

3 May 2013

Te Mahana - Draft Homelessness Strategy (COCY01)
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Wellington City Council
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Re: Te Mahana: a draft strategy to end homelessness in Wellington 2020

This submission is from the Architectural Centre, an incorporated society dating from 1946, which represents both professionals and non-professionals interested in the promotion of good design.

In general the Architectural Centre supports the new draft policy on homelessness.

1. We support the policy's Māori cultural framework. We note this framework's empathetic approach to the wider issues of homelessness.
2. The identification of several types of homelessness (i.e. without shelter, temporary accommodation, sharing accommodation and living in uninhabitable housing (pp. 1, 5)) suggests the need for different strategies. Uninhabitable housing, for example, suggests the need for the council to be proactive with respect to working with landlords, and property developers (e.g. introducing a warrant of fitness for rental properties and/or working with the Minister of Housing to lobby for this), ensuring building consent conditions are monitored, being proactive with respect to sanitary regulations and building standards. Another option might be to introduce a loan-system to support building improvements (including earthquake strengthening, retro-fitting insulation etc.) linked to the building's title, and paid via additions to rates' bills. These different types/aspects of homelessness might also be used to provide specific timeframes regarding targets for ending homelessness (e.g. end "without shelter" homelessness by 2015; "temporary accommodation" homelessness by 2017 ...)
3. This policy needs to be contextualised within the WCC's broader housing policies, including densification and the transport spine. (pp. 3,4)
 - (a) We also note that there is no statement regarding WCC's current social housing provision, rather there is a aim to "increase the supply and range of accommodation that provides targeted solutions" (p. 3). How does this fit within current WCC housing policies/commitments?
 - (b) The Architectural Centre also considers that a statement noting the need for WCC to work with Housing New Zealand would be worthwhile, particularly given the recent disruption to Wellington Housing NZ tenants due to deferred maintenance on these properties. This is important to both ensure continuing good and safe environments for tenants to live in, but also to acknowledge their role in the stewardship of many important buildings in the history of New Zealand architecture. We urge the WCC to take a leadership role encouraging Housing NZ to repair poorly maintained housing (e.g. Gordon Wilson flats) and to implement a more appropriate, preventative, maintenance programme. Related to this is the need to ensure that good quality, and well-maintained housing is provided for tenants in the private sector as well as those in council and government housing.
 - (c) We strongly encourage the WCC to implement a requirement for all new housing developments to include 15-20% affordable housing, as occurs in other countries (e.g.



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England, the Netherlands). We strongly encourage that such housing support a socially-diverse range of families and working people, and be in addition to the provision of student housing.

(d) In addition the Architectural Centre encourages the identification of specific areas targeted to increase housing density in conjunction with provision of civic amenity to facilitate this (e.g. green spaces, play grounds, recreational areas).

4. The policy refers to the need to achieve equitable housing outcomes for our whānau (p. 5), housing solutions, sufficiently resource housing solutions for Māori etc. It does not directly confront the issue of racism as an issue impacting on housing solutions for Māori (as documented, for example, in Harris *et al.* "Effects of self-reported racial discrimination and deprivation on Māori health and inequalities in New Zealand: cross-sectional study" *Lancet* (17 June 2006) 367(9527):2005-2009). How will the WCC address this?

5. While the Architectural Centre supports the statement acknowledging the Rangatiratanga of Te Atiawa, we suspect this will have resource implications for Te Atiawa that the council ought to acknowledge this through financial and/or other resource contributions.

6. We wonder if a statement regarding WCC staff and council training with respect to homelessness is warranted.

Thank you for this opportunity to make a submission on this draft policy: "Te Mahana"

Yours faithfully

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