



Message from the Chair Peter Jones

In our last newsletter we mentioned that the Trust had been shortlisted for more Housing Innovation Fund money to build a further



four homes. I am delighted to advise that this funding was approved by the Housing New Zealand Board in May. We can now begin work on this project.

Sharing this news is a great way to start what will be my last column as chair. I will be stepping down from the role after this year's AGM after nine years.

During this time there have been big changes, notably the change of the Trustee Board to a professional governance model which coincided with the appointment of Alison Cadman as Director. Also the preference of the Trust to undertake new build housing projects to expand its social housing portfolio, with government assistance, rather than purchase existing dwellings.

I am very proud of the achievements made by the Board and staff over this period. The Trust's new Chair will be decided by the Board after the AGM and we will let you know who this will be in due course.

I am looking forward to continuing to be a Trustee and being involved in other areas of the Trust's work.

AGM

The Trust's AGM will be on Tuesday 5 July at 5.30 pm in the MacKenzie Room of the St John's in the City Conference Centre, located on the Corner of Willis Street and Dixon Street.

New Build Project Progressing Well

Work continues on our latest new build project in Berhampore. Before construction began in January local kaumātua blessed the site (see picture right). The site is designated as significant to Maori in the district plan as it was gifted to the Wellington Tenth Trust by The NZ Company.

The Trust is extremely pleased with how the project is progressing and the work completed so far. The project is expected to be completed as planned by the end of August.

The four homes are designed to have low running costs and are fitted with 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.



Left to Right: Mark Ansell (MacKenzie Higham Architects), Alison Cadman (WHT Director), Don Borrie (WHT Trustee), Sam Jackson (Kaumātua), Toni Doile (Armstrong Downes Construction), June Jackson (Kaumātua)



Trust Excels in HotHouse Competition

As part of the Community Economic Development conference on 19-20 April in Auckland the NZ Federation of Voluntary Welfare Organisations ran "The HotHouse" competition. The Hothouse was derived from the reality television series "Dragon's Den".

Groups from all over NZ were encouraged to present the organisers with an enterprising idea - whether rough and ready or well polished - that combined making a profit with community benefit. It was an opportunity to win some extra cash and professional support to develop a first rate application for a social loan.

The Trust's entry into the competition was short listed and we were given the chance to pitch our idea to an expert panel of leading business and community practitioners. We were thrilled when our Director Alison Cadman pulled off 1st equal in the 'Water Your Grass Roots' section of The Hothouse.

Our idea was to develop a housing project and use a social loan to support the purchase of land when an opportunity arose. We so often lose the opportunity to purchase land as finance is not available.

"It was a fantastic opportunity for me personally, the Trust and community housing" says Alison. "It was invaluable being in front of potential partners and others, talking about our ideas and issues. Appropriate social lending is badly needed for community housing organisations and we hope to see this increasing in the future."

Raising Our Profile

During 2010 the Trust commissioned Ceridwyn Roberts, a freelance communication expert, to develop a communications strategy for the Trust. The strategy aims to help raise our profile and support our plans to grow the Trust so it can better meet the increasing need for good quality affordable housing in the region.

We are very pleased with the communications strategy, which will also help us when we are communicating with funders, supporters, politicians, tenants, media, members of the public and other third sector organisations.

One of the changes we have already made as part of the new communications strategy is to improve our website. We have

- altered the layout of the site and rewritten the text to make it more user-friendly
- added new pages, such as on the research findings about the need for more affordable housing in Wellington.

Visit our website at www.wht.org.nz to see these changes and other information about the Trust and the work that we do. You can follow the progress of our Berhampore project on our website and all our latest news.

Thank You

Our sincere thanks to **The Francis Group** for supporting the Trust work by providing Melanie Bierne to facilitate our annual planning session.

Many thanks to the **Lion Foundation** for awarding \$4000 to help us repaint one of our houses. Grants like these enable us to provide safe, secure and well maintained homes for our tenants.

TAG Meeting

The second meeting of the Tenants Advisory Group (TAG) took place at the Trust's offices in March. The meeting included discussions on a review of tenant related policies, the role of body corporates and residents associations in multi-flat properties, and what to do in an emergency. The next TAG meeting will take place in September. The TAG is open to all Trust tenants.

Promoting Community Housing

Our Director Alison Cadman attended the 2011 National Conference of Community Housing Aotearoa (CHA). Held in Waitakere, Auckland on 22-23 March the theme of the conference was "doorways to community housing", showcasing the role played by community housing organisations as viable providers of affordable housing options in New Zealand.

The two-day conference was CHA's fourth such event. The first day included addresses by Housing Minister Phil Heatley and Auckland Mayor Len Brown, as well as a keynote presentation by Michael Lennon, a former chief executive of Housing New Zealand who is now CEO of Housing Choices Australia. Michael outlined the many changes that have happened in community housing in Australia and the lessons learnt so far.

Day one also featured the 'Outrageous Bus Tour', an informative expedition around some West Auckland community housing organisations hosted by Housing Call to Action.

On day two the keynote speaker was Kay Saville-Smith, of the Centre for Research, Evaluation and Social Assessment (CRESA). Kaye's speech was one of the highlights for Alison as she spoke about our housing future as it looks now, how the community housing sector fits into that and what we really want from our housing. Kaye was followed by speakers from Westpac, KPMG and Opus discussing Public Private Partnerships both here and overseas.

"As usual the conference was a great opportunity to catch up with colleagues and discuss issues in common and actions we can take. It was also great to meet new people and be inspired by new ideas and what others are doing," says Alison. "I hope the reforms we need in social housing will happen soon so we can put our ideas and plans into action."

Budget 2011

It was disappointing that the issue of housing didn't feature more highly in the latest Budget. We are still awaiting details of how the government will fund further community housing. In a press release Minister of Housing Phil Heatley stated:

"A contingency fund of up to \$45 million for 2011/12 has been set aside so the Government can respond to recommendations of the Housing Shareholders' Advisory Group. This will be partly offset by an increase in the dividend to the Crown from Housing New Zealand Corporation of \$21 million for 2009/10."

"The extra funding will improve the ability of third sector providers to significantly increase the amount of housing available to those on lower incomes or with specialised needs."

"Current financial restraints mean we have had to be innovative, so we are likely to focus the resources previously invested in the Housing Innovation Fund on supporting smaller niche providers while creating a new, larger pool of funding for housing providers which want to grow significantly."

"We believe this will have a more meaningful impact when supporting third sector providers to build more homes and the Government will now have more flexibility to support larger projects."

Furthermore the Budget marked an end to the Housing Innovation Fund (HIF) which the Trust has used in the past to help fund its new build projects. A new scheme, to be administered by the Department of Building and Housing, is being developed to replace the HIF scheme of loans and grants. Work on the detail of the government's much talked about support of community housing seems to be taking some time but we are hopeful we will have a clearer picture of their new policies by the end of June.

This newsletter is produced by the Wellington Housing Trust



Level 9, Century City Towers
173-175 Victoria Street
PO Box 24-179, Manners Street
Wellington 6142

T: 04 384 4854
F: 04 384 4692
E: info@wht.org.nz
www.wht.org.nz