

## THE NEW POLITICS OF SOCIAL HOUSING

Talk to University of Auckland's Communiqué Series by Alan Johnson<sup>1</sup> - March 2014

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Social housing in New Zealand makes up less than 4.4% of New Zealand's housing stock or around 85,000 of the nation's 1.95 million dwellings. This share has been declining for a number of decades. Twenty years ago the share probably stood at 5.6% of the 1.4 million dwellings we had at that time and 40 years ago at around 7% of the 1 million dwellings in the national housing stock. These numbers are only approximate in part because the census - or more precisely respondents to the census do not accurately report who their landlord is and in part because social housing has a diverse range of owners - from a key central government agency which is presently known as Housing New Zealand Corporation Ltd to around 70 local councils and perhaps including up to 100 NGOs or civil society organisations. On any account social housing has a small and diminishing importance in New Zealand's housing landscape - a landscape which is dominated by middle-class homeownership and small-scale private landlordism.

The problem with this slowly evolving housing landscape is that there is not really any place in it for the poor. This is not unusual as there is often not any place in many landscapes for the poor. While social housing is not necessarily the housing of the poor it has become so over the past 50 years. Because it is the housing of the poor it has become more and more marginalized as the poor have become more and more marginalized within New Zealand's neo-liberal political economy.

What I want to talk to you today about is a potentially new chapter in this marginalization - a new and even more clever way in which the neo-liberals are demolishing the surviving remnants of our social housing legacy

My talk today is titled 'A New Politics of Social Housing' and it is my first public attempt to piece together what I believe is a fragmented picture of what is likely to happen to social housing over the next decade - unless we decide on a different path. This speech and topic is also my attempt to publicly repent and to seek atonement for my contribution to this new politics. In doing so I need to admit too that this reflection and retraction is not a consequence of some road to Damascus revelation but rather from a sorry stumble home from a late night party - not that party was that good anyway.

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Specifically today I want to focus on the Government's social housing reform agenda and on the thinking which drives these reforms and the rhetoric which surrounds them. I want to place these reforms into a broader context and what happened before this Government came to power and to what is likely to happen when a less rightwing Government is elected. From this I would like to offer you some points of reference for reading this evolving landscape as this new politics rolls out. But first of all I would like to convince you that this all matters.

### **Why does social housing still matter?**

All families and many communities have stories. These stories tell us about our past but they can also tell us something about who we are and who we should thank and perhaps abuse for this. For example most of us have a journey story - a story of migration whether this was on an ancestral waka, a sailing ship or flight NZ0295 from Apia. We all have a housing story which may or may not feature prominently in our storytelling but probably is still formative and perhaps quite fundamental to our identity and status. In my view these housing stories are important in framing how we see housing and conceive housing policy.

I have four housing stories to offer you - two of my own and two I have come by.

In December 1961 - just before my fourth birthday, my parents moved into the first and only home they ever owned together - a three bedroom brick and tile house built by the Hutt Timber Company in McDougall Street Manurewa. My sisters, brother and I all grew up in that house, my best friend today lived next door, we called our adult neighbours uncle and aunty. Like my parents most of our adult neighbours came from rural or provincial New Zealand although some were from Britain and all were young working class couples buying their first home. My parents purchased that house with a deposit gained by capitalizing the family benefit for me and my sister and through a 3% rehab loan which Dad was entitled to as a returned serviceman. The house is there today more or less unchanged and the neighbourhood is just as ordinary as when I was a boy. To me this story is idyllic.

Before we married my wife and I both saved for a house deposit in a special home loan account with the ASB. The deal was that if we saved \$3,000 a year each - probably around 20% of our take home income we would receive \$1800 in tax refunds which also went into our home loan account. After three years together, we had \$15,000 toward a house. At that time in the late 1980's a modest house cost around \$80,000. In 1988 we had our first child and became eligible for a HomeStart deposit gap interest free loan of \$10,000. We

had also purchased a section on credit in Weymouth and with these savings and the interest free loan, during weekends and with the help of family, neighbours and friends. I built our first house - a modest two bedroom cottage. My wife and I still own that cottage which we now rent out. We also own our family home and a rural lifestyle property in Waihi where we plan to retire.

