

Wellington Housing Trust

More than a landlord:
2007 – 2012

Louise Slocombe



Foreword

The release in 2006 of *More than a Landlord*, the history of the first 25 years of the Wellington Housing Trust, coincided with my first involvement with the Trust. In the five years since then, much has happened, including completing our new-build housing developments in Newtown and Berhampore, reviews of our operational structure and governance and our partnership with the Wellink Trust.

Looking back on this period, much of what we have done has been about building for the future while continuing to provide good quality homes and high levels of service to our customers. These have helped give the Trust a firm foundation so that we can meet future challenges and take advantage of new opportunities. Establishing our new housing trust, Dwell, is another important step that will enable us to provide good quality affordable homes throughout the Wellington region. We are also on the point of delivering our first mixed-tenure development, involving the launch of a new shared-ownership housing scheme.

The Trust has achieved a great deal in its 30-year history, yet none of this would have been possible without the amazing support we have received from so many people and organisations. I'd like to thank everyone who has helped us over the years including our trustees, members, volunteers and supporters. You have truly made a difference.

Despite our achievements, we know there is still so much to be done. The limited funding available for the community housing sector always falls far short of meeting the ever-increasing levels of housing need in Wellington. We know the costs of poor, unaffordable and inappropriate housing - to people's health, families, communities and the economy. How much longer can we as a country afford not to address this properly?

This update to *More than a Landlord* describes some significant changes for us over recent years, and more changes are in store as we grow and expand the reach and impact of the Trust. However, we have never forgotten that we are indeed more than a landlord. Our focus is not and should never be just on the homes, important though these are. It's about the people who live in them and the difference that secure, affordable, good quality homes make to people's wellbeing and through this, the economic and social wellbeing of local communities and the country as a whole.

Paul Scholey
CHAIR, WELLINGTON HOUSING TRUST

Introduction

Wellington Housing Trust is a community-based, not-for-profit organisation providing housing and services to people on low or moderate incomes in Wellington city, with a housing need not being met by other housing providers. The Trust’s vision is that everyone has access to an appropriate, affordable, quality home. The Trust is governed by an elected Board of volunteer trustees.

In celebration of the Trust’s 25th anniversary in 2006, Wellington public historian Ben Schrader was commissioned to write *More than a Landlord – a short history of Wellington Housing Trust* (copies are available from the Trust). The history charted the Trust’s development as a pioneer of non-government social housing provision in New Zealand, from its establishment in 1981 as the Mt Victoria Housing Trust through to 2006. Originally set up in response to the dwindling availability of affordable housing in Wellington’s inner city, the aim of the Mt Victoria Housing Trust was to maintain Mt Victoria’s population diversity by providing rental housing for some of the suburb’s low-income residents. Over the 25 years covered in *More than a Landlord*, the Trust widened its operations to the whole of Wellington city and moved from renovating run-down properties to providing newer, more modern homes. This update to Ben Schrader’s history covers developments from 2006 up to the Trust’s 30-year anniversary celebration held in June 2012.



First Trust chair Judith Miller and Peter Jones at the 25th anniversary celebrations.

1: Wellington Housing Trust – building for the future

Trustees

Over the past five years, the Trust has concentrated on becoming a more strategic organisation with a strong focus on the future, and the energy, commitment and skills of the trustees have been central to making these changes.

"We are very proud to live here. My children are very proud to live in houses that are modern and attractive looking."

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Peter Jones was chair of the Trust for most of this period, stepping down after nine years in July 2011. During his time as chair, Peter oversaw some of the significant changes that are described here.

He was on the staffing committee the whole time and managed staff in a supportive, caring and thoughtful way. Peter always gave so much time and energy to the Board – never once missing a Board meeting - and he continues to play a valuable role as a trustee. Paul Scholey succeeded Peter as chair in 2011 and Stephen Cross became vice-chair.

Rod Macdiarmid stood down from the Board at beginning of 2008 to enable him to focus on managing the Trust's Stoke Street development. Rod had been a trustee since 1983 and his contribution was huge and highly valued over this time. Rod now acts as architectural advisor to the Trust and continues to play an important part in developing the Trust's capability.

