid-1930s targeted lending thus perpetuating the home ownership 'dream', rather than rental provision. Overall, the historical literature suggests that although there were attempts made to cater to the housing needs of the 'deserving' poor, those considered 'undeserving' were left to charity or their own devices. In the 19th century landless Māori were recognised as needing assistance and in the 1930s some attempts were made to rectify the substandard conditions they were living in (see below). Before moving onto the themes prominent in the housing research literature, it is important to examine the history of State housing.

History of state housing and state support for housing

In order to house New Zealanders well, the Labour Government of 1935 believed that the state would have to maintain a significant and constant presence in the housing market. State housing was a key electoral platform and the first state house was built in 1938 in Miramar, with the then Prime Minister Joseph Savage carrying furniture into the house of the first tenants. By 1939, some 5390 houses had been completed or begun. However, at this time, state housing was vastly different to today. Historically it was reserved for respectable working people; the working man, his spouse and children, and located in the suburbs.¹ Subsidised housing was denied to the very poor whilst relatively affluent workers and their families lived in state houses with what was in effect subsidised rent. Government policies excluded single people, young and old, single-parent families and those families not considered 'respectable enough for state houses' (Ferguson 1994:158) such as those with very low incomes. By the late 1940s resentment in relation to the subsidies for 'elite' and privileged state tenants grew making it easier for future governments to abandon state housing (Ferguson 1994). Some 32,000 houses were built in the first fourteen years of the state housing but overcrowding and poor housing conditions remained.

After National came to power in 1949, they rejected state housing as a mainstream form of tenure, and home ownership became the main focus of housing policy. The number of state houses built was reduced and in the 1950s, state houses began to be sold off. The remaining state housing was opened up to welfare recipients, which started to produce a concentration of these groups in suburbs. Demand for state housing remained high and an income limit for applicants was introduced to cut back on the numbers applying. Such limits were later blamed for forcing low income households into concentrations of state homes and as home ownership amongst

¹ A few years later, the government did build several medium and high rise blocks in Wellington and Auckland for couples without children and single people, to replace slum housing, but these tenants were forced to pay market based rents. (Ferguson 1994).

middle-income New Zealanders increased so state housing became a refuge for those unlikely to ever be able to afford their own home (Ferguson 1994).

During the 1980s, the notion of statutory responsibility for the homeless, such as that which exists in the UK, was investigated but rejected by the then Labour Government. At this time it was felt it could not find the estimated \$700 million needed to provide a long-term solution to the housing problem. In 1988, however, the Housing Corporation devised its own standards of housing need and, for the first time, national state housing resources were allocated according to an assessment of population need as opposed to demand on the basis of the number of applications received for state assistance (Ferguson 1994).

In the early 1990s, the government attempted to withdraw from providing assistance to vulnerable people, both in housing supply and with the introduction of 'market' rents in state houses. This was compounded by the increase in emergency housing rents. These changes were implemented as a result of the Housing Restructuring and Tenancy Matters Act in 1992, which also introduced the Accommodation Supplement. The effects of these policy changes had a detrimental impact on the vulnerable and led to increased problems of overcrowding and health issues (Maynard 1992). The situation was exacerbated by the lowering of benefits in the 1991 Budget, thus creating affordability problems, which further inhibited those on low incomes accessing housing and impacted on the ability of vulnerable people to rent in both the public and private sectors. Maynard (1992) cites a direct governmental move away from state provision ultimately leading to a lack of commitment to vulnerable people throughout the 1990s.

The situation improved with the passing of the Housing Restructuring (Income-Related Rents) Amendment Act in 2000. Under this Act state house rents returned to being income-related. The Government continued the Accommodation Supplement provision for people on low incomes renting in the private sector. In the period 1999-2005 the Government increased state house numbers by 4,800 (Housing New Zealand Corporation 2004). However, despite a stronger commitment to housing those on low incomes and the vulnerable, homelessness continued to be an issue as the provision of housing did not adequately meet community needs. State housing has become a residual political issue (Johnson 2013), and Housing New Zealand Corporation (HNZC) is a substantial source of income for the government. Between 2010 and 2013, it received \$129 million in government contributions, but the government received \$271 million in dividends, resulting in a net \$142 million extraction of funds from HNZC (Johnson 2013).

Housing research

There were six main themes identified in the literature on housing vulnerable people:

1. Presence and causes of homelessness – much of it invisible
2. Housing for Māori
3. Sub-standard, inadequate and inappropriate housing
4. Lack of suitable housing for people with disabilities
5. Domestic violence as a catalyst for homelessness
6. Women and access to housing
7. The ability of people to access housing when coming out of prison

1. Presence and causes of homelessness

Since the late 1970s there have been many attempts to address the problem of homelessness. One of the issues related to homelessness is defining what it is. In 1979, Davey and Barrington (1979) divided the solution into two categories. First, those who are suddenly made homeless who are provided with 'emergency' housing or what may be considered 'shelters' ; and second, those who are long term or homeless due to a previous emergency who are provided 'transitional' housing (1979: 68-74). Transitional housing is what is currently known as emergency housing in New Zealand. The categories currently used by Statistics New Zealand (2009) to define homelessness are:

- Without shelter, such as living on the streets or a car
- Temporary accommodation, such as homeless hostels, supported accommodation, women's refuges and boarding houses
- Uninhabitable housing or dilapidated dwellings
- Sharing accommodation, such as temporary accommodation in someone else's private dwelling.

These categories include visible and invisible homeless and individuals and groups from all demographic categories and are therefore probably most useful for the current situation.

The causes of homelessness have also been the subject of debate since the 1970s. In the conclusion to her research - *Homelessness in the Auckland Region* - Percy (1982) cites one of the main causes of homelessness as the high cost of private rentals in relation to income, although this is frequently compounded by other contributing factors. Percy (1982) recommended rent subsidies, rent controls, more public housing and construction of rentals, negative income tax and increased employment opportunities to solve homelessness in Auckland.

Thorns (1987) emphasised the heterogeneous nature of homelessness, but more importantly the need to take the problem out of the private and into the public sphere. He argues that too often the victim is blamed when the problem needs to be addressed at a systemic level with housing supply, rather than political and/or economic ideology being the main cause of homelessness. He suggests a focus on long term rather than temporary solutions (i.e. emergency and transitional housing). Thorns (1987) cites the USA and the UK as places where temporary solutions have become institutions of social control. The likelihood of institutions monitoring and organising the lives of those in their housing is greater, rather than empowering them and assisting them to improve their housing situations. Some of the homeless, he argues, may only need accommodation (unlike those who may have other issues/problems) and once settled are able to lead very independent lives. Also once a homeless person or family is housed, any other special assistance they may require can be dealt with as adequate shelter (as a basic human need) enables security and peace of mind. The Housing First programme (see below) works on this premise.

Woolley's (2014) study of VisionWest in Auckland examines effective ways of providing housing and support services for people in this vulnerable position. She states: 'that one in every 120 people in New Zealand are facing homelessness or severe housing deprivation' (2014: 1). Woolley examines macro, meso and micro

reasons for homelessness, but emphasises systemic inequality and lack of government planning and action as major concerns. Unemployment, imprisonment, domestic violence, poverty and cultural discrimination, she argues, all contribute to homelessness. On a micro level she cites abuse, trauma, marriage/relationship breakdown, addictions, imprisonment and unemployment as contributing factors (Woolley 2014).

Overall, Woolley (2014) argues that the most vulnerable ethnic groups identified are Māori and Pasifika. She also identifies women and youth as the 'hidden homeless' as they often live in temporary situations with relatives and friends, with women coming out of relationships being the most vulnerable as they frequently experience a lack of income with which to re-house themselves. Youth also have similar problems when they are transitioning away from their families and attempting independence.

Emergency houses developed in the early 1970s to cope with the growing need to house people experiencing difficulties accessing public income-assisted housing. In a 1992 survey with twenty-four agencies, mostly dealing with family groups, Maynard (1992) found that all were committed to moving the families onto a permanent housing solution, with 80-100 per cent likely to be housed in state houses. Sixteen of the twenty-four agencies had experienced an increase in demand, which they ascertained as due to reduced incomes (especially from the 1991 cuts in welfare benefits) making it difficult for clients to afford private rental accommodation. Agencies also reported an increase in the level of domestic violence and depression amongst residents (Maynard 1992).

A recent joint report by Lifewise, Auckland Council, Auckland City Mission and ThinkPlace (January 2015) identified key insights into rough sleeping, or those who can be defined as 'without shelter'. This report gives an insight into the lives of rough sleepers and the difficulties of leaving the street and accessing and sustaining housing. It aimed to identify new opportunities for rough sleepers, inspire innovative approaches to the issue and provide a tool for the Auckland Homelessness Steering Group to "develop best practice that can appropriately respond to the needs of those sleeping rough in central Auckland" (2015: 1). The report produced several key findings:

- A history of suffering such as physical violence, emotional abuse and neglect, is a common pathway to life on the streets
- Although many rough sleepers may choose to sleep rough, the concept of choice is complex and more often than not is a result of having no other options, for example, when escaping intolerable physical and emotional abuse
- Personal safety is an ongoing concern for those who sleep rough and rough sleepers employ sophisticated strategies to keep themselves safe
- Street based social networks (street whānau) are very important
- Over time, biological families learnt to accept their family members' decision to live on the street
- Routine, centred on meeting basic everyday needs, is an important feature of life on the street

- There are a range of obstacles that hinder access to social services, such as the limited opening hours of support agencies and securing the appropriate documentation including ID.
- Once housed, creating a home is not straightforward (Lifewise et al. 2015: 15-18).

The important issues identified were: improving safety, broadening the number of housing options and choices available, removing barriers to social services, working collectively, strengthening the street whanau and lessening the adverse effects of belonging to a street whanau, better supporting those who get housed, changing negative public perceptions and language about homelessness, and asking how agencies can better support people who are rough sleeping (Lifewise et al. 2015). This project is ongoing and the findings are an important guide for future work and collaboration.