About eight years ago and for the ten previous years I along with a friend established and managed a work trust to offer employment opportunities to unemployed men in Manurewa. This was a labour of love as I spent much of my spare time managing the affairs of the trust on a voluntary basis. For about five years our trust was involved in insulating state houses and over this period we insulated around 1000 houses and employed around five to seven young men at any time. As part of my role I had to scope the work in the houses which meant that I had to visit each one, measure it up and report on its insulation requirements. This work put me in touch with a large number of state house tenants and gave me a little glimpse into their lives. A conversation with one woman living in a state house in Glendowie stands out. She was a Maori woman about my age (late 40's at the time) and was the tenant of a simple weatherboard and tile roof house which had a large section and well developed mature garden. I commented on her garden and the effort which this must have represented and asked her how long she had lived there. She said she had lived in that house her whole life and had taken over the tenancy from her parents when they died as she and her children were living with them in the house at the time. She indicated to me a deep love for that house, that it contained many of her family's memories and that she had buried her children's placentas underneath certain trees in the garden. This ordinary state house in a fashionable part of eastern Auckland was her home.

I am on a Board of Trustees for the intermediate school which our children attended and have been for 15 years although youngest child left eight years ago. About six years ago I received a phone call from the school principal. She was asking my advice on how to respond to an incident that day at the school. It was shortly before Christmas. A young Maori boy aged about 12 had been stood down for assaulting another boy. His mother had been rung to pick him up and he was waiting in the school office reception lobby for this. His aunty arrived instead and slapped him across the face and dragged him out. I suggested to the Principal that our school social worker should visit the family to see what the situation was. The social worker had already done so and found that this boy was living with his mother and three younger sisters in a garage at his aunty's home, his dad was in prison and they had virtually no money - just before Christmas. All we could do is give them some food.

Just for one moment think about that boy's anger - about how hopeless and powerless he would have felt.

These stories are of course quite different. Those of my family are ones of humble beginnings but solid material progress. The story of the middle aged Maori woman is a similar story although I have a sense that it will not end as well as my story - at least in material terms. The story of the young Maori boy is in my view a disgrace. It is this story which I use to motivate my work and which I am suggesting to you today should be the reason you should care about what is happening to our social housing.

As you reflect on these stories think about the role which the State played in each of these about how this role has changed over time and how the State has advantaged some and left others quite vulnerable. Think too about the politics behind these State roles.

### **Social housing politics of the past**

The picture of Michael Joseph Savage carrying furniture into the first state house in Mirimar in 1938 is iconic especially to someone such as me who has come from a Labour Party family. This is the image we used for the cover of a housing paper I did for The Salvation Army in 2008 titled 'Rebuilding the Kiwi Dream'<sup>i</sup>. Its use was deliberate because we knew that this picture was deeply symbolic for many of those in the Labour Government of that time. We knew too that its appropriation for the cover of a paper which challenged them about how little they had done in housing was likely to annoy them and perhaps goad them into action. Regrettably it didn't. Instead we were laughed at for suggesting that \$1 billion a year should be spent on social and affordable housing.

But there is a great deal of romantic nostalgia around the achievements of Savage and his colleagues in establishing state housing in the late 1930's. There was then as there remains today a clear sense of the deserving and the undeserving poor in Labour Party social policy thinking<sup>ii</sup>. State housing in the 1930's and 40's was seen as housing for the worthy working man and his family. What happened to the indolent, destitute, vulnerable or marginally employed and to women and children living in violence was not of much interest. Much as it was in 2007 when we published Rebuilding the Kiwi Dream and much as it is today. In this sense the politics of housing has changed little.

Savage's plan for a socialist paradise based on social housing for the working class was undermined ideologically by Sid Holland's first National Government which during the 1950's rolled out a massive house building programme based on low interest state supported home loans, suburban expansion, increasing car ownership and personal mobility

and dedicated taxes for road building. This was the birth of New Zealand as a property owning democracy. Social housing was forever marginalized socially and politically. This of course is the background to my parents' housing story and their children's pathway into the middle class.

But social housing also became marginalized morally from the 1950's onwards following the great moral panic around teenage promiscuity and delinquency in Lower Hutt which led to the Mazengarb Report in 1956. Inevitably these teenagers were from state houses and morally questionable families and these of course were identified for a social malaise which later turned into the youth culture of the baby boomers. This public moralizing and the resulting demonizing of state housing continued through to the 1970's with a report from the Anglican Church in 1971 which identified state housing as the root source .