"It has been a privilege to be associated with the Trust over almost all of its history. During that time I have seen the Trust grow in size, in professionalism, and in the quality of housing it has provided to tenants. That has given the Trust an authoritative voice in any debate over social housing. It is just a pity that the need for more and better social housing is as urgent as it ever was. I wish the Trust all the very best for the next 30 years."

Rod Macdiarmid, Director, Pelorus Architecture Ltd, long time WHT trustee now architectural adviser to the WHT Board

Trustee and tenant Liong Xi sadly passed away in 2007, and his partner Faye Tohbyn, a long-standing tenant representative trustee resigned from the Board the following year. Sister Marcellin Wilson also resigned in 2008.

Andrew Killen was a trustee from February 2006 through to November 2010 and brought valuable experience and skills from his commercial property business to the Trust's acquisition and development of new homes.

Peter Jones

Peter's background is as a property/commercial and local authority lawyer. Peter was invited to join the Board by then trustee John Bledsoe in 1996. At that time, Peter worked for DLA Phillips Fox in Wellington, but now has his own property and commercial law practice.



Peter relished the opportunity to join a not-for-profit team committed to helping people in need into accommodation.

'It was a thrill to serve the community and a real contrast from my day job'.

He remembers meetings in those days were in an almost empty building marked for demolition in lower Taranaki Street. Board meetings were irregular and not as well attended as today! In many Board meetings, time was taken up with operational matters such as rent arrears which doesn't happen today as operational matters are normally the Director's responsibility.

Peter quickly became the Trust's lawyer for general advice, property acquisitions and sales, and subdivisions, a role he performed for many years, and which he found a real privilege – although it was quite challenging at times, for example when he was involved in selling some of the Trust's older housing stock.

Under the very able Trust coordinator, William Holden, the Trust built up its property portfolio by purchasing newer housing stock. Peter well remembers the tragic death of William Holden, and injury to Peter Cameron (William's assistant) – *'the lowest point of my time with the Trust to date'.*

However, the ensuing appointment of Alison Cadman as Trust coordinator (now director) on the recommendation of Peter and fellow trustee Don Borrie in 2003, and the contracting out of the Trust's property management, ushered in an exciting era for the Trust. *'I am sure all who have worked with Alison have thoroughly enjoyed the experience and have admired Alison's passion for her work, her integrity and great organisational skills.'*

Peter took over from Lizzie Quinn as Trust chair in 2002 until 2011, an era highlighted by an increasingly professional approach by the Trust Board and two new housing developments.

Peter says over the last three years, he has greatly enjoyed his role in assisting the Trust adopt new rules and in establishing Dwell, the new trust. He really looks forward to the new and exciting era Dwell will bring, with its regional focus to providing social housing to those in need.

Mary Martin, Deborah Utting, Amarjit Maxwell and Peter Schroder were also trustees during this time, as was Iona Pannett who was a trustee in 2007 but had to resign when she was elected as a councillor to Wellington City Council.

Current trustees are Clare Aspinall, Raewyn Bates, Don Borrie, Stephen Cross (vice-chair), Steph Forrest, Jon Holmes (treasurer), Peter Jones, and Paul Scholey (chair).



Trustees and staff at their 2011 planning day

Governing

Over this period, the Trust has further strengthened its governance and strategic focus, to ensure it is well positioned for future opportunities.

An important step was a human resources review carried out in 2008 by Marc Slade of Koromiko Consulting, which looked at Board and staffing needs. Among other things, the review looked at the balance of skills on the Board. Some new trustees were recruited following the review, who brought valuable skills and experience in finance, governance and communications to the Board.

The Board also set up a new committee structure with five committees: governing, performing, growing, influencing, staffing. The committees have allowed trustees to become more closely involved in areas that they are interested in, while allowing the Board to be more strategic and less involved in detailed management issues.

A further change as a result of the review was the creation of the position of vice-chair to support the chair, stand in for the chair where necessary, help with governance issues, and to provide a plan for succession. Paul Scholey was appointed to this role in August 2008.