2. Housing for Māori

Prior to 1935, Māori were seen as having serious housing problems as many were living in substandard dwellings and consequently suffering as a result. Despite various schemes to improve Māori housing during the 1920s and early 1930s, under the Coates Government influenced by Sir Apirana Ngata, the stock was generally in a dilapidated state. A survey conducted under the Native Housing Act 1935 found that Māori were living in the worst conditions of any group in the country. As a result, the Labour Government passed the Native Housing Act 1935 which enabled Māori to take up loans on more generous terms than other State Advances loans. However, although eligible for state-assisted loans, many Māori were not in the skilled and semi-skilled brackets and few were living in urban situations. As Ferguson surmises: “Poverty and prejudice effectively barred many Māori, both urban and rural, from the mainstream housing market” (Ferguson 1994: 98).

The 1940s saw the opening up of state housing for Māori tenants, some were ‘pepper-potted’² amongst Pakeha and some special areas were set aside specifically for Māori. During the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s Māori were housed due to their impoverishment, rather than their special housing needs. Although housing standards were improved, the emphasis was on monocultural attempts at Pakeha assimilation (Ferguson 1994). It was not until the late 1970s that the particular housing needs of Māori and the prejudice experienced by them in the housing market were acknowledged and acted upon (Ferguson 1994).

During the 1970s, groups lobbied for greater rights for indigenous control, ownership and culturally appropriate housing provision. During the period of the fourth Labour Government, loans became available for papakāinga³ housing built on marae and demands for marae based ownership and control were partially met. A change in government in 1990 curtailed this, but the demand persisted and this

² ‘Pepper-potted’ – scattered

³ Papakāinga is used to define ‘a collection of dwellings occupied Māori connected by common kinship or kaupapa, located in reasonable proximity to each other and normally relating to a marae or other communal area or building.’ (Hoskins 2012: 1)

scheme continues today funded by the Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment (MBIE).

Schrader (2005) explores the levels of racism and discrimination in early housing policies and the changes in attitude from the 1970s, leading up to attempts to build more culturally appropriate houses from the 1980s. For example, houses where the preparing of food and the washing of clothes are well separated (Schrader 2005). McKay and Stevens (2014) confirm this, citing the publishing of designs sensitive to Māori culture in 1951 by architect Max Rosenfeld, as the first time any attempt was made at acknowledging difference. Generally provision of housing for vulnerable people in New Zealand has tended to be designed and instigated from a monocultural perspective, with little attention paid to cultural appropriateness.

3. Sub-standard and inadequate housing

A Statistics NZ (2013) report found that just under one third of New Zealanders had a major problem with the physical condition of their accommodation and 25-44 year olds were more likely to live in houses that are cold, damp and too small. The report found that renters are three times more likely to live in houses that are cold, damp and too small, as were single parent families and Māori and Pasifika groups. Howden-Chapman, Issacs, Crane and Chapman (1996) found that 25-30 per cent of people with mental health difficulties were living in inappropriate or sub-standard housing. They also identified a strong correlation between poor health and substandard housing. Since then, improvements have been made in the areas of insulation, more adequate heating installations, correcting leaky houses and generally promoting healthy housing. Despite this, poor conditions in both state and private rental housing remain, as highlighted by the recent case of Emma Lita-Bourne, a two-year old girl who died from bronchopneumonia. The coroner judged that the cold damp state house in which she lived was a contributing factor in her death (Miller 2015).

There is currently a strong lobby to introduce a 'Warrant of Fitness' (WOF) into the private rental sector led by Howden-Chapman and her team at the Housing and Health Research Programme of the University of Otago, to improve the condition and standard of rental properties in New Zealand. Other organisations throughout the country are also lobbying for it, such as tenants' organisations, Salvation Army and community housing groups. There is a level of general enthusiasm for WOFs and Auckland Council held a trial with private landlords in the Onehunga area in 2012/13, but it is yet to be rolled out nationally, regulated or legislated on at this point. Auckland City Council has developed a *Housing Warrant of Fitness (WOF) Assessment Manual* (June 2014) based on a Fitness Assessment Checklist developed by the University of Otago⁴ and their aim is to get rental housing initially to an adequate standard of health and safety. They are currently able to do these inspections free of charge to interested landlords and the Whau and Henderson-Massey Local Boards are keen to set up trials in their areas in the near future. In 2013 HNZC also conducted a trial in their stock but further action is yet to be carried out.⁵

⁴ See Appendix 1

⁵ Government's Social Policy Committee is currently (as of late March 2015) examining WOF possibilities.

Boarding houses have historically been places where vulnerable people have sought shelter. Many are below standard and some contain mixtures of residents that should not be residing under the same roof. The recent *Inquiry into Boarding Houses in New Zealand, and Briefing into Long-Term Caravan Park and Motor Camp Accommodation* (Social Services Committee 2014) examined the legislative and regulatory frameworks that apply to boarding houses and whether they provide adequate protection to tenants. It found that typically boarding houses in New Zealand are occupied by tenants, often transient, who have no other accommodation options such as those with substance abuse, mental health or emotional issues, or those receiving invalid's or sickness benefits. Boarding houses could be a last resort for persons with limited means or a poor credit or tenancy history. The report noted that many of these houses fall short of 'the most basic standards that could be expected' (Social Services Committee 2014:7), with minimal support services for vulnerable tenants with complex and multiple needs, who had limited knowledge about their rights and obligations and often lacked the skills or confidence to complain (Social Services Committee 2014). A recommendation from the Committee that the government update regulations under the Health Act 1956, the Building Act 2004, the Residential Tenancies Act 1986 and the Local Government Act 2002 to ensure that minimum standards are more reflective of modern standards was not, however, accepted by the government, which responded:

Government will need to prioritise work on minimum quality standards against other housing priorities, including work on how to increase the supply of affordable housing while progressing the social housing reform programme (Government Response to Report of the Social Services Committee 2014: 5)

The current boarding house situation is uncertain in that there is no register of boarding houses and no statutory inspection regime. According to a report by the Sunday Star Times, many of these dwellings are cramped, insanitary and unsafe (Kilgallon 2014). The inability to find and/or access suitable housing which frequently leads to people becoming boarding house residents is often a result of homelessness.

4. Suitable housing for people experiencing mental illness and/or disabilities

Another group of people who have difficulty accessing housing are those with physical and intellectual disabilities or people experiencing mental health issues. It is not uncommon for this population to become homeless, especially if they are on low incomes. Those with physical disability experience additional problems of accessibility in relation to housing that is not designed or adapted to cater for their needs. Housing difficulties are known to be a significant issue for mental health service users, and a key factor in the success of community mental health care (Colwell, 2009; Howden-Chapman, Chandola, Stafford, & Marmot, 2011).

Davey and Barrington (1979) called for increased provision of both emergency and transitional housing for people with special needs. They identified a lack of foresight historically in considering this group which they felt had led to the subsequent need for so many houses to be adapted in order to be suitable. Two CHРАНZ reports have investigated the issues and concerns around providing appropriate housing for people with disabilities. The first, *Housing Choices for Disabled New Zealanders: Scoping Research*, used interviews with stakeholders and questionnaires to gather New Zealand responses to housing choices from 1935-2004 for people with

intellectual and physical disabilities (Miller 2005). The report traced the development of services historically and advocated for a shift from a medical to social model of disability. After several attempts at legislation, the *Disabled Persons Community Welfare Act* (1975) gave people access to specific services to help them live in the community. This was the result of a worldwide move in the delivery of services away from large institutions into smaller community based facilities in the early 1970s. Miller (2005) argued a lack of a clear-cut strategy for the process of deinstitutionalisation resulted in people being subject to discrimination by landlords unwilling to adapt dwellings for those with physical needs.

During the 1980s, Community Housing Limited (a subsidiary of Housing Corporation) provided rental accommodation for community groups working with people with disabilities. Physical adaptations to houses were funded by the Regional Health Authorities and this policy is still in effect under the District Health Boards who are responsible for renovations in HNZN houses. From 1990 to 2000 the housing needs of disabled people were not a core feature of the housing policy agenda as the government, but policies were reinstated under the Third Way Government of the 2000s. Three reports were produced to research ways in which the treatment of people with disabilities and mental illness could be improved. The first: *The New Zealand Disability Strategy* (2001) promoted increased housing opportunities for people living in the community; *Like Minds Like Mine National Plan* (2003-2005) tackled the issue of discrimination experienced by people with mental health issues living in the community; finally, the third: *To Live an Ordinary Life* (2003), focused on flexible living options for those with intellectual disabilities. Each of these reports became part of the *New Zealand Housing Strategy*.

Miller (2005) concluded that a key focus should be on those with greater need and also acknowledged that the aging demographic structure must be taken into account when developing policy. Miller recommended that future research should include the participation of the consumers of accessible and specific housing with a focus on how they actually use the buildings they live in (2005: xvii).

The second CHRANZ report: *Housing And Disability: Future Proofing New Zealand's Housing Stock for an Inclusive Society* by Saville-Smith et al. (2007), identified many obstacles and areas needing to be addressed. Citing the 2001 Census figures, the authors estimated that 96 percent of people with disabilities live in households; the remainder lived in residential facilities; and, older people make up the large majority of disabled people in residential care (Saville-Smith et al. 2007: 6). Saville-Smith et al. (2007) acknowledge that predicting future levels of disability was impossible but that moderate to severe disability is increasing internationally and this will generate increasing demand for accessible housing stock in future.