The early 1970's saw an expansion of welfare entitlements especially with the introduction of the domestic purposes benefit which almost at once led to an increase in divorce rates as women who had been stuck in unsatisfactory relationships were given options beyond reliance on their husband or partner. Around this as well we saw the beginnings of the slow rise in ex-nuptial births and a decline in marriage rates although the link between these and the DPB is unproven and probably tenuous.

Almost immediately following the introduction of the DPB and sickness benefit in the early 1970's we had the oil shocks of 1973 and 1979 and so the post-war Keynesian boom ended. The end of Keynesianism made way for monetarism and eventually for neo-liberalism which hit these shores with the election of the Fourth Labour Government of Lange and Douglas in 1984. What followed was a massive rise in unemployment and growing welfare dependency but by this time place of social housing in the political economy and the minds of middle New Zealand voters was set. Social housing was welfare housing - the place for the unloved and the unlovable.

This marginalization of social housing politically and socially was not unique to New Zealand but was a consistent pattern across the western world from the 1960's onward. Social housing neighbourhoods and estates were where the poorest most marginalized people lived - most of them unemployed or single parent families and from ethnic minorities. These areas had become the sites of concentrated disadvantage and poverty but with a quick twist of the neo-liberal knife they then became the source of this disadvantage and poverty - places which breed criminality, dependency, delinquency and promiscuity.

The Lange-Douglas Government and its Labour successors didn't meddle with social housing or welfare policy but the following National Party Government of Bolger and Richardson certainly did with their benefit cuts of 1991 and a number of significant changes to housing policy from 1993 onwards. These housing policy changes had four elements which were:

- ▶ the replacement on income related rents in state houses for market rents,
- ▶ the corporatisation of the public housing provider Housing Corporation into a profit focused company Housing New Zealand Corporation Ltd,
- ▶ the sale the Crown's home mortgage portfolio which had been built up through its affordable home loans programmes over the previous 50 years, this was the second largest privatization of that era and was worth \$1.3 billion at the time
- ▶ the introduction of the a demand subsidy - the Accommodation Supplement as the principal form of housing subsidy.<sup>iii</sup>

These changes were driven purely by ideology as there was little or prior analysis of their likely impacts. In fact some their impacts such as the massive blow out in the Accommodation Supplement budget from under \$400 million in 1994 to over \$800 million in 2000 were probably not contemplated by the architects of these changes.

In a matching ideological shift the newly elected Labour led Coalition Government of Clark and Cullen re-introduced income related rents for state house tenants in 1999. Once again this shift had little in the way of prior analysis as to the equity impacts or value for money for the extra \$400 million or so involved in this shift. In particular little thought seems to have been given to the majority of assisted tenants who were renting in the private sector or for from other social landlords who received much lower levels of assistance and probably started with similar incomes and personal circumstances.

Labour's ideology also led to it placing its blind faith in the staff and management of Housing New Zealand to run the Crown's housing affairs. HNZ quickly become a one stop housing shop. It not only monopolized social housing subsidies and housing policy advice but developed and administered the underwhelming Welcome Home Loan's Programme (which wasn't actually a loan programme at all but a mortgage guarantee scheme) and administered the Housing Innovation Fund which was meant to offer assistance to its competitors in the community housing sector.

Do you spot the obvious conflicts here? A series of fairly ordinary Labour Party housing ministers didn't.

Labour's blind faith in the staff and management of Housing New Zealand may have been misplaced. The last HNZ CEO to be employed under a Labour appointed board was former Christchurch City Council CEO Dr Lesley McTurk . Under her leadership HNZ established a new IT system the cost of which blew out from \$72 million to \$80 million. Under investigation of this cost blowout a Parliamentary Committee in April 2012 found that two HNZ senior executives who have been involved in this IT project had recently departed and set up a private consultancy company Tinakori Group with two other HNZ executives and that Tinakori Group had a business alliance with Northgate Public Services the company which was undertaking the IT project.