Paul Scholey

Paul's first involvement with the Trust was working as a volunteer in early 2007 (helping Alison with her piles of filing!). At the time, Paul had recently moved to New Zealand and while he was looking for full-time work, he decided to put the skills he had gained working in social housing in the UK to good use. Once he had found full-time work, he decided to continue his involvement with the Trust by becoming a trustee. In the UK he had been a non-executive director on the board of a UK housing association which owned and managed over 5000 homes, and this experience has proved to be very valuable for the Trust. He supported Peter Jones as vice-chair of the Trust from 2008, and became chair when Peter stepped down in 2011.



Paul considers that what the Trust does is *'incredibly important'*. The lack of resources can be frustrating when there is so much that needs to be done in terms of meeting housing need, but at the same time he finds his role stimulating and rewarding and enjoys working with the *'talented and committed people'* who are involved with the Trust. Paul's personal highlight from his time with the Trust has been the opening of Stoke Street. *'Stoke Street had been such a long and difficult journey, but I was just blown away by the standard of the finished homes, and the opening event was inspiring, humbling and uplifting.'*

Also in 2008, the Trust registered with the Charities Commission.

A major piece of work for the trustees during this time was making changes to the Trust deed. DLA Phillips Fox generously carried out legal work on this, on a discounted and pro bono basis. The changes were made to meet the needs of the Charities Act 2005, and to update the deed to make it more useful and relevant. The amended deed was adopted in March 2010.

"I'm not sure what would have happened to us if we didn't get a house with the Trust. You were so good. It quickly became our home and we loved being near the beach. It gave us the time we needed to get ourselves together and to get my daughter sorted. Paying the rent we did meant so much. The stress on us was masses less just by paying less rent. I could also get my daughter the few extra things she needed to help deal with her issues."

Tenant

Performing

In 2008, the Trust completed a review of its policies and procedures using the Best Practice Guide produced by Community Housing Aotearoa (CHA), the community housing sector umbrella organisation. The guide aims to set national best practice standards for the community housing sector and covers topics such as governance, tenancy management, asset management and tenants' rights. The results of the review showed that the Trust was meeting or exceeding many of the standards. The review involved a lot of work but was felt to be worthwhile, not only for identifying areas for improvement and gaps where policies needed to be developed or updated, but also because it demonstrates that the Trust meets recognised performance standards.

Growing

Over the past few years, the Trust has held regular planning days for the Board to help the organisation become more forward thinking. The planning days have helped the Trust to develop and refresh its vision, building on its long-standing values.

In 2008, the Trust developed the three strategic objectives of 'better services', 'more homes' and 'strong advocacy'. It also developed a three-year strategic plan with the goal of doubling the Trust's housing stock within this timeframe to be better able to meet the need for quality affordable housing in the city.

The Trust's new strategy (2012-2017), sets an even more ambitious goal of owning and managing 500 homes by 2017. The goal of 500 homes was chosen because it provided a challenge to the Trust, but also because having an asset base of this size would reduce the Trust's reliance on external funding for new developments. The strategy also sets out the Trust's mission of being the leading provider and partner of community housing in the region.

The Trust identified that one way to help provide more affordable housing and to grow the organisation was to form strategic partnerships with other organisations including central and local government as well as other social service providers. The Trust obtained funding from Housing New Zealand Corporation (HNZC) for a feasibility study exploring different partnership options, carried out by Keith Preston of Sustainability Ltd. This helped the Trust to develop its thinking about how it might operate in the future and confirmed the Trust's commitment to working with organisations that share its goals and values. The partnership with Wellink described in the next section is an example of this.

“One of our priority areas for increasing the supply of housing is to work in partnership with an existing social housing provider to acquire/develop properties. Robust strategic partnerships can leverage the strengths of the external partner to the mutual benefit of both parties.”

“NGO partners offer a number of advantages over local authority partners or HNZC as they are more closely aligned both in terms of shared values and cultures and tend to operate in similar ways. They are also generally more innovative and flexible and are able to respond more quickly. They are also less vulnerable to policy changes brought about by political changes in their governing bodies.”