The report recommended the introduction of priority policies and regulations that could help make this area of housing provision more suitable to the needs of its consumers. Issues and problems identified included many dwellings not being warm enough and houses considered modified frequently were not modified throughout, for example, access to all rooms such as children's bedrooms was not covered. Not all the needs of individuals were met with the modifications, for example, often only one door was accessible to the outside which could cause problems in a fire, modifications were often piecemeal and did not cover the changing needs of individuals such as aging and that many older people also need accessibility (Saville-

Smith et al. 2007: i-iii). The report recommended that instead of spending money on basic modifications such as widening doors and installing wet showers, it is more cost effective to incorporate accessibility into all new housing being built. However, the Report identified resistance to this guidance, and recognized that there will always be a need for some extra modifications, but this would improve the situation long term. While there may be some consumer resistance to this, incorporating accessibility could be done through education and making modifications aesthetically pleasing (Saville-Smith et al. 2007). Other strong recommendations included a built environment that was resource efficient, accessible and environmentally sustainable, focusing on mainstream housing stock. The Report also calls for the establishment of an accessible housing register to ensure the efficient use of existing accessible stock (Saville-Smith 2007).

Unlike New Zealand, the private sector internationally has engaged in provision of accessible housing in some areas. Saville-Smith et al. (2007) consider Japan, Norway and the USA as being the most successful societies at engaging the private sector in accessible housing provision. They credit this to either strong financial incentives and/or strong legislative or regulatory frameworks. These are as yet not as well developed in New Zealand. Saville-Smith et al. (2007) sum up their immediate priorities as:

- Improving the accessibility and comfort of housing stock through the introduction of universal design
- Improving the policy, funding and practice around providing customized accessibility features to meet individual needs
- Capacity building
- More efficient use of modified housing stock.

A further report produced by the Auckland Regional Growth Forum, *Auckland Regional Affordable Housing Strategy* (2003), included disabled people in its 'goals and desired outcomes' under the area of eliminating discrimination for health reasons as a barrier to pursuing affordable housing options (2003: 5). People with disabilities (these are not specified) are seen as a 'key' issue. They are cited as most likely to have specific needs, which they outline as follows:

Their needs will relate to the design and layout of the housing, proximity to passenger transport and to services, and ease of access to these services... There are many different forms of disability, each of which is likely to generate special needs (Auckland Regional Growth Forum 2003: 50).

A Discussion Paper, *Housing Support Services In Aotearoa New Zealand: Future Policy And Funding Options* (Community Housing Aotearoa 2008) discussed the silo approach to housing vulnerable people and the gaps in services and housing provision that have arisen due to this. The Report recognizes housing support as integral to an individual's wellbeing and functioning in society and a preferred option to institutionalization:

Housing Support is a cheaper and more effective intervention than its alternatives; crisis intervention and institutionalization, and generally leads to improved social, health and housing outcomes for a diverse range of vulnerable groups (2008: 3).

Community Housing Aotearoa therefore recommend a “whole-of-government” national housing support strategy that is well funded and flexible (2008: 3). HNZC currently houses people with both mental health, intellectual and physical disabilities, however, they do not provide wrap around services, social work assistance or a referral service, although these may be provided by other agencies. The risk of becoming homeless is increased for vulnerable people who have disabilities or other issues that inhibit them from accessing suitable housing. Refuges and emergency housing are often not suitably adapted for physical disabilities.

Recent New Zealand research into supported housing in the mental health sector similarly found that the lack of connection between the health and social sectors contributed to difficulties faced by service users who needed both support and housing (Kidd et al, 2015). ‘Poor housing efficacy’⁶ was identified as a factor in a negative housing loop where housing that is damp, cold, unsafe, temporary, and/or without social connections, and existing mental ill health exacerbate each other. The involvement of housing support services can help people move from a difficult and deteriorating situation to a more positive, empowering one with increased options and the means to access them. Supported housing services provided a turning point in the lives of many people.

5. Family violence as a catalyst for homelessness

Housing victims of domestic violence was not prioritised until the 1970s when the inadequacy of emergency housing to cope with this issue became evident. During the 1970s, a national movement of independent women’s refuges emerged, the first of which opened in Christchurch in 1973, followed by one in Auckland in 1975 (Ferguson, 1994). Ferguson believes the reason for the lack of interest in women’s housing until the 1970s was the result of a general tendency for society to blame women for not remaining with their families, whether violence was a cause or not. The fourth Labour Government of the 1980s was more sympathetic to the needs of women, especially vulnerable women, resulting in the establishment of a Special Lending – Women’s Project Fund, which targeted groups providing housing schemes for those with special housing needs or homelessness (Ferguson, 1994). Organisations dealing with domestic violence were able to utilise this fund to provide refuges. Since then the provision of refuges has expanded chiefly through the support of the National Collective of Women’s Refuges.

6. Women and access to housing

Interest in housing women, either single or sole parents has not been a priority of housing policies and provision. Throughout the 1950s, despite lobbying by various groups including the National Council of Women, politicians declined to address the issue. In 1958 women were given the right to apply for state loans, and in 1957 a small percentage of state flats were preserved for single women between 45 and 60 (Ferguson 1994: 213). By the mid-1960s single parent families headed by women were considered for state housing provided their ex-husbands or a solicitor signed the application form. The Government worried that the availability of a state house might encourage women to leave their husbands (Ferguson 1994). As a result, women were forced to live in boarding houses and/or rely on charity. The YWCA provided boarding houses but this was insufficient to meet the demand (Ferguson

⁶ The power and the ability to get the housing you want. This includes factors like debt levels, rental history, and state resources like prioritisation or allowances (Kidd et al., 2015).

1994). This continues today for those with no other options and some boarding houses are not suitable for lone women. Currently there are two boarding houses in Wellington solely for women and the Housing for Women Trust in Christchurch.

Unmarried single mothers were housed from the late 1960s but as they were considered a threat to the nuclear family, were 'pepper-potted' amongst nuclear families (Ferguson 1994: 215-6). The Labour Party's focus on the nuclear family remained more or less unchallenged until the 1970s, a period of change when the rights of women were promoted through the global feminist movement. The introduction of the Domestic Purposes Benefit in 1973 was a recognition and manifestation of this change and generated the need for other types of household formation to be considered apart from the nuclear family.

7. The ability of people to access housing when coming out of prison

Stable housing is thought to reduce re-offending by ex-prisoners by up to 20 percent (Mills et al. 2013; Social Exclusion Unit 2002;), making it an issue of considerable relevance to criminal justice agencies, both internationally and in New Zealand , which is seeking to reduce the recidivism rate by 25 per cent by 2017. However, ex-prisoners are a group who have been generally neglected in New Zealand. In Percy's (1982) Report, *Homelessness in the Auckland Region*, she cites a Prisoners' Aid and Rehabilitation Services (PARS) fieldworker as stating that 70 per cent of ex-prisoners have nowhere to go. Percy recommends inexpensive, unstructured, short-term hostel-style accommodation is built. A report in the *Sunday Star*Times* in 2014 on boarding houses in Auckland noted that the majority of users of these facilities had been in prison. For example, in the old Kingseat psychiatric hospital which since deinstitutionalization has become a boarding house, three-quarters of the 48 residents are men who have come out of prison (*Sunday Star*Times*, 7th December 2014). More research needs to be done in this area and a long term housing policy implemented urgently in order to rectify this situation.

Recent policy developments

Affordability in accessing housing is one of the main barriers to vulnerable people seeking accommodation. In addition, vulnerable people are often not looked upon favourably by landlords in both the private and public sectors. Community housing agencies attempt to fill the gap, but there are few in New Zealand. A report on social housing by The Productivity Commission (2012) reported:

- There are 3,500 applicants on the social housing list (more than 10,000 if family members are included).
- Approximately 5,000 community housing homes are occupied by those who are able to survive in the private rental market.
- There are 160 not-for-profit community housing associations operating in New Zealand.

The Report supported more community sector involvement in social housing provision because of its ability to provide more comprehensive social services. It suggested that:

- Wrap around services are essential for sustainable improvements in clients.

- Tenants considered able to ‘move on’ should be carefully monitored as ‘moving on’ generates the risk of moving to inadequate housing or vulnerable situations which increases risk for both the tenant and the state.
- Community housing needs to have clear accountabilities and a mandate; and it needs to be integrated with social policy if the sector is to deliver social housing (Productivity Commission, 2012).

There is no officially endorsed definition of ‘community housing’ in the New Zealand context as defining ‘community housing’ is complex, partly because the sector is small and in its infancy. Within Government’s policy and planning documentation, it is frequently referred to as the ‘third sector’ and is defined by HNZA as follows:

Located between the state and market sectors, third sector housing organisations use public and private sector resources to deliver housing. They provide an opportunity to help groups whose needs cannot be met by the state and who have difficulty functioning in the private sector (HNZA 2003: 46).

The Social Housing Fund was established in 2011 and by 2013 had distributed \$57 million in grants to NGO social housing providers to co-fund⁷ new housing developments. In the first round in 2012, around one quarter of the funding went equally to housing for people with intellectual disabilities, low-income tenant households and modest-income home buyers. The remaining funding went to providers working with the elderly and those with mental health issues (Johnson 2013). In the second round in 2013, \$20 million worth of grants was given out to create 101 dwellings with 20 per cent of grants going to Māori housing projects (Johnson 2013).

On 20th November 2013, the Minister of Housing, Nick Smith set out the details of his Social Housing Reform Bill 2013, part of the Social Housing Reform Programme, which aims to:

- Encourage the growth of a more diverse range of new social housing providers and to grow the community housing sector to provide 20 per cent of New Zealand’s social housing over the next five years.
- Enable approved social housing providers to receive the same Income Related Rent Subsidies (IRRS) as Housing New Zealand and tenants to receive the benefit of paying a discounted income related rent (Smith 2013)

This policy was justified with reference to international experience which, according to Smith (2013), shows that community housing providers are better able to provide complementary services to tenants to support disabilities and families, do better at transitioning people to independence, more consistently maintain the quality of their housing and can also stretch the tax payer investment in social housing further (Smith 2013). Johnson (2013) identifies two core ideas behind the direction of establishing a social housing market. Firstly, that competition will foster innovation and efficiencies; and secondly, that additional capital will be brought into social housing from the community and private sector, which will reduce demand on the

⁷ Applications were generally funded according to the availability of organisations being able to contribute 50 per cent of the project costs, thus limiting the organisations that could be involved (Johnson 2013).