Under Dr McTurk's leadership Housing New Zealand published this little gem in its 2011/12 Annual Report:

State tenants Paula and Mervyn wanted to *'move away from a problem neighbourhood to raise their children in a more family-friendly area'*. Housing New Zealand helped Paula and Mervyn to move into private rental housing because *'this was best for the children'*. A bonus (reports HNZ) is that Paula and Mervyn *'have inspired friends living in Corporation properties in their old neighbourhood to move into private rentals also'*<sup>iv</sup>

Imagine a fast food restaurant such as McDonalds publishing in their annual report a story which goes as follows: 'Tim and Alice were worried about their already slightly overweight children becoming obese by having too many Happy Meals. Our friendly crew at McDonalds Henderson directed Tim and Alice to the Subway store around the corner because they serve healthier meals. Tim and Alice have inspired their friends to also stop buying Happy Meals and to go instead to Subway'

The sequel to such a scenario in the real world is 'Now our friendly crew at McDonalds Henderson no longer have a job'

When public servants who have been paid to administer and operate our public housing system represent social housing in such dismal terms we must surely begin to understand just how despised social housing has become in the public mind. More tragically perhaps is the realisation of how uninspired and uninspiring those in charge of social housing have been.

With a sense of resignation bordering on dismal I have come to the conclusion that the time for radical change has arrived. But what sort of radical change and what philosophical tradition or ideology might drive such a change

## The emerging politics around social housing

As the saying goes be careful what you wish for. We are in fact experiencing the most radical change to social housing since the 1940's - but is it the sort of change which those of us interested in social justice and the reduction of inequality would wish for?

Since 2011 the National Government has been running a social housing reform programme. This has emerged in two tranches - the first during late 2011 and early 2012 when announcements were made on the way Housing New Zealand would operate and the second at the time of the 2013 Budget when changes to how housing needs would be assessed and an allocation of a small budget for extending income related rents were announced.<sup>v</sup>

Essentially the National Governments social housing reform agenda has three elements:

- ▶ the reconfiguration of the state housing stock
- ▶ the establishment of a social housing market, and
- ▶ the development of a community based social housing sector.

It is possible to present these changes as being well intended and commonsensical but what I would like to offer you today is an alternative critique of these changes based on a wider critique of the ideology which drives them - that of neoliberalism.

There have been a number of critiques of neo-liberalism offered over the past two decades in particular by sociologists, geographers and political philosophers. To paraphrase this work risks representing it as simple and straightforward and the efforts of those involved as mundane - this is certainly not the case. Geographer David Harvey in his work 'A Brief History of Neoliberalism' neatly defines neoliberalism thus

*'For the purposes of our critique of the new politics of social housing neo-liberalism can be seen as having two relevant stances - it is anti-statist in that it holds that the State should not be involved in markets and in activities which could be mediated through markets and it is anti-welfarist in that tax funded welfare system saps personal initiative and creates dependency and moral hazard and should be replaced with systems of charity and mutual support through communities and families'*<sup>vi</sup>

Both these stances are at play in National's social housing reform agenda.

The Government's reconfiguration of state housing is by New Zealand standards a massive exercise which might over a ten year period involve 40% or more of the 69,000 state units controlled or owned by Housing New Zealand. This reconfiguration is expected to involve \$6 billion of investment which from all accounts will be funded by \$6 billion of asset sales of a state house portfolio of \$16 billion. There is a risk within this sales and re-investment process that some privatisation will sneak in because the process is quite opaque as it is hidden by the commercial sensitivities of Housing New Zealand and special redevelopment agencies such as the Tamaki Redevelopment Company. It appears that a privatisation agenda is not being run by Government although it is clear that the Government means to squeeze higher dividends out of Housing New Zealand - ostensibly on the basis of its now more streamlined operations and commercially focused culture. For example over the past four financial years Housing New Zealand has provided \$216 million in dividends to the Crown and received just \$26 million in new capital from it. Over the previous four years under Labour, Housing New Zealand paid out \$70 million in dividends and received \$480 million in capital contributions<sup>vii</sup>. Think what these numbers mean for Housing New Zealand's balance sheet and for its ability to provide more social housing.

It is difficult to gain a clear understanding of how the state housing stock is being re-configured because of this commercial secrecy. This secrecy may be justified on the basis that many of the transactions involved have a commercial element and that it would be commercially foolish to openly discuss plans and expectations at a detailed level. All the public really have to go on in what is reported in Housing New Zealand's Annual Reports and Statements of Corporate Intent. These however only offer glimpses and are often a little contradictory but they raise cause for concern about the possibility of privatisation by stealth.

