

Youth – Executive Summary

Guiding Principles

- It is a fundamental right for young people and children to have access to safe, stable, healthy, affordable and quality housing.
- The government recognises young people as a priority because of the inherent vulnerability that exists for them in the transition from childhood to adulthood.
- The Government has an obligation to develop, facilitate and maintain social housing for young people.
- It is recognised that quality housing provides a foundation for young people to:
 - develop socially;
 - achieve and sustain good health;
 - have access to employment and income,
 - receive education; and
 - develop family/whanau relationships which provides a stable home environment.
- The design, development, implementation and maintenance of social housing for young people in New Zealand is consistent with the government's domestic policies and international obligations and responsibilities under:
 - The Treaty of Waitangi
 - The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
 - The International Covenant on Economic and Social Rights
 - Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa
 - Declaration of Human Rights
- The government has a duty to ensure young people are advocated for, informed of, and educated on their rights in relation to housing.
- Government recognises that in order for some young people to achieve sustainable housing solutions they may require support from whanau/family/caregivers or other appropriate support groups who in partnership with the young people themselves can support and encourage independence by:
 - providing general support;
 - acting as an advocate when required; and
 - consulting and including the views of young people.
- Government departments and services in relation to housing:
 - are youth friendly and accessible, and
 - provide mechanisms and infrastructure to respond to young people and children in need.

- Government recognises that the housing needs of young people are dynamic and that their ever-changing housing environment requires ongoing and regular:
 - monitoring
 - evaluation
 - research

Key Outcomes

Participants were asked to construct a vision for youth housing ten years in the future. As part of this vision, participants wanted to see:

- young people recognised as a priority group for housing support;
- initiatives and options developed by HNZN which address the identified needs of young people;
- an ongoing process of researching, evaluating and monitoring the housing needs of young people;
- a youth-friendly Tenancy Services and youth-friendly information on tenancy rights and responsibilities;
- youth input into all aspects of state housing projects and HNZN decisions;
- effective co-ordination of central government, local government, private sector, community organisations and faith based groups; and
- greater involvement of local government in social housing.
- recognition that a young person's place in society is dependent on a secure place called 'home';
- an inclusive, shared vision throughout New Zealand of youth housing;
- supported communities which recognised the cultural needs of youth in relation to housing;
- more research undertaken on issues concerning youth and housing; and
- a network of youth organisations.

Key Issues

- mobility of young people
- cost of tertiary education
- increase in diversity of population
- lack of social priority
- vulnerability of being young
- reduction of income.

Key Recommendations

1. Youth Involvement

Ensure that youth are involved in the development of the action plan by forming a reference group in which minority and under-represented communities are represented.

Investigate how HNZA can involve youth in decision-making processes.

Develop mechanisms to ensure that youth are involved in the planning and design decisions in relation to their local communities.

Develop programmes which promote connections between youth and their communities and support already established programmes.

2. Research

Undertake, gender balanced focus groups with youth including rural, urban, Māori and Pacific youth, solo parents, students, 17 year olds and youth at risk in order to ascertain the needs of these groups in relation to housing. (This research is important given the lack of information around youth and housing in New Zealand).

Develop research priorities in relation to youth and housing based on the above focus groups and current information available. These should include:

- accommodation patterns and the housing career trends of youth;
- tenancy and home ownership decisions of youth today and projected trends;
- effects of high youth mobility and the extent of transience and homelessness amongst New Zealand youth;
- housing needs of students (international and local).

3. Education, Advocacy and Protection

Develop and support tenancy advocacy services specific for youth and life skills education programmes.

Establish tools to ensure that youth are better protected in relation to rental housing.

4. Provision of Housing

Provide options which allow youth to access affordable and appropriate accommodation.

Investigate the provision of youth specific accommodation programmes (including emergency accommodation provision for young men.)

5. Other Considerations

Ensure that Treaty of Waitangi and legislative obligations are considered throughout the development of the Strategy.

Conclusion

The social housing strategy should be an effective and responsive strategy that meets the immediate and long-term needs of youth. However it is important to recognise that it must also be a strategy and process which evolves in order to take into account changing geographic, demographic and social needs of youth. As such it is crucial that youth are continually consulted

and involved in the implementation of the strategy. Further to this, a holistic approach is essential when dealing with young people.