



# WELLINGTON HOUSING TRUST

# NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2011

## View from the chair

Nau mai, haere mai and welcome to the latest WHT newsletter and my first as Chair. I'd like to start by acknowledging and thanking my predecessor Peter Jones for his work, commitment and leadership over the last nine years he has been Chair. I'm delighted that Peter is staying on the board and he is instrumental in the work being done to prepare our new trust deed – more about that later.



Our AGM in July also saw Stephen Cross elected as Vice Chair and Jon Holmes as Treasurer. If you want to find more information about the Board and the WHT team - who we are, where we are from and what we do outside of the Trust – visit our website at [www.wht.org.nz](http://www.wht.org.nz).

2011 has been another notable year for the Trust, and this newsletter highlights some of our achievements and successes, such as the results of our annual customer survey, as well as some of our plans for next year. We remain focused on three main areas:

**Better services:** our customers – the people living in our homes – are at the heart of what we do and why the Trust exists.

**More homes:** to meet the large – and growing – need for quality affordable homes, not just in Wellington City, but from 2012 the wider Wellington region too.

**Strong advocacy:** for affordable housing, better homes and the growth of the community housing sector.

## New homes in Berhampore

Our four new four-bedroom homes were officially opened by the Minister of Housing, Phil Heatley, on Thursday 29 September.

"We are very proud of this project which will truly make a difference for Wellington City and in particular to our families who need affordable housing", said Trust Director Alison Cadman.

The four homes are designed to have low running costs and are fitted with high standards of ceiling, wall and floor insulation, double glazing and energy efficient heat pumps. The new properties will be easy to maintain and will provide safe, warm, affordable housing for local people with housing needs.

This project is our second new build project funded by the Housing Innovations Fund (HIF) and again shows how we can deliver the outcomes wanted from the HIF fund.

"I am always delighted to see Government funding being used to grow social and affordable housing by a provider like the Wellington Housing Trust", said Minister Heatley.

"An opening celebration gives us the opportunity to thank all those people and organisations who support our work and projects. This opening was no exception and we were pleased to be able to publicly acknowledge and thank the big contributions made by so many", Alison said.

The Berhampore project is another milestone for the Trust with our vision of being the leading community housing partner and provider in the Wellington region.



### Planting a Kowhai Tree

Left to Right: Trust Director Alison Cadman, Minister of Housing Phil Heatley and Trust Chair Paul Scholey.

## Tenant survey 2011

The Trust sends a survey out to its tenants every year asking their opinions on the services we provide. The information gained from the surveys is used to improve the delivery of our services and to highlight any areas that need attention. We were very pleased to see high levels of satisfaction in this year's survey responses. 92% of the Trust's tenants stated they were satisfied or highly satisfied with the work done by Trust staff, the tenancy managers at Accessible Properties NZ and the trades people that were employed to maintain their homes. A great result!

## A new deed

As part of our plans to grow and meet more of the housing need that exists, the Trust is looking to provide affordable housing in areas outside of Wellington City, such as Porirua, Hutt Valley and the Kapiti Coast. Currently our deed confines our operations to Wellington City so we have been working on a new entity that will enable our future work. The new deed document is expected to be completed by April next year and will give us the flexibility we need to tackle the lack of affordable housing on a larger scale than we have been able to before.

## 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary plans

2011 marked the 30th anniversary of the Trust's founding. From humble beginnings in 1981, when the Trust owned a single two bedroom home in Mount Victoria, we have grown into an organisation that owns 26 homes with a total of 74 bedrooms. It is a time to look back and reflect on all the Trust has achieved over the last three decades.

Our 30 year heritage gives us a strong foundation to take on the challenges ahead of us. We also stand proud and celebrate that we have proven that we are a reliable and experienced social enterprise that provides cost-effective, responsive, quality homes and services. We are planning to have a formal celebration some time next year.

## Meeting with the mayor

In August the Trust welcomed an initiative by Wellington Mayor Celia Wade-Brown. Mayor Wade-Brown organised a meeting of interested parties with the purpose to explore ways of growing community housing in the city. Discussions centred on what actions we can undertake to increase the supply of affordable housing. It was agreed that a working party would be established and this group will meet again in December.

## Moving office

The Trust has recently moved office – but we haven't gone far! We are in the same building as before, Century City Tower, 173-175 Victoria Street, but have moved from Level 9 to Level 5. Our new office is bigger and brighter than the old one and is much better configured for our future needs.

## Thank you

Many thanks to the **G Trust** for their continued support of our work.

Sincere thanks to **Armstrong Downes Construction** and **MacKenzie Higham Architects** for all their hard work on our new housing development.

A big thank you to **Rod Macdiarmid** and **Marc Slade** for giving their time and energy.

Many thanks to the **BNZ** for renewing their commitment to the Trust and the work we do.

## Funding our next housing development

We announced in May that the Trust has successfully secured funding from the Housing Innovation Fund for the third time. Previous applications to the fund enabled the Trust to build its six home development in Newtown and our recently opened homes in Berhampore. In the current round of funding the Trust was awarded \$790,000 to build four new homes.

Two of the homes, like most of the Trust's homes, will be rented to families on low incomes. The remaining two homes will form part of the Trust's new shared homeownership scheme. This has been designed to help families who can't afford to buy a home on their own due to Wellington's high house prices. Families will be able to buy a proportion of the home while the Trust retains the remaining portion of the property. We look forward to launching the scheme in 2012.

## In the media

We have continued to raise awareness about the lack of affordable housing in Wellington, with Alison Cadman quoted in two recent articles about this in the Dominion Post. As well as speaking out on this important issue it also helps raise the profile of the Trust and what we do. We have received positive feedback about the articles and as the Trust implements its communications strategy it's really encouraging that we are being approached by the media for our views.

A short article by our Chair, Paul Scholey, has recently been published in the UK's Inside Housing magazine and is now available on its website. The article 'Tackling the crisis' outlines the current housing situation in New Zealand.

Links to the full text of these three articles can be found in the news section of our website at [www.wht.org.nz/news.html](http://www.wht.org.nz/news.html).

## Changes to funding new community housing

Earlier this year the government established the Social Housing Unit (SHU), a semi-autonomous body within the Department of Building and Housing that aims to increase the supply of social and affordable housing for New Zealanders.

The SHU has been set up to work with organisations like the Trust that provide social and affordable housing.

In line with government policy they are particularly interested in working with organisations that will be able to deliver significant growth in social and affordable housing. The Trust has made it clear to the SHU that we need to grow, we want to be a growth provider and so are willing to step up to play a larger part in the social housing sector.

The SHU has recently released details about four new funds that have been created to support increased social and affordable housing. The Trust is currently working on an application for the largest of the funds, the \$22.35 million Growth Fund/Pūtea Whakatipu.

In addition to administering funding the SHU also plans to facilitate partnerships, including land transfers and sale or lease of surplus state housing stock.

The Trust is eager to see the investment strategy currently being developed by the Department of Building and Housing and due for release early in 2012. This strategy will outline how the government will support organisations like the Trust to grow and meet the increasing housing need in New Zealand.

This newsletter is produced by the Wellington Housing Trust



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