The best example of the privatisation by stealth is with the Glen Innes North redevelopment. In 2013 Housing New Zealand reported that the soon to be commenced project would involve the removal of 156 state houses and their replacement with 'at least 260 new homes'. These new homes would include 78 state houses and at least 39 other social housing properties. In other words the redevelopment would involve the net loss of 39 social housing units. Undaunted by the public's ability to do this simple math Housing New Zealand encouraging writes '*This redevelopment is essential to improve our homes and to build a healthier safer community*'. The question not answered here is 'healthier and safer for whom'<sup>viii</sup>.

Although those involved in the redevelopment of Tamaki argue otherwise there is a real risk that what we are witnessing there and in other areas such as Mt Albert, Sandringham Te Papapa and Onehunga which have streets of state houses built in the 1940's and early 1950's is state driven gentrification.

This has already been signalled in part by Housing New Zealand's desire in Tamaki to reduce the concentration of state houses as such concentrations are seen problematically as concentrating disadvantage and anti-social behaviours. There is however a basic logistical problem here with a policy of diluting concentrations of the poor in areas such as Tamaki which are ripe for gentrification given their locations. Where do you decant these poor people to if you are also concerned about concentrations of poor people in such places as South Auckland. The Prime Minister has already cut off prospects of poor people living in his electorate in the Hobsonville Point development because that would be 'economic vandalism'<sup>ix</sup>. On several occasions now solid middle class Auckland citizens have come out en masse against social and affordable housing being developed in their neighbourhood. Witness the most recent outburst during the preliminary debate around Auckland's Unitary Plan and the antics of the Auckland 2040 group to resist higher densities in their leafy beachy suburbs<sup>x</sup>.

There is of course a flip side to what is happening in Auckland with this state driven gentrification and that is what is happening in provincial towns such as Napier and Whanganui<sup>xi</sup>. Here state houses are being left empty most likely in anticipation of their sale or disposal.

Many small cities and towns in New Zealand don't have a housing problem as their populations are stable aging and even declining. Clearly to continue to hold social housing in communities where housing is relatively affordable and demand is stable does not make economic sense when there is a critical shortage of social housing in other parts of the country. Ideally there should be a re-allocation of resource to meet unmet demand and this to some extent is what is driving the social housing reform agenda - or at least providing a justification for it.

The problem here is of course that it would probably take two three bedroom state houses in a place like Maraenui or Gonville to pay for a two bedroom terrace unit in Tamaki so this re-allocation/reconfiguration risks a musical chairs scenario - when the music stops there are fewer chairs.

One thing seems certain about the final outcome from this massive re-configuration of the state housing stock - it will be good for business. Just think of the opportunities unlocked for developers and investors in Tamaki with the evictions of state tenants and removal of state houses in order to provide blocks of land for so-called mixed income housing. While the Crown and Housing New Zealand may also realise some of the value of the underlying land one purpose being served by this process is that business can get in their make a profit where as previously - because the resource was in public ownership, they couldn't.

The same business friendly process is working in reverse in Napier and Whanganui. The removal or sale of state houses makes private landlordism more profitable in part because Mom and Dad landlords no longer have a publicly owned and sponsored landlord to compete with. If we are still concerned that former state tenants won't be able to afford the private sector rents don't worry we can just top up their incomes with the Accommodation Supplement.

The second element of the Government's social housing reform agenda is the development of a social housing market. This was signalled in the 2013 Budget with the allocation of \$27 million over four years to fund the extension of income related rents to other social housing providers which most likely will be in the community sector. This \$27 million over four years needs to be compared with the \$2.8 billion which Housing New Zealand is expecting over the same period in income related rent subsidies<sup>xii</sup>. There is nothing magical about this \$27 million, this was simply the amount Treasury managed to pull out of the Weathertight Resolution Service budgets as a saving<sup>xiii</sup>. Such a cynical re-allocation calls into question the Government's commitment to resolving the \$11 billion leaky homes fiasco but that is another story<sup>xiv</sup>.

To be funded at a comparable level to Housing New Zealand the budget for funding community sector and local government social housing providers needs to be increased 12 to 15 fold above current levels. While we are likely to see an expansion of this meagre budget in the 2014 Budget it seems unlikely that it will be by 12 to 15 times.