State. He has already criticised as tokenistic and modest the \$27 million allocated for IRRS to NGO social housing providers for 2013/14 to 2015/16 IRRS (Johnson 2013). The Bill came into effect in 2014. It has also created 'reviewable tenancies', and transferred housing needs assessment from HNZC to the Ministry of Social Development (MSD).⁸ Under these changes 3,000 HNZC tenants will be reviewed over the next two years to ascertain whether or not they need 'social housing'. This policy brings an end to the previous policy of allowing tenants to stay as long as they wish ('tenancies for life'), with HNZC merely encouraging those on higher incomes to move on. According to the Ministry of Social Development, this is to support "... more people into independence from social housing" (2015: 1).

Additionally, in 2015 government announced plans to transfer HNZC houses to community housing providers, as part of the Social Housing Reform Programme. Although the number of properties involved is unclear, most recently the ministers involved have suggested that between 1000 and 2000 houses will be transferred and the scheme will be rolled out firstly in Tauranga and Invercargill (English and Bennett, May 2015). Social and community housing providers will receive subsidies from the MSD to enable them to apply IRRS to the tenants of transferred properties, although Johnson (2013) suggests that HNZC still receive a disproportionately high amount of funding for IRRS. Additionally, a one-off payment of \$500,000 will be made to MSD funded emergency housing agencies as a "cash injection". This will be shared amongst all emergency housing providers around New Zealand. A review of emergency housing funding will be carried out and completed by July 2015 and a register of agencies in the Auckland region developed (Ministry of Social Development, 2015). Unfortunately these policy changes do not appear to address long term provision of housing to cover future needs nor do they address the housing needs of vulnerable groups.

These measures have led to considerable debate amongst community organisations regarding the practicalities of implementing these new policies. The limitations of shifting provision to this sector include its limited size and the need for more funding. There is the possibility that organisations could fold and their stock sold into the private sector either to individual owners or profit-driven organisations, thus being lost as social housing. On the positive side there would be less bureaucracy and tenants would be more supported as community organisations provide them with other help such as providing wrap around services. This is especially important for those with disabilities.

Woolley (2014) of VisionWest, a community housing provider, noted that VisionWest is keen to take up the offer of stock transfers to community organisations and their inclusion in IRRS eligibility. She questioned, however, the degree to which the government will financially assist organisations such as VisionWest, iwi groups, etc, to provide social housing, or whether they will seek to sell the house to these organisations at market price. Following a study to test its capacity, the Salvation Army ruled itself out of negotiations with the Government for the transfer of HNZC stock, stating that it does not have the infrastructure, expertise or resources, particularly given the poor and neglected state of HNZC houses (Feek 2015).

⁸ The details of these changes are beyond this report, see Appendix 2 for the complete press release and details of the Act.

In *Give Me Shelter*, Johnson refers to New Zealand's housing policies as the "wobbly pillar" (2013: 8) of New Zealand's welfare state as historically it has not been given the same importance as health and education. The emphasis has always been on home ownership with renting viewed as a temporary measure as part of a life stage progression towards home ownership, despite many people (especially the vulnerable) never being able to afford to become homeowners. Even today the owner-occupation 'dream' appears to dominate policymaking and the lack of long term planning is evidence of this.

Johnson (2013) is critical of HNZC and its plans to reduce its housing stock. This has happened in the Glen Innes area in Auckland where HNZC has sold land containing state houses to private developers who plan to construct higher density housing with only a small percentage being assigned to state rentals – 156 state houses will be replaced by 260 new dwellings, only 78 of which will be bought back by HNZC (Collins 2015). Similar developments in other areas are planned, reducing the overall housing stock. Johnson states:

The Corporation's 2013-16 Statement of Intent reported that for the same three years [2013-16], \$2.2 billion in capital expenditure was planned of which \$403 million was to be spent in purchasing new buildings and land. This spending was in part to be funded by \$1.066 billion in asset sales. In other words planned asset sales had grown by \$95 million while planned asset purchases had fallen by \$60 million (2013: 35).

Policies and the movement of social housing from supply side subsidies to demand side subsidies illustrate a move away from the needs of social housing to policies that have been driven by "... the fiscal fortunes and political philosophies of the Government" (Johnson 2013: 42). This approach reflects a lack of understanding of the needs of vulnerable people and appears to be a somewhat middle class perspective, with renting considered temporary and, therefore, not worth allocating sufficient funds towards (Johnson 2013: 89). Johnson further suggests:

An alternative framing which includes [people in] poorly paid and perhaps intermittent work, perhaps illness and disability and a lack of any material assets needs to be developed in order to better understand the nature of future demand for housing assistance for perhaps 20 per cent of New Zealanders (2013: 89).

How does the future look?

The future does not look favourable for vulnerable people seeking secure and appropriate housing. The apparent lack of a long-term housing plan in New Zealand and recent moves to downsize state rental housing stock has created a climate of uncertainty. The future of the dwellings that are to be sold to iwi/Māori groups, social housing providers and private sector organisations is unclear. Once removed from public sector stock, fears have been raised that these dwellings could be on-sold and completely disappear from the social housing sector.

The proposed new policies and directions may be limited in ensuring the security of tenure for vulnerable occupants. Community agencies which assist these groups are reliant on funding, usually but not always, from government sources, which is uncertain and often short-term. Care needs to be taken when devolving responsibility

from the State to the community in order to protect vulnerable people and meet their housing needs.

Nevertheless, some of the literature suggests potential solutions. Woolley's (2014) research concludes that Housing First is the best solution for transitioning people out of homelessness and into a secure housing future. Once shelter is provided, wrap-around services are instigated to deal with all the other health and social issues that led to the original situation of homelessness (frequently long term).⁹ Woolley (2014) promotes the idea of strong community sector support (the meso level), both religious and secular, in order to resolve homeless situations.

At a Social Science Research Fund Committee (SSRFC) symposium in 1987 suggestions were made for ways to address homelessness. Pool (1987) encouraged viewing housing as a social policy issue not a social welfare issue; and Whelan (1987) recommended that HCNZ investigate and report on proposals by the organisation Shelter For All, for an amendment to the Housing Corporation Act 1974 for a statutory obligation for the homeless, thus recognising housing as a human right. Furthermore, Campbell Roberts (1987) suggested that the root of the problem lay in treating housing as a commodity rather than a social need. He and others have stressed the need for a long term housing strategy¹⁰ to provide permanent housing so that in five to ten years transitional housing would cease to be necessary. His conclusion lists recommendations (see Appendix 3) that had they been followed might have seen New Zealand become a well-housed society instead of one that is currently in a situation of housing provision chaos.

Conclusion

The New Zealand 'dream' of home ownership is not, and never has been, viable for everyone in society especially for the vulnerable. A viable rental sector needs to be developed in line with these shifts. Households come in many forms and sizes, so a variety of high quality stock sizes and design types need to be planned and built for the future.

Since the 1970s housing has been viewed by policy makers as a welfare issue, rather than a human rights issue and, therefore, addressed as social policy. The welfare perspective perpetuates the 'deserving' and 'undeserving' poor traditions of the 19th century. This approach to housing New Zealand's population discourages long term plans and commitments and encourages 'blame the victim' sentiments. In so doing it inhibits policy development and discourages general community support. Addressing housing as a human right needs to be the focus, and more objectivity used in planning housing policy to remove the tradition of favouring the 'deserving', which will continue to dominate if housing is viewed as a welfare issue. Viewing housing as a human right will allow the target of achieving a well-housed nation to be set and worked towards. Continuing to propose solutions to housing vulnerable people and people on low to modest incomes from an economic perspective rather than from a social perspective will just lead to a continuation of the current situation. As Johnson (2013:88) suggests 'the ownership of the housing provided matters less

⁹ Housing First originally worked with people suffering from substance abuse and mental illness, but can be applied to all situations of homelessness (Woolley 2014).

¹⁰ The New Zealand Coalition to End Homelessness (2009) also called for a nationwide homelessness strategy to eradicate homelessness by a target date.

than that housing is able to meet the reasonable needs of the people living in it'. People need to be housed first and foremost in order to participate fully in society

CHAPTER THREE: THE WORKSHOPS

Workshops were held in Auckland (15th May 2014), Christchurch (21st July 2014) and Wellington (21st October 2014). To each workshop, a range of participants were invited, including those from addiction and mental health services, criminal justice agencies (court/prison/probation/case management), housing organisations, social welfare-orientated NGOs (such as the Salvation Army/Richmond Fellowship/Lifewise), domestic violence services, youth agencies and government departments. The make-up of participants varied slightly with the focus of the workshop. The Auckland workshop participants, for example, were predominantly professionals who work with marginalised populations. The Christchurch workshop was focused on children and families and participants included mainly youth and family agencies, with Christchurch City Council also well represented. In contrast, many of the participants from the Wellington workshops were from government departments and social housing agencies. After a short introduction to the project and the research team, and a talk from the keynote speaker,¹¹ the attendees took part in small group activities to discuss salient housing issues and solutions from their varied perspectives.

The following provides further detail on the keynote addresses at each workshop.