Wellink Housing Strategy 2008/2009

Influencing

A communications strategy was developed in 2010 (with help from Ceridwyn Roberts, a freelance communications expert), to support the Trust’s advocacy and plans for growth. The strategy has helped raise the profile of the Trust and has improved communication with funders, supporters, politicians, customers, media, the public, and other organisations. The strategy also led to the Trust updating its website (www.wht.org.nz) to make it more user-friendly and informative.

Staffing

The HR review carried out by Marc Slade in 2008 also looked at the role of staff in the organisation. It found the coordinator role, filled by Alison Cadman, had changed and the workload had increased. Alison’s title was changed

“Thank you for being more than just a landlord.”

Tenant

to ‘director’ to better reflect the responsibilities of the role and a part-time administrator was employed to enable Alison to focus more on strategic and development work. This role was initially filled by Camille Mooney and then by Janice Hill. It is currently undertaken by Chris Coles.

At the end of 2011, the Trust moved offices, but only within the same building – Century City Tower on Victoria Street. The new office is bigger and brighter, as well as better configured for current and future needs.

Chris Coles

Chris has worked as an administrator for the Trust since 2010, however he had several stints volunteering for the Trust prior to that, including helping to design and build a new website, and producing an “in-house” movie for the 2008 annual general meeting.



Originally from the UK, Chris has a background in molecular genetics and librarianship, and has worked in university, scientific and medical libraries. He has also worked as a support worker with intellectually disabled adults. Chris became involved in the Trust during a stint of unemployment in 2005 – he had previously worked with director Alison Cadman at the Wellington Medical Library, and Alison asked him if he would like to do some volunteer work with the Trust. His first job was the mighty task of sorting out the Trust’s paperwork and files before it moved offices from Abel Smith Street to Victoria Street.

While a downside of working with the Trust is that *‘there isn’t enough funding available to do a fraction of what we are capable of doing’*, what Chris likes most about his work is *‘the fact that the work we do is targeted at people in real need. I know that the provision of warm, safe homes makes a real difference in our tenants’ lives.’*

Some of the things that stand out for Chris from his work with the Trust include *‘surviving the endless revisions of the website’*, and the completion and tenanting of the Trust’s Adelaide Road development. He also appreciates having understanding colleagues who can tolerate his bag-a-day chip habit.

2: Better services

‘Our customers – the people living in our homes – are at the heart of what we do and why the Trust exists.’

For the Trust, providing better services to its customers is its most important objective. The Trust has always aimed to be more than a landlord, providing support for the diverse needs of the people living in its homes and contributing to the local community.

The Trust has a strong history of involving its customers in its work, believing that tenants’ voices should be heard and should influence what the Trust does and how it does it. Faye Tohbyn in particular, a longstanding tenant representative trustee, helped to keep customers at the centre of everything the Trust does. The Trust established a Tenants Advisory Group (TAG) in 2010 to act as a link between tenants and the Board and enable open dialogue on policies, procedures, guidelines and service needs. This group meets every six months. The group has made a number of suggestions that the Trust has followed up including: holding a meeting with the tenants of Stoke Street to talk about the concerns of the families living there and help them get to know each other; more regular face to face meetings between Trust representatives and tenants; and communicating with tenants about ten-year maintenance plans for their homes. The TAG is currently reviewing tenancy management policies.

Since 2005, the Trust has carried out an annual tenant survey. The survey was initially developed with the help of an Otago University masters student. The

“We have so much space we are so happy. Our children have so much space and are very happy. They use the stairs for their games. They can find space to be alone. This place is so good for us.”

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survey helps the Trust to improve its services and make sure they are meeting customers’ needs. In 2011, 92% of the Trust’s tenants stated they were satisfied or highly satisfied with the work done by Trust staff, the then tenancy managers and the tradespeople that maintained their

homes – a very impressive result and an improvement from a very respectable three-quarters of tenants who were satisfied or highly satisfied in the previous year’s survey.

In April 2007, the Trust entered into partnership with IHC Properties (which later became Accessible Properties), a community-based organisation. IHC Properties provided tenancy and asset management services for the Trust’s homes to a very high standard, as shown by the results of the tenant surveys.