Judging from the official briefing papers released around the social housing reform process it does not appear that there is a grand plan of what this emerging social housing market will look like. There is in fact no grand plan for anything in housing and that of course is part of the problem - we have no idea as a nation about what it is we want to or need to achieve in social and affordable housing.

The current budget for extending income related rent or most likely operating subsidies to social housing providers outside of Housing New Zealand was probably just a first pragmatic step. I expect that the next steps are being developed right now as bureaucrats and their consultant advisors get their heads around what a social housing market will look like. We probably can already guess at the rhetoric - transparency, level playing field, incentives, efficiency, value for money and innovation. The same arguments are being advanced for private prisons and charter schools.

Two related possibilities emerge around this developing social housing market. The first is that Housing New Zealand's subsidies will come under closer scrutiny and may even be reduced in real terms in the name of efficiency and fairness. While Housing New Zealand's operating subsidies have ballooned over the past decade by more than three times the rate of rent inflation there is no proof that the Corporation is being sustainably funded for what it does. While Housing New Zealand is probably not that efficient, the extent of its legacy problems around its poorly maintained, located and configured housing stock suggests that it has never been adequately funded - under Labour or National.

We may soon see that Housing New Zealand will have to compete with other social housing providers for a common pool of social housing subsidies which will not be adequate for the job. In response Housing New Zealand will likely have to rapidly shed some of its less profitable housing stock which most likely will be in areas of low housing demand because these houses will receive the lowest subsidies and most likely cost the most to run. The emptying out of state houses in provincial cities may even be a pre-emptive move in this direction.

Part of this unloading of the poorly located or maintained housing stock may be in the guise of stock transfers to NGO's or iwi/hapu organisations. If this happens we could be distracted by the transfer process at both a national political level and local activist level and lose sight of the fact that the budgets are not adequate.

It is possible but not likely that the private sector could enter the social housing market as social housing providers. There is insufficient profit in such involvement especially given the existence of fairly efficient NGO's in this market but we may see various NGO/private sector partnerships operating as we have seen in Australia.

Perhaps the most stunning thing about the social housing reform agenda has been the complicity of the community housing sector. This sector has remained silent about the reconfiguration of Housing New Zealand and the potential privatisation of state housing

assets and has said nothing about the inadequate budgets which are on the table at present. The reason of course is that they may be the beneficiaries of this and on any account they are already being supported through modest capital subsidies to expand.

The community housing sector remains genuinely non-profit in New Zealand at present although the extent to which the sector is delivering social housing in the traditional sense of the idea needs to be questioned. The community housing sector in New Zealand can probably be broken into five basic categories or operating models as follows:

- ▶ Organisations such as Accessible Properties and Comcare which offer supported housing for people with disabilities or suffering mental illness
- ▶ Faith based organisations such as VisonWest Habitat for Humanity and Monte Cecelia Housing Trust which offer a variety of housing options on faith based models
- ▶ Secular organisations such as the Wellington Housing Trust and the Auckland Community Housing Trust (which I am a trustee of) which provide affordable rental housing to low and modest income households
- ▶ Secular not-for-profit organisations such as New Zealand Housing Foundation and Queenstown Lakes Housing Trust which offer moderately affordable homeownership options for middle income households
- ▶ Iwi and hapu organisations which look to provide housing on customary land.

Much of the recent funding which has been made available through the Social Housing Fund. Of the \$80 million in Social Housing Fund grants which have been announced since 2011 43% have gone to organisations offering supported housing, 24% to organisations offering home ownership options, 6% to iwi/hapu/whanau organisations and 27% to organisations offering affordable rental housing. <sup>xv</sup>

Whether or not such allocations are fair or adequately meet the relative housing needs of low income New Zealanders is in my view highly debateable. These allocations have come about because of the funding rules which advantage groups which have access to additional funding be this from family sources or philanthropic agencies. Marginalised groups and those working with marginalised people have been left out. We hear very little criticism of this from organisations such as Community Housing Aotearoa the national peak body for the community housing sector because it is largely dominated by those organisation receiving these grants and is on any account largely funded by the Crown<sup>xvi</sup>.