Keynote speakers

Alan Johnson, Social Policy and Parliamentary Unit, Salvation Army

Alan Johnson set out the history of the state housing system, noting that there are approx. 67,500 state houses and 30,000 of these were built between 1938 and 1950. In the 1940s, the National Party emphasised family values and private enterprise. After they won the election in 1949, home ownership was assisted, particularly for returning servicemen. This was done through low interest loans, industrial scale suburban housing and tax payer funded road building. The 1950s were a time of mass suburbanisation and by the 1960s, state housing became to be seen in 'pathological' terms and has remained residual ever since. This partly came about due to the Mazengarb report on youth behaviour in 1954, which blamed bad parenting and state housing for poor behaviour. State tenants were essentially blamed for creating their own problems.

As part of the rolling back of the state (of state welfare provision), which commenced in the mid-80s, in 1991, with unemployment in excess of 10 per cent, welfare cuts and markets rents were introduced. At the same time, state supported home ownership programmes were dismantled. State housing is worth approximately \$60 billion – it is therefore probably NZ's biggest asset. However, politically it is not so important that the government wants to do it better, but they cannot ignore it. Housing NZ is becoming much more commercial, to provide higher dividends. The Crown now receives substantially more from Housing NZ in dividends than it provides in contributions. A radical change/reconfiguration in the Housing NZ portfolio in terms of the type and location of housing is likely, and under National

¹¹ Auckland - Alan Johnson, Salvation Army; Christchurch – Sue Hay, Salvation Army, and Gerald Direen, Linwood Avenue Primary School; Wellington – Vicki McLaren, Wellington City Council.

there has been a quiet and gradual reduction in the stock of state houses. Alan predicted that assessment for housing need will be used as a rationing tool as exemplified by the fact that application and assessment for housing is now a phone-based system – the trouble is you may not have access to a phone.

Additionally, National has sought to establish a social housing market, with \$26 million given to social housing providers and income related rent subsidies have been extended to NGO social housing providers, although this could be viewed as a token effort. Housing NZ has publicly supported gentrification in the name of a social mix and reductions in the concentrations of poverty. For example, in 2011, it highlighted how it had been helping people shift to the private rental sector to move them away from ‘problem neighbourhoods’. However, how well this works remains to be seen. In Glenn Innes, for example, will the middle class cope with living next to the poor?

Alan then went on to discuss the concept of vulnerability. In housing terms, vulnerabilities are complex, multi-faceted and related to poverty – being unwanted, unloved and uncared for. Vulnerability is the outcome of the lack of regard that New Zealand has for certain groups of people. Alan gave the example of the over 65s and young people to illustrate this. The substantial political and financial focus on superannuation can be contrasted with the growth in youth unemployment with few resources given to dealing with it. Additionally, an emphasis on Victorian values has given rise to a strong work ethic but also the notion of a ‘deserving’ and ‘undeserving’ poor. Alan gave the example of the Bengal famine in 1944 to illustrate how the needs of the vulnerable are marginalised. In the case of the famine, there was sufficient food to go around but the UK Army had purchased so much rice to feed their troops that this disrupted the market, pushing the price of food out of reach for many. In this instance, as in housing, the most vulnerable had no entitlements.

Housing in New Zealand is a game of snakes and ladders. NGOs tend to focus on the ‘deserving poor’. They rarely consider the bigger picture as they are usually just interested in getting a person into accommodation. Community Housing Aotearoa is advancing the transfer of state housing stock to NGO social housing providers, but this will just result in a change of providers rather than changing the housing stock. A ‘naïve complicity’ exists between the NGO social housing providers and the government which is highly unlikely to place the housing needs of the most vulnerable at the centre stage. A rights-based approach to housing would ensure that the needs of the vulnerable are recognised. Additionally, it was noted that the vulnerable are often invisible, for example, young adults sleeping on sofas. Or children who become vulnerable because they miss out on education and a decent income and therefore cannot get into housing independently. Alan pointed out that in years to come, there are likely to be substantial labour shortages and with that, greater competition for young people. This could be a tipping point, as the wealth will need to be shared in order for the baby boomer generation to be cared for.

Sue Hay, Social Policy and Parliamentary Unit (SPPU), Salvation Army

Sue began by detailing child and family poverty in New Zealand. Although there is no agreed measure of relative poverty in New Zealand, 250,000 children are estimated to be in poverty in New Zealand and for each of these children, there is at least one adult attached to them. Seventeen per cent of families do not have enough

money for food and 40,000 families get their electricity cut off due to unpaid bills. Rates of poverty in New Zealand are now higher than in the 1980s. Fifty per cent of all poor children in New Zealand are white and nearly half of all children in poverty live in private rental housing.

Sue then went on to discuss some of the substantial difficulties faced by families in Christchurch, including substandard and overcrowded housing and substantial rent rises due to the overheated housing market. For example, 18 people living in one 3 bedroom house and one family's rent rising \$150 a week after it had been subject to post-earthquake repairs. Since the earthquakes rents in Aranui have increased by 29 to 36 per cent yet welfare benefit rates have not risen. In Hornby there has been a 25 to 40 per cent increase. The number of hours that a family needs to work to pay the end/mortgage has gone up from 15-20 hours pre-quakes to 18-23 hours. Quality of housing is also severely lacking with some landlords not rebuilding or repairing damaged properties but renting them out because they know the demand is there. Such properties are often cold, damp and damaged but there is no one to tell the landlords that they must be repaired, although the proposed Warrant of Fitness (WOF) scheme and a landlord register may help with this. Getting access to more stable, better quality housing is highly challenging. Sue gave the example of one woman living with her child in a severely damaged house who has been refused a place on the HNZA waiting list because she still has a roof over her head. The earthquakes have also led to a substantial degree of transition in Christchurch with 14,000 people leaving since the quakes. Between 2006 and 2013, there has been a decline of 16 per cent of the population of Christchurch East, perhaps the most vulnerable region of Christchurch in terms of earthquake damage and socio-economic deprivation.

In order to alleviate some of these housing difficulties, Sue recommended that social housing agencies should offer long-term leases to provide families with stability. Without this, children often have to move school as they move properties with a consequent effect on their education and wellbeing. Those in state housing are the lucky ones as 46 per cent of those in HNZA properties are not living below the poverty line. The Salvation Army is also advocating a universal benefit for children, starting off with children under three to ensure that the welfare state is of benefit to all. As suggested above, the WOF idea was also strongly advocated by Sue as a mechanism to ensure a basic quality of living.

Gerald Direen, Principal, Linwood Avenue Primary School

Ko te Tamaiti te Pūtake o te Kaupapa
The child - the heart of the matter

Gerald has been the Principal at Linwood Avenue Primary for two years and described some of the challenges of teaching and looking after children in the aftermath of the earthquakes. He is part of a collective across schools in Christchurch East, which is trying to tackle the core issues facing children and their families. Children's emotional and behavioural needs have changed and there are more 'top-end kids' with serious problems, exacerbated by the transitional nature of life in Christchurch where many families have left the city or have moved between areas in the city. Linwood Avenue now has a 40 per cent annual turnover since the earthquake. Children in Linwood Avenue were suffering from the effects of when

'poverty meets disaster', with around one third living in homes that were not weatherproof, including in garages, sheds and caravans. In one case, a family (mum with four kids) was living in a car for several months. The school started offering parents 'coffee at the gate' and found several similar cases. Other children live in overcrowded situations with several families in one dwelling (which could include garages). In such cases, and those of single parent families encouraged to take in boarders to help with the rent, children were left vulnerable to sexual assault, as there is no facility for police checks on the boarders/co-habitees.

Gerald called for collective responsibility to ensure that children in Christchurch are better cared for to lift them out of these conditions. For example, schools should hold weekly health clinics so that it could be ensured that no child was regularly cold, in ill-health or unsafe, although public health nurses have not received any additional funding since the earthquakes. The most common response to children who are 'at risk' and/or disruptive, was just to shore in another teacher aide. Children friendly facilities and services should be at the forefront of the recovery effort, and WINZ should have a 0800 social work service. There is a need to apportion greater resources into children and to ensure that they are protected. Although there have been some welcome developments, such as Habitat for Humanity building 20 new houses in Christchurch, this is by no means enough.

Vicki McLaren, Manager, City Housing, Wellington City Council

Vicki detailed the progress that has been made towards ending homelessness in Wellington by 2020 through Te Mahana, a city wide, collaborative, inter-sectoral approach. Wellington City Council (WCC) has 2181 housing units, distributed between 40 high to medium density complexes and 12 small sites and a number of standalone houses. It provides 49 per cent of the social housing in Wellington. The stock consists of around a third each of bedsits, 1-bedroom flats and 2-3 bedroom dwellings with a small number of larger properties. Rent is set at 70 per cent of the market rent and the affordable rent limit is 35 per cent of tenant's income. All tenants are subject to an annual rent review and if their income increases and falls out of the Council policy, they get 12 months' notice to transition to market rents. Rents are also frozen when the tenant turns 80. The average age of tenants is 55, with 65 per cent living alone and 80 per cent receiving some kind of income support. The target groups for the accommodation include the fit elderly, refugees and migrants, those with low level psychiatric needs or physical disabilities, and those who might be classed as 'multiple disadvantaged'. They are often disadvantaged in the private sector and have no other options other than social housing due to their social and mental health issues. Around 40 per cent of their tenants are dependent on welfare, 25 per cent are from low income working households, 10 per cent from moderate incomes households and 25 per cent are fit elderly. The waiting list for accommodation in Wellington consists predominantly of middle-aged, single males, waiting for studio or one-bed apartments.

Wellington City Council is currently in year seven of a 20-year partnership with the Crown to upgrade its social housing, which requires WCC to provide the same level of social housing for 30 years. The initial focus was on seismic strengthening, but the wider aim is to ensure that homes are modern, warm, dry and secure, with appropriate community amenities. The standard of renovated WCC homes exceeds the guidelines for the Housing Warrant of Fitness (WOF). Examples of upgraded housing include the Regent Park project, Newtown which provides family and

apartment style accommodation. The community was initially resistant to this project feeling that it would increase housing density but WCC worked with the local community and Residents' Associations, and received highly positive feedback following completion of the project.