However, in 2011 the Trust decided that it would return to managing its own properties directly. This was done for a number of reasons. The Trust felt it was important to build its capacity and capability as a property manager as part of its plans for future growth. The Trust also felt that managing its own properties gave it more control over services and enabled it to build a direct relationship with customers. It also provided the potential for greater efficiencies. The Trust decided to employ a part-time housing officer to carry out this task. Fiona Burke took up this role in January 2012.

“Thank you for the opportunity to undertake tenancy management and property management work for the Wellington Housing Trust. We have enjoyed doing this, and working with you – and it has given us valuable experience in dealing with tenants with a wide range of backgrounds.

We would be most interested in any opportunities to work together in other ways.”

Andrew Wilson, General Manager, Accessible Properties New Zealand Ltd

Another significant partnership, established in 2007, was with Wellink Trust, a charitable organisation that works for and alongside people in the Wellington region who experience severe mental illness. The Trust approached Wellink knowing there was a need for more supported accommodation for mental health service users in Wellington. At the end of 2007, the Trust purchased a house in Titahi Bay, and Wellink provides a service to residents living in this house. This innovative approach has enabled the Trust to provide new services by linking up with another organisation. Up to then, the Trust only had properties in Wellington city, but the house in Titahi Bay was convenient for other services used by the tenants. The service that Wellink provides to the house in Titahi Bay took the Gold award at the 2012 Australia and New Zealand Mental Health Service Achievement Awards.

In 2012, the Trust has been working with the Sisters of Compassion and the Refugee Reunification Trust. These organisations are renting one of the Trust’s homes for refugees coming into the country through family reunification, to provide them with a home while they settle into the country and until a permanent home for all their family is found.

“It is wonderful to finally have a much needed home available for refugees in Wellington. It will really help with their resettlement and make them feel welcome in our community. Sincere thanks to the great team at the Wellington Housing Trust for all your support.”

Amanda Calder, QSM, Chairperson of the Refugee Family Reunification Trust, and a long-time refugee advocate.

3: More homes

'To meet the large – and growing – need for quality affordable homes, not just in Wellington city, but from 2012, the wider Wellington region too.'

The Trust's plans for growth reflect the increasing need for affordable housing in the region. In 2007, the Trust owned 15 properties with a total of 38 bedrooms. This has been increased to 26 homes with 74 bedrooms, housing 94 people.

The new homes built by the Trust during this period mark a departure from the Trust's original approach of renovating old and run-down dwellings, to providing newer, better quality homes. This is because newer homes are cheaper to develop and maintain, as well as providing more comfortable and fit-for-purpose accommodation. At the beginning of 2007, the Trust sold its last house in Mt Victoria.



Construction of Stoke Street project

Stoke Street

The Stoke Street development in Newtown, completed in 2009, was the Trust's first new build project – a significant new venture for the Trust. The Trust decided to demolish a couple of adjacent older properties in Stoke Street, Newtown that needed extensive refurbishment and build a scheme of six homes for rent on the site. These were designed by Pelorus Architecture Ltd and built by Redican-Allwood builders. Two of the six townhouses have four bedrooms, as there is a shortage of larger homes for social housing in the city. One of these larger townhouses is also accessible for people with disabilities. The remaining four townhouses are two- and three- bedroom homes that house families on low incomes. The scheme was funded by the HNZA Housing Innovation Fund (HIF) and private sector funding from BNZ bank.

The development was a challenging and sometimes frustrating process, held up by delays, construction problems, and boundary and access issues with neighbours. However, the Trust felt they learnt much from this experience which they could apply to future projects.

It was important to the Trust that the homes were comfortable, inexpensive and healthy to live in. The insulation installed was above the required standards and the houses had efficient heating systems, double glazing and thermal curtains.

The healthy environment provided by the houses is illustrated by a family of two adults and six children who moved into one of the brand new four-bedroom homes from a small two-bedroom flat. After a week of living in a dry, warm home, their public health nurse rang to say the family had slept through the night. For the first time ever the family did not wake with one or more children coughing or wheezing.

