



# affordable housing

## western park village housing hub

### MacroAuckland Research - Evidence of Need

The MacroAuckland research demonstrates the severe housing shortages that Auckland is experiencing. By 2021 there is expected to be 135,500 new households in Auckland, but whilst the population is growing, rents are rising faster than both income and inflation.

The majority of rental properties are not affordable for low-income families and individuals. This means those on low incomes are finding it increasingly hard to find appropriate accommodation, meaning they are sharing with other families in crowded conditions and/or are forced to use boarding houses and caravan parks as forms of emergency accommodation that then become long-term 'solutions' to their housing needs.

Although social housing is provided by central and local government, there is a constant and disproportionately high undersupply in Auckland despite many of those on Housing New Zealand's waiting list classified as having 'severe' or 'significant' housing needs.

Western Park Village is a caravan park in Ranui that has become an emergency housing option to over 200 residents who struggle to attain or maintain private rental agreements, largely due to financial issues such as a poor credit rating or low income which makes the cost of rental bonds prohibitive.

### Action on Issues

The Housing Hub is a project designed to improve conditions at the Western Park Village caravan park, and improve resident's access to wrap-around support services that can assist families with their underlying problems and therefore help with transition into more appropriate accommodation.

As caravan parks sit outside of the Tenancy Agreement regulations, the standard of accommodation in the park is not accountable to regular tenancy law. Further to this, support services have limited access to the park's residents as the site is privately owned.

These issues were the main catalyst for the housing hub project, which works to improve conditions and provide support services for tenants, and has achieved great successes in its first year of operation.

The hub project is co-ordinated by Monte Cecilia Housing Trust and Auckland Council on behalf of a steering group of residents, community organisations, and government agencies. Services offered on site by the hub include:

- Relationship building with the park owner to facilitate access by support organisations
- Support with transitions out of the park into more sustainable accommodation, including help with applications for Housing New Zealand properties

- Personal development workshops
- Employment skills training
- IT access to support job seeking
- Agency drop-in session for advice and support on a variety of issues, including health
- Gardening and healthy eating programmes
- Te Reo Maori lessons

These services are co-ordinated by a former tenant who is employed by Monte Cecilia to facilitate community-led development.

### Collaboration

The project was conceived out of Waitakere City Council's 'Wellbeing Collaboration – Housing Call to Action' project, and is therefore based on principles of partnership working. The hub is co-ordinated by a paid resident, who is supported by Monte Cecilia Housing Trust's Housing Social Worker.

Organisations offering services from the housing hub include Plunket, Waitemata District Health Board, the Ranui Action Project and the Ranui Community Trust.

## **Funding**

\$50,000 per annum would provide funding for the hub co-ordination, which is crucial to ensuring that the hub's support services are well-managed and wide-reaching.

Project funding would include professional development for staff involved in project delivery as part of the on-going sustainability of the project, ensuring that community development expertise is embedded in the hub's services.

## **Sustainability**

The housing hub project is funded until September, beyond which there will be no further resources to build on the platform of work achieved to date. Multi-year continuation funding would make the project more sustainable, and allow full establishment of strategic plans for the hub, including an exit strategy for the leading agencies and plans for more sustainable income generation to support the services offered by the hub.

Three year funding would also enable significant community development work to take place, allowing residents to take full ownership of the initiative.

*For more information about this project, please contact Mark Bentley or Kat Stanier on 09 277 8833 or visit the MacroAuckland website [www.macroauckland.org.nz](http://www.macroauckland.org.nz)*