In addition, the council offers support services in order to sustain tenancies, including targeted support for 'at risk' tenants. WCC has partnered with various support networks and developed action plans which may include a visitation schedule and social support networks to help tenants integrate and get to know their neighbours. Community building activities also aim to enhance social inclusion and include onsite health and community development services, community gardens, social spaces such as BBQ areas, clubs and classes, tenant leaderships and a job club. Such activities are particularly important for older persons who can be socially isolated: the case of an older social housing tenant who died and whose body was not discovered for about a year, was a catalyst for these community-building activities. Older people also make valuable community builders.

WCC also liaises with probation and other agencies to help ex-prisoners find accommodation on release, but this can be challenging for those who are seeking or have been granted parole. WCC social housing is a business and requires a guaranteed release date as it cannot lose rent waiting for people to be released from prison. The council is currently exploring the possibility of leasing housing that can act as transitional accommodation in such circumstances. For migrants and refugees, WCC has developed a partnership with Refugee Services and contracted agencies so that a property can be contracted and set up for individual families in advance of their 'move-in' date. Language barriers can create some difficulties in tenancy management but Refugee Support services have been responsive to support needs.

WCC faces various difficulties in providing social housing, for example, it can be challenging to sustain high and complex needs tenancies. Furthermore, as local authority housing is excluded from income related rent subsidies, it has to balance rental affordability with a sustainable business model. But Wellington does have the opportunity to pilot initiatives. They are not under the same housing pressures as Auckland and they have secure funding to plan and develop new forms of accommodation and tenant support. The evaluation of the housing upgrade programme has found that social isolation has decreased and social inclusion has risen so the council feel they are slowly reducing loneliness. Tenants have suggested that they feel much safer and connected to the community and there are improved relationships with City Housing, partly due to tenant leaders who are successful in creating community cohesion. Vicki finally suggested that good quality community housing could have broader social outcomes and with those, substantial economic benefits:

Every dollar spent in social housing delivers three dollars in health outcomes and a dollar fifty in education outcomes.

Findings from the workshops: Key housing issues in the three centres

Following the keynote addresses, participants were then split up into small groups and asked to discuss what they thought were the key housing issues for vulnerable and marginalised populations in their region. Some of the themes that emerged from such discussions are outlined below.

Choice: The most prominent theme arising from the Auckland workshop was choice. Choice was an umbrella concept that had many dimensions. For example, choice for the client could be choice of housing provider; choice of accommodation in terms of individual living or communal living with whanau; the location of accommodation; and the duration of tenancy. Choice was also discussed as the juxtaposition of paternalism compared with support for their chosen lifestyles. There is a need not just for availability, flexibility and choice in housing but also for clients to be actively involved in housing decisions.

Suitable accommodation in good condition: Firstly, there was consensus that suitable accommodation was more than simply a roof over the head, as one attendee noted, “a house is more than bricks and mortar, and a home is more than a house’. Creating a home rather than merely a house could help people to live well and improve their sense of self-worth. Suitable accommodation needs to be a safe and secure space, which fits the client’s individual needs. Secondly, the quality of housing should be improved to ensure that it does not create or exacerbate serious health conditions, although this could cost money to either the landlord (e.g. through renovations or installing a damp removal system) or to the tenant (in the form of increased rent or power bills) and some tenants may feel unable to voice complaints about their accommodation due to the insecurity of their tenancy. Accommodation should be regulated perhaps through the proposed Warrant of Fitness, to ensure better conditions. Thirdly, accommodation needs to be located in a place close to health and support services, public transport, and shops and to whanau if required. There should also be a broader range of building structures to cater for a wide range of needs including capacity for multiple generations to live together if desired.

Social connectedness, social capital and sense of belonging: Linked to the concepts of choice and suitable accommodation was the theme of social connectedness, social capital and sense of belonging. One conceptualisation of social capital is as a communal resource that can safeguard groups facing negative events that threaten their wellbeing. It is the bond that holds people together, and is associated with a sense of belonging and support, trust, shared goals, social networks and group affiliation (Groot, 2010: 20). When this was unpacked in the workshop, attendees spoke about the need for clients to feel a sense of social belonging, to feel part of communities. In order for this to occur, clients needed secure and long-term tenancies in their communities of choice. It is apparent from research that clients who are socially connected in communities are more likely to remain well than those who are not (Clarke and McCann, 2003; Groot, 2010; Hamilton, 2011; Kidd et al, 2015). Social connectedness was a particular issue in Christchurch for people living in areas affected by the earthquakes who had then move to other areas, and it was recognised that they needed substantial help to deal with the cultural shift that this entailed, particularly if they had lived in the former area all their lives. Similarly, in heavily damaged areas of Christchurch, people were

deserting non-damaged housing because the sense of community and social connectedness had broken down.

Safe transitional housing: Safe and appropriate transitional housing was also seen as lacking, particularly for people moving from emergency or institutional accommodation (such as prison or hospital) to more permanent housing. Available transitional accommodation, such as boarding houses, was seen as 'dangerous' and unsafe, due to shared facilities such as bathrooms and kitchens and the variety of different groups accommodated there. Furthermore, much available emergency provision is located in city centres, leaving the people disconnected from communities and suffering from a lack of services and other support. Currently there is no key organisation or agency that advocates for people in transitional or emergency accommodation to help them into more permanent accommodation, although many of the workshop participants were involved in advocating for their clients even if this was not the main task of their agency/support.

Vulnerability: In all three workshops, participants noted the challenges of obtaining housing for those with additional needs. One participant in the Wellington workshop suggested that agencies such as Housing New Zealand frequently 'skim the top off the most vulnerable' as they are selective in choosing tenants and those who are vulnerable (e.g. single homeless) may not always meet the specific criteria and remain at the bottom of the housing list. Within groups, there is also additional vulnerability. For example, in mental health someone who is single and with addiction issues is likely to be more vulnerable than someone with no addiction issues and a supportive whanau. Finally, stakeholders noted the creation of 'vulnerable' groups who are socially isolated due to the lack of affordable housing and the absence of any national housing strategy to tackle current housing challenges.

Stigma and discrimination: Some groups are more likely to face discrimination and stigma ensuring that it is harder for them to obtain accommodation. For example, people with a different sexual orientation may not fit into housing communities or be discriminated against in private rentals. Communities (including landlords and neighbours) are also less accepting of certain groups such as ex-prisoners, refugees, migrants and those with addictions/mental health problems. Ex-offenders may face difficulties obtaining references in order to access housing and are often excluded from private rentals. It can also be challenging finding housing for people who have already lost previous tenancies due to non-payment of rent or property damage.

Need for support services: All the workshops noted the need for support services for vulnerable groups not only to help them obtaining housing but also to help them adjust to tenancies and ensure that they can keep them. Stakeholders also noted that people were not always certain or aware of the welfare benefits that they are entitled to and may miss out on them. This can create great difficulties as it may exacerbate mental health and/or addiction problems, in turn increasing costs for society. Housing New Zealand no longer provides any support services but community organisations do. Tenants, however, do not always know how to tap into such services. At the Wellington workshop, participants also expressed concerns about how to help those with high and complex needs who they felt needed 24-hour supervision.

Lack of co-ordination and connection: Stakeholders suggested that the situation of vulnerable groups was made more challenging by the lack of co-ordination, connection and collaboration between different services or different municipal localities. This situation was not assisted by privacy concerns, which prevent information sharing, and the highly competitive, often short-term, funding environment, which make it hard to work collaboratively or consider the long-term picture. Additionally, it was felt that services are not flexible enough to cope with people with complex needs as some deal only with certain specified needs, e.g. mental health, rather than taking a more holistic approach. Integrated services are key, particularly as a significant minority of service users are 'service-hopping'. There has been some innovation where silos have been broken down. For example, in Christchurch some NGOs working in mental health have started working together, discussing referrals together and sharing information to promote collaboration and remove the competitive aspect from service provision.

Bureaucracy and information: A lack of data about people with housing needs and available accommodation means that demand and supply are not well mapped. Little is known about levels of invisible homelessness, either in the form of couch surfing or overcrowding. It is therefore hard to match services with the people who need them or plan services to meet needs.

Families and children: In the Christchurch workshop, it was noted that families and children are facing particular difficulties. Families with children were less likely to be preferred tenants than those without, meaning that they were more likely to suffer housing difficulties. Furthermore, parents are stressed and depressed due to the effects of the earthquake and more reluctant to be firm with their children, leading to a lack of behavioural boundaries. Children may be taking on parental concerns and are also having to move away from their schools and local connections. Children live in the now – there is a need to invest in them now so that the current situation and its attendant stressors do not impact badly on their future. Although there was help for children such as counsellors and social workers in schools, children's voices desperately need to be heard to understand their needs from their perspective.

Additionally in Christchurch, family violence notifications have increased as families, which had been learning to cope without violence, have returned to violence as a coping strategy due to the stress of the earthquake. Relationships Aotearoa had been given funding for extra counselling for EQ-related problems, helping over 32,000 families since 2011, whilst other agencies have put substantial effort into making victims feel safer at homes after abusers have moved out. Having a dog could often make women feel safer but finding accommodation that will take pets could be problematic, ensuring some women preferred to stay in their cars with their pets rather than in stable housing.

International examples of best practice

At the Auckland and Wellington workshops, participants were also presented with three examples of international good practice; Housing First (US and Canada), Vision Housing (UK) and Common Ground/Micah Project (Australia). Workshop participants were then asked their opinions of such examples to stimulate ideas about housing solutions in New Zealand.

Housing First

Housing First is an approach that aims to end homelessness quickly by providing clients with a home first, then putting the necessary wraparound services in place. This model differs to the traditional service delivery model for chronically homeless people, which aims to enhance clients' "housing readiness" through outreach services including treatment and transitional housing, before transition to permanent housing. The assumption underlying this approach is that clients with drug, alcohol or mental health issues cannot maintain permanent housing before their condition is stable, and any skills needed for independent living can be learned in transitional accommodation arrangements.

Research suggests that the most effective place for a client to learn the skills needed for a particular environment is within that actual setting (Tsemberis et al. 2004). The transitional approach is incompatible with clients' priorities for stable housing (Culhane et al. 2002). Those who are chronically homeless often experience an inability to gain access to existing housing programmes. Often clients have multiple needs, including psychiatric disorders and/or addictions, and programmes are poorly equipped or unwilling to treat these dual diagnoses, let alone prepared to address housing needs (Hwang et al. 2012). Clients who experience housing instability due to frequent hospitalisations and alcohol and other drug treatment may be mistrustful of treatment providers or unwilling to comply with the demands of a housing programme. Furthermore, some clients prefer the relative independence of being on the street but this may confirm perceptions that an individual is not "housing ready" (Tsemberis et al. 2004).

In the United States, the Pathways Housing First model was developed to meet the housing and treatment needs of the chronically homeless population (Tsemberis, 2010). Housing First is based on the premise that housing is a basic human right and a foundation to wellness. Housing First aims to address the client's needs from their perspective, regardless of their willingness to engage in treatment or rehabilitation. In addition to accommodation, clients are offered treatment support and access to a community treatment team. This team comprises of health and social work professionals and alcohol and other drug counsellors who are able to offer assistance 24 hours per day, seven days per week (Padgett et al. 2006).

While there are numerous Housing First programmes, which vary depending on the target population, they share critical elements. These include: a focus on helping individuals and families access and sustain permanent rental housing as quickly as possible without time limits; a variety of services delivered to promote housing stability and individual well-being on an as-needed basis; and a standard lease agreement to housing – as opposed to mandated therapy or services compliance (Drake et al. 2014). Whether clients choose to comply with treatment does not affect

their housing status and assistance continues to be available to them (Tsemberis et al. 2004).

Research studies demonstrate that the Housing First approach is effective in reducing levels of homelessness among the chronically homeless and that Housing First clients remain stably housed (Greenwood et al. 2005). A longitudinal study of 225 clients compared the outcomes of those using linear services (n=126) and those using a Housing First programme (n=99). The authors found that 88 per cent of those housed through the Housing First model retained their housing for two years compared to 47 per cent in the continuum of care model (Gulcur et al. 2003). After four years, housing retention rates remained higher in the Housing First cohort, compared to those reported in the control group, at 75 per cent and 48 per cent respectively (Padgett et al. 2006). However, it is important to contextualise these results. Most evaluations of the Housing First model have been conducted in the United States. Given the differences between the United States and New Zealand in terms of population, health and social services, housing availability and affordability, some of these favourable results may not be transferrable. For example, New Zealand may not have access to the resources required to meet the basic housing and service provision criteria. The ideals of the Housing First programme are only achievable in the presence of sufficient resources and the focus on choice, holistic recovery, separation of housing and support and community integration are dependent upon these resources (Johnson et al. 2012: 14). Therefore, for the Housing First model to operate successfully in New Zealand, the capacity to access permanent housing and to fund and deliver on-going community support is essential.

Vision Housing, London, UK

Vision Housing is a scheme that aims to provide stable housing for people released from prison or on community sentences. Research has shown that stable accommodation can reduce the risk of re-offending by ex-prisoners by up to 20 percent (Baldry et al. 2006; Lutze et al. 2014; Metraux and Culhane 2004; O'Leary 2013; Social Exclusion Unit 2002; Williams et al. 2012), yet up to 12,000 offenders are released from prison in England and Wales each year with no fixed address (Allison 2008). Vision Housing was established by an ex-prisoner, Annys Darka. She herself served a four-year sentence and during that time, noticed many released prisoners returning to prison time and time again, who identified housing as the main barrier to successful reintegration. When Annys was released she also experienced the very limited support for ex-prisoners and decided to do something about it. Working from the back of her car, Annys visited shops and other places where accommodation was advertised and contacted various private landlords to see if they would be willing to accommodate ex-prisoners if a security bond and rent were guaranteed. Based in London (an area of great housing need with several large prisons), Vision Housing has now built up a large network of private landlords who are willing to take their clients. Referrals to Vision Housing can be made by local authorities, correctional services and non-governmental organisations or through self-referral. Clients are helped to access emergency crisis loans within 24 hours of release to enable them to pay a month's rent in advance. The organisation offers direct, same day payments to landlords and carries out monthly property inspections. Clients can stay for at least six months and Vision Housing is usually able to provide accommodation on the day of release, avoiding the need for transitional housing such as hostel accommodation. Vision Housing also provides a variety of support services through other non-governmental organisations which are

tailored to the need of individual clients who typically have multiple needs including addictions, debt, domestic violence, gangs and poor health. Social mentoring is also offered.

Since its establishment, Vision Housing has housed over 650 clients (Ellison et al. 2013) and over 85 per cent of tenants maintain their tenancies for the full duration of their lease. A study in 2013 compared the predicted re-offending rate with the rate of actual reoffending for Vision Housing tenants. It found an 11 per cent reduction on average in re-offending amongst tenants, a 26 per cent reduction for women and a 21 per cent reduction for more serious offenders (Ellison et al. 2013). Vision Housing has won several awards including the Innovation Award at the Redemption and Justice Awards in 2013.

With some modification due to the different systems of social welfare, an approach similar to that taken by Vision Housing could be used by NGOs or correctional agencies in New Zealand to secure housing for ex-prisoners on release.

Micah Projects, Brisbane Common Ground

Micah Projects is a not-for-profit organisation located in the South Brisbane area that delivers services to individuals and families who may be homeless or receiving low incomes. It evolved from an initiative of the St Mary Church community in response to the increasing numbers of people experiencing homelessness in Brisbane. It has grown into a community organisation that now delivers services in the areas of domestic violence, homelessness, mental health and disability support services, and street to home services. In particular, it uses an assertive outreach model to engage with rough sleepers in order to understand their needs, to help them resolve crisis and access housing if they want.

Brisbane Common Ground grew out of the organisation's belief in the 'housing first approach' and the need to break the cycle of chronic homelessness by providing permanent, affordable solutions for individuals experiencing chronic homelessness. Brisbane Common Ground is a supportive housing project, aptly located on Hope Street in South Brisbane. The project is a joint government- business-community partnership with Micah Project delivering the support services. There are 146 units onsite with 24/7 support services for tenants (including 24 hour concierge for safety and security). Communal areas, including a roof garden, have been designed to enhance community cohesion. The social tenant mix comprises of 50 per cent low income workers and 50 per cent those who have experienced chronic homelessness to mitigate stigmatisation and reduce the likelihood of social and neighbourhood problems associated with a concentration of those with complex needs (Batchelor 2013). Tenants sign a lease and are required to meet tenancy responsibilities (i.e. pay their rent, maintain their unit and be a good neighbour). Most tenants do not become homeless again and, in many cases, move onto more independent housing. Batchelor (2013) reports that after 15 months in operation, 71 per cent of formerly chronically homeless tenants had been housed for at least 12 months. The Brisbane Common Ground project therefore offers an excellent example of housing and substantial housing support services for vulnerable groups.

CHAPTER FOUR: SOLUTIONS TO HOUSING DIFFICULTIES FOR VULNERABLE POPULATIONS IN NEW ZEALAND

The solutions discussed below emerged from both the literature and the workshop discussion with key stakeholders.

Funding

In terms of funding structures, attendees discussed the need for increased funding for social housing and for emergency accommodation for rough sleepers, in addition to funding for community agencies that provide wrap around programmes and support for vulnerable groups. Lang's (2007) study of study of six rough sleepers in Auckland found that they received \$1.5 million of government funding in five years through on-going use of income support, health and addiction services, the justice and prison system and community agencies, yet they were still homeless. Thus it is likely to be more cost-effective to fund quality social housing than to pay for the costs of homelessness, particularly as unstable, poor quality housing can lead to a range of negative social outcomes. Therefore, it is crucial that the Government places emphasis on the issue of increasing long-term housing funding, as short-term funding could be seen as tokenistic, and does not promote change. Attendees at the Auckland workshop spoke at length about the current competitive funding model for housing providers. They felt that this encourages competition between providers, instead of collaboration, which was often counterproductive when dealing with the most vulnerable members of society. If housing was considered a human right, rather than as a welfare issue, there could be a long-term national housing strategy and/or a cross-party agreement on investment into housing to ensure longevity in funding structures and political commitment.

Governance and regulation

A number of issues emerged from the research around the regulations and governance of housing in New Zealand. Chief amongst these was the need for a Warrant of Fitness programme to regulate and improve the quality of all rental stock, both public and private, but also an inspection and regulation regime for boarding houses to improve conditions for those who live and work there. It was also suggested that the Residential Tenancies Act should be strengthened to provide substantial security of tenure, and that this might help to ensure that renting was not merely seen as a transitional life stage but as an appropriate and secure housing option.

Innovation and thinking

Rather than relying on traditional accommodation, attendees felt that 'thinking outside the box' was needed. Examples included using empty farmhouses to create opportunities for youth, both in terms of accommodation and employment. The current container village in Christchurch, which was erected after the Christchurch earthquakes in 2011, is also a good example of this progressive provision. The road to homelessness was noted as complex, and it is important to recognise that those experiencing homelessness are not a homogeneous group. Therefore, individual needs, including diversity, cultural issues, living arrangements and accessibility issues all need to be taken into account and respected at all levels, including in housing design

Collaboration

Collaboration at all levels from government ministries through to NGOs providing support services on the ground was felt to be needed to ensure that people are housed appropriately and received the right support to sustain that housing. One suggested model was to have a lead agency for housing that then partners with local councils and NGOs to create a dynamic social housing entity that is capable of responding to diverse and complex needs. It was also suggested that greater information sharing and collaboration between the Health and Housing Ministries is required, and that multi-agency work should be sustainable so that it continues even when governments change. Specific planning should also be carried out to address the often high and complex needs of the chronic and aging homeless. As mentioned above, housing should be conceptualised as a basic human right that should be met regardless of politics.

