

The Housing Needs of Vulnerable Populations in New Zealand

Alice Mills, School of Social Sciences
University of Auckland



The challenges of housing in New Zealand

- ◆ Until recently – focus on ‘affordable housing’
- ◆ Small social and community housing sector
- ◆ Vulnerability of state housing
- ◆ Rapid population growth and declining stock (Christchurch)

Aims

- ◆ Explore the housing needs of vulnerable populations
- ◆ Examine the existing housing and housing support provision
- ◆ Build collaborative networks with external agencies including community organisations and external researchers
- ◆ Funded by Transforming Cities

Vulnerability

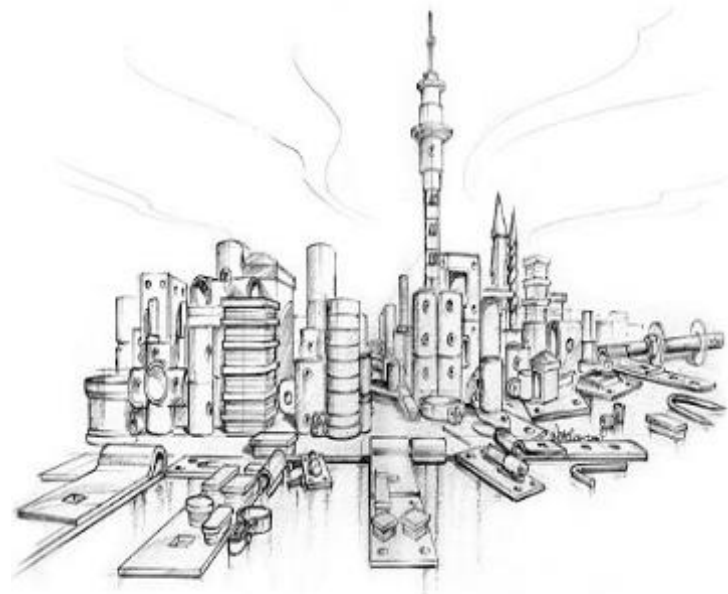
- ◆ Broad and multi-faceted term
- ◆ Mental health problems, addictions, physical impairments
- ◆ Rough sleepers, refugee populations, victims of family violence and those leaving institutional accommodation
- ◆ Linked to issues of social and economic marginalisation

Workshops

- ◆ 3 workshops in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch
- ◆ Variety of stakeholders
- ◆ Different themes and audiences
- ◆ Auckland – Support service providers
- ◆ Christchurch – Children and families services/local council
- ◆ Wellington – Central government and housing providers

Auckland

- ◆ Alan Johnson, Salvation Army Social Policy and Parliamentary Support Unit
- ◆ Marginalisation of housing from the political agenda
- ◆ Vulnerability as being unwanted, unloved and uncared for
- ◆ Housing affordability but also housing choice
- ◆ 'a house is more than bricks and mortar, and a home is more than a house'



<http://www.dreamland.co.nz/albert.html>

Christchurch

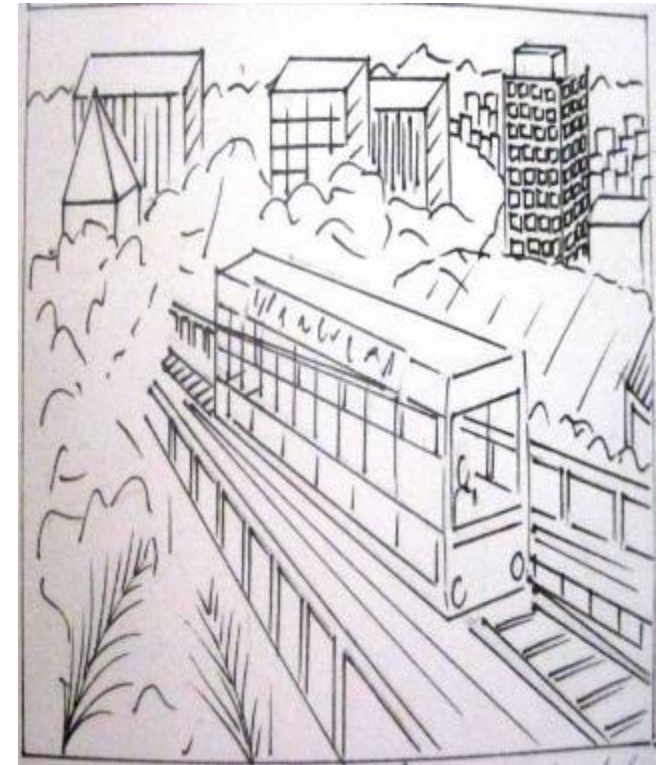
- ◆ Substandard accommodation and rapidly rising rents
- ◆ Need for long term leases for families
- ◆ Linwood Avenue School –turnover of 40%
- ◆ Social connectedness and social capital
- ◆ Need for collaboration



<http://welcomeboard.co.nz/blog/christchurch-cardboard-wonder/>

Wellington

- ◆ Wellington City Council provides 49% of social housing
- ◆ Targeted support for 'at risk' tenants
- ◆ Need for safe and appropriate housing not just in city centres
- ◆ Some are more vulnerable than others
- ◆ Need for support services



International examples of good practice

- ◆ Housing First – US, Canada and Hamilton
- ◆ Vision Housing (UK)
- ◆ Micah/Common Ground project (Brisbane)



Potential solutions

- ◆ Funding and a national housing strategy
- ◆ Innovation
- ◆ Collaboration
- ◆ Finding suitable landlords
- ◆ Emergency accommodation – more than short-term hostels
- ◆ Advocacy and transitional support

Conclusion

- ◆ What we don't know is startling
- ◆ Housing debate is shifting – greater focus on homelessness rather than affordability
- ◆ Further research – housing for ex-prisoners