“As architects we have made a commitment in our work to a social good. Working alongside the Wellington Housing Trust is undoubtedly delivering on that. This is a superb organisation that makes a huge difference and we have been very privileged to be able to contribute to, and share in their work. They fill a pressing need and deserve all of our support.”

Callum McKenzie, Principal, McKenzie Higham Architecture

Tariana Turia, then Minister for the Community and Voluntary Sector, spoke at the opening of the Trust's Stoke Street development on 18 February 2009:

"Many of you may be familiar with the whakatauaki which says:

He kokonga whare, e kitea;

He kokonga ngakau, e kore e kitea.

A corner of a house may be seen and examined;
not so the corners of the heart.

Today we bring the corners of the home together with the warmth of the heart, to celebrate the formal opening of the Stoke Street Project.

We celebrate the vision of the Wellington Housing Trust, who have a heart for the people, who are driven by aspirations to invest in a community that enables access to appropriate and affordable housing for all."



Adelaide Road

With the experience and expertise gained from the Stoke Street development, the Trust's next new build housing project on Adelaide Road in Berhampore ran more smoothly. This was a development of four new four-bedroom townhouses, which were again partly funded by HNZC's HIF. The houses were designed by McKenzie Higham Architecture Ltd and built by Armstrong Downes. As with Stoke Street, the Trust wanted to build high quality homes with low running costs and the homes were fitted with high standards of insulation, double glazing and energy efficient heat pumps. The homes were officially opened on 29 September 2011 by Phil Heatley, the Minister for Housing.



Construction of Adelaide Road houses (above) and finished homes (below)



Hon Phil Heatley, Chair Paul Scholey and Alison Cadman at the opening of Adelaide Rd homes



Matautu Ualesi

Matautu Ualesi lives with her husband Filipo, and family in one of the Trust's townhouses on Adelaide Road, Berhampore. Matautu works at Wellington Hospital serving food to patients and taking around tea and coffee. Her husband also works at the hospital as a cleaner. Patients say to Matautu that she makes them happy with her friendly, smiling face.



Matautu came to Wellington from Samoa in June 1987 and initially lived with her uncle in Newtown. She met her husband Filipo at their church and they married in 1988. Matautu and Filipo rented from the city council for many years, with eventually Matuatu, Filipo, a teenage daughter, older daughter and granddaughter all living in a two-bedroom flat. When the Adelaide Road houses were near completion, the Trust approached the council to see if they had anyone in need of a transfer and Matautu and her family were put forward because of their overcrowding. With the move to their new home, their two-bedroom flat was freed up for another family in housing need.

The family are very happy with their new home and feel lucky to live there. They enjoy having enough space for all of them, and find the house very comfortable. They also appreciate being close to church, work and school for the kids, and having a bus-stop right outside.

When the family was housed by the Trust, a member of Matuatu's church rang the Trust to say that when the church heard the news they were all so happy, and felt it was a real boost to their community that one of their families who were in need got such a good house.

For the Trust, Matautu is very friendly and approachable and she and her family look after their newly built home with love and respect. They are fantastic tenants and the Trust has been fortunate as a landlord to have them.

Other developments

Two further homes acquired during this time were the house in Titahi Bay (described above) and a property in Hiropi St, Newtown. The property in Hiropi Street will require earthquake-strengthening work, which will be a significant future cost for the Trust.

The Trust also carried out a significant upgrade of its Clyde Street property, including structural work and a facelift. The Trust received a grant from HNZC for the building work, and the garden was 'made over' by 14 staff volunteering from Fujitsu NZ, organised by United Way NZ.



Team at Fujitsu

In 2011, the Trust secured further HIF funding to build four new homes. Two of the homes will be rented to families on low incomes, and the other two homes will form part of the Trust's new shared homeownership scheme. The new scheme has been designed to help families who, due to Wellington's high house prices, cannot afford to buy a home on their own and reflects the Trust's strategy of responding to a wider range of needs. Families will be able to buy a proportion of the home while the Trust retains the remaining portion of the property.

Finding funding for developing new homes has been a constant challenge for the Trust, which is always working hard to do its best with the resources that it has. The Trust's achievements in building new homes during this time are a testament to the skills of trustees such as Jon