Finding suitable landlords

A common problem that service providers and other stakeholders faced is trying to find suitable landlords. Attendees considered this to be due to stigma towards those experiencing homelessness and again, a funding issue. Rent guarantees used by Vision Housing (see above) could act as incentives for private landlords. Workshop participants also suggested that assessing suitability and trying to find information about landlords as areas for potential future research, and proposed creating a database of available accommodation or a rental register that could also give advice on good and poor landlords. It was acknowledged, however, this could be political and difficult to manage. It was also suggested that training should be made available for those working with vulnerable groups to encourage landlords to engage with their tenants and have active input into the support they receive.

Emergency accommodation

There is large and immediate need for suitable emergency accommodation for those experiencing homelessness, and such accommodation needs to be more than just short-term beds in hostels. It was also recommended that there are more opportunities and resources for homelessness prevention, reducing the need for emergency housing in the first instance.

Advocacy and transitional support

Finally, advocates or 'navigators' are needed to approach agencies on behalf of potential tenants with high levels of need but also to help people transition from short term emergency accommodation to longer term affordable housing. Those who are relocating due to the earthquakes in Christchurch could also be helped to prepare for the move and to build up new connections in their new communities.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

This report has detailed a project that set out to identify the core issues and explore some potential solutions for housing of vulnerable and marginalised groups. We hope that this report can act as a think piece to activate those in the field to collaborate with us to make some real change in this context. The future of housing for vulnerable and marginalised groups requires a strong stakeholder group that is willing to advocate and mobilise change in the direction of housing policy and provision.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Housing Warrant of Fitness Assessment checklist

Appendix B Housing Warrant of Fitness Assessment Checklist Version 2.1 June 2014

Assessor Details		Assessment Date:	
Assessor Name:		Assessor ID:	
Organisation:		Phone:	
Property Contact Information		Property Contact Information	
Tenant Name:		Owner Name:	
Property Address:		Contact Address:	
Property Phone:		Owner Phone:	
Email:			
Property Information			
House Age (approx. yr.):		Approximate Size	m ²
Storeys		Number of bedrooms:	
Type	<input type="checkbox"/> detached <input type="checkbox"/> duplex <input type="checkbox"/> terrace <input type="checkbox"/> apartment		Start Time:

P	F	Kitchen & Laundry
		Wall and ceiling linings, and floor intact
		Surfaces clear of mould
		Functioning stove and oven
		Effective ventilation to the outside
		Adequate food preparation and storage
		Working artificial lighting
		Potable water supply
		Hot water temperature at tap (55°C ±5°C)
		Waste water drainage with sound connection
		Visibly safe power outlets and light switches
		Secure storage (1.2 m high or child-safe lock)
P	F	Bathroom & Toilet
		Wall and ceiling linings, and floor intact
		Surfaces clear of mould
		Operational toilet
		Sewage connection functional
		Functioning bath or shower
		Effective ventilation to the outside
		Waste water drain connected
		Working artificial lighting
		Visibly safe power outlets and light switches
P	F	Living Areas
		Wall and ceiling linings, and floor intact
		Surfaces clear of mould
		Working artificial lighting:
		• Living, lounge, dining
		• Hallway
		• Stairs (switch at each end)
		• Other
		Visibly safe power outlets and light switches
		Window security stays (where required)
		Heating, fixed, effective and safe kW
		Opening window (each area) with secure latch
		Curains/drapes present

1	2	3	4	+	Bedrooms
P	F	P	F	P	F
					Opening window, with latch
					Window stays (if required)
					Wall/ceiling linings intact
					Surfaces clear of mould
					Working artificial light
					Safe power & light switches
					Smoke alarm within 3 m
					Curains/drapes present
P	F	Entrance			
		Address clearly labelled and identifiable			
		Securely locking door(s)			
		Working light			
P	F	Ceiling			
		Insulation to requirements (120 mm)			
		No gaps, tucks, or folds			
		No dampness in insulation			
		Clearance from lights, ducts and roof			
		Thermoplastic insulated cabling			
P	F	Under Floor			
		Insulation to requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Foil <input type="checkbox"/> Bulk			
		Dry underfloor			
		Ground vapour barrier			
		No ponding			
P	F	General			
		Envelope in reasonable repair and weather tight			
		No cracks, holes in roof			
		No cracks, holes in external cladding			
		No cracks, holes or missing panes in windows			
		Spouting and stormwater functioning and not leaking			
		Structurally sound			
		Glass doors include visibility strips			
		Handrails and balustrades to code			
		Non-potable water labelled			
		Paths, decks and surfaces non-slippery/free from moss			

Comments	PASS	FAIL
Signed:	Date:	End Time:

Version 2.1

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Appendix 2: Social Housing Reform Bill 2013

Hon Dr Nick Smith – Press release, 20th November 2013. Available at <http://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/new-era-social-housing-after-bill-passes>

- Reforms will encourage the growth of a more diverse range of new social housing providers
- Reforms enable approved social housing providers to receive the same rent subsidy as Housing New Zealand and tenants to receive the benefit of paying a discounted income related rent
- International experience shows that community housing providers are better able to provide complementary services to tenants to support disabilities and families, that they do better at transitioning people to independence, they more consistently maintain the quality of their housing, and that they can stretch the taxpayer investment in social housing further
- The Government's ambition is to grow the community housing sector to provide 20 per cent of New Zealand's social housing over the next five years
- The bill also extends reviewable tenancies to focus social housing on families with the greatest need.
- Housing New Zealand currently has 4,000 tenants whose incomes are sufficiently high to pay a market rent but whom are legally entitled to occupy that house forever, while there are an equivalent number of high needs families on a waiting list unable to be housed.
- Reviewable tenancies will be undertaken with care. To ensure this, the bill includes a provision to enable Ministers to identify groups of people, such as vulnerable elderly or disabled tenants, who will not be subject to tenancy reviews
- Reviewable tenancies are expected to cost the Government \$46.8 million over two years, as state houses freed up will be provided to higher need tenants, who are eligible for more Government financial support. Through reviewable tenancies 1,000 tenants are expected to be supported into housing independence in 2015/16 and 2,000 in 2016/17
- The Act also makes the housing needs assessment independent of housing providers by transferring it from Housing New Zealand to Work and Income in April 2014
- This legislation builds on the Government's work to grow the community
- social housing sector through start-up grants from the \$139 million Social Housing Fund and Housing New Zealand's \$2.9 billion three-year investment focusing on new builds, housing extensions, insulation, earthquake repairs, and maintenance

Housing Shareholders' Advisory Group (HSAG) April 2010 *Home and housed: A vision for social housing in New Zealand*. Wellington: HSAG



Social housing reform programme

January 2015

The Government has announced a number of new initiatives aimed at improving social housing for vulnerable New Zealanders.

These initiatives build on the changes that have been made to social housing in New Zealand over the past few years through the social housing reform programme.

Social housing reform programme:

The Social Housing Reform Programme aims to increase the amount of social housing by building a fair, efficient and effective social housing market that better supports people in greatest need by:

- ensuring that people who need housing support can get it along with other social services
- ensuring that social housing is suitable for the households that need it
- supporting more people into independence from social housing
- helping increase the supply of affordable housing, especially in Auckland and Christchurch.

In the coming months:

- The Ministry of Social Development (MSD) will introduce a package of new initiatives to better assist people most in need of housing and support more people into independence from social housing when appropriate.
- Government will start national engagement with community housing providers, Māori and other groups around the planned transfer of 1,000 to 2,000 Housing New Zealand properties to approved community housing providers.

Transfer of Housing New Zealand properties

This is an important step in encouraging and developing a more diverse ownership of social housing, that is more innovative and responsive to tenants and communities.

The intention is to transfer the properties for use as social housing, run by approved community housing providers.

Properties will be transferred only if this results in better outcomes for tenants. No decisions have yet been made around when the transfers will happen or where these will be.

Tenants in properties that are transferred will continue to be housed for the duration of their need.

Find more information at www.treasury.govt.nz

Reducing the pressure on emergency and social housing

Development for each initiative has begun, with staged implementation through to July 2015.

Initiatives	Description
Supporting people into independence from social housing	
1 An additional 3,000 tenancy reviews over the next two years	An additional 3,000 tenancy reviews are to be started within the next two years: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1,000 will begin in 2014/2015, making the total number of reviews underway 1,800.

MSD800 – January 2015



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MSD800 – January 2015

Appendix 3: Areas of research involvement

Areas of research involvement could include:

- Work on a more accurate measure of homelessness;
- Research into the general New Zealand perception of adequate housing;
- Research that brings together the technical, economic and social sectors;
- More work is needed on projecting housing need. This should be on an ongoing, monitoring basis;
- The possible impact of increasing levies on capital projects in local authority areas experiencing inward migration;
- The development of 10-year housing development plans. These should include various comparative models of Government, private sector and community involvement;
- The housing needs and type;
- Investigation of culturally appropriate and creative living style housing types;
- More accurate research into the nature of disadvantages;
- Providing resource and expenditure for groups working with the problems of homelessness;
- The place of Government, Private Sector and Community Sector in future housing policy;
- Adequacy of managing social responsibilities in the Housing Corporation;
- Social Auditing of the Building Industry;
- Effects of overseas ownership on New Zealand housing market.

(Roberts, Campbell (1987) 'Housing policy: A values approach' paper at Housing and homelessness, *SSRFC Symposium*, pp23. Wellington: Social Science Research fund Committee)



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