The shift to relying on communities and charities to provide social housing is absolutely consistent with the neoliberal anti-state, anti-welfare agenda and is probably the reason it has found favour with the National government. It is a classic way of both shifting funding responsibility to civil society and to individuals and also shifting risk and eventually blame. I am doubtful that those involved in the community housing sector are complicit with this agenda but rather motivated by ideals of community ownership and empowerment and of social justice. What disappoints me most about them is their lack of critical analysis of this bigger picture and so the naivety with which they go about their work

I have no easy answers here. All I do in my work and I hope you will in yours is focus on who you are truly working for. I am working for that young Maori boy, the son of a prisoner who today is living in a garage with his Mum and sisters.

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### Endnotes:

<sup>i</sup> Available at <http://www.salvationarmy.org.nz/research-media/social-policy-and-parliamentary-unit/reports/rebuilding-the-kiwi-dream>

<sup>ii</sup> For an excellent summary of the changing perspectives of state housing in New Zealand see Ben Schrader's 2006 article '*The Other Story: changing perceptions of state housing*' New Zealand Journal of History 40:2.

<sup>iii</sup> For a useful summary of these changes see Murphy, L. (2003) '*Reasserting the 'Social' in Social Rented Housing; Politics, Housing Policy and Housing Reform in New Zealand*' International Journal of Urban and Regional Research 27.1

<sup>iv</sup> Housing New Zealand Annual Report 2011/12 p.15

<sup>v</sup> See Cabinet paper '*Delivering Housing Reform*' available at <http://www.mbie.govt.nz/about-us/publications/cabinet-papers/Delivering%20Social%20Housing%20Reform%202013%20Cabinet%20Paper.pdf>

<sup>vi</sup> Harvey, D. (2005) '*A Brief History of Neo-Liberalism*' Oxford p.2

<sup>vii</sup> For a detailed of these figure see Johnson, A. (2013) '*Give me shelter: an assessment of New Zealand's housing support policies*' The Salvation Army Social Policy & Parliamentary Unit available at <http://www.salvationarmy.org.nz/research-media/social-policy-and-parliamentary-unit/reports/give-me-shelter>

<sup>viii</sup> See Housing New Zealand's Statement of Corporate Intent 2013-16 p.21

<sup>ix</sup> For a short summary of the Prime Minister's involvement in the Hobsonville Point development see Johnson, A. (2012) '*Adding it all up: the political economy of Auckland's housing*' pp.7-9. This is available at <http://www.salvationarmy.org.nz/research-media/social-policy-and-parliamentary-unit/reports/adding-it-all-up>

<sup>x</sup> See the group's website at <http://auckland2040.org.nz/> where they say '*Auckland 2040 is committed to ensuring that the future development of Auckland under the Auckland Unitary Plan balances the need for intensification with protecting the character of our residential areas*'.

<sup>xi</sup> See for example Tracey Chatterton's article in the Dominion Post of 26/02/13 '*HNZ 'rubbishing' Napier suburb*' available at <http://www.stuff.co.nz/dominion-post/news/hawkes-bay/8351356/HNZ-rubbishing-Napier-suburb> and Aaron van Delden's article in the Wanganui Chronicle of 17/11/12 '*Dispute over need as state houses go*' at [http://www.nzherald.co.nz/wanganui-chronicle/news/article.cfm?c\\_id=1503426&objectid=11081878](http://www.nzherald.co.nz/wanganui-chronicle/news/article.cfm?c_id=1503426&objectid=11081878)

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<sup>xii</sup> This estimate is taken from Housing New Zealand's *Statement of Corporate Intent 2013-16* p.42 which show anticipated Crown subsidies of \$2.165 billion for the three years 2013/14 to 2015/16.

<sup>xiii</sup> See NZ Government Budget 2013 *'Performance Information for Appropriations - Vote Housing* p.10

<sup>xiv</sup> For the most recent assessment of the scale of the leaky homes problem see Price Waterhouse Cooper's 2009 report *'Watertightness - Estimating the Cost'* available at <http://www.dbh.govt.nz/UserFiles/File/News/WHRS/pdf/PWC-weathertightness-estimating-cost-full-report.pdf>

<sup>xv</sup> These figures are taken off Social Housing Unit newsletters which reported its funding programme. These are available at <http://www.shu.govt.nz/news/>

<sup>xvi</sup> See for example a news release from Community Housing Aotearoa which expressed that it was 'cautiously optimistic about the Governments multiple announcements on the passage of the Housing Reform Bill' at <http://communityhousing.org.nz/news/media-release-housing-reform-bill-and-tax-treatment-community-housing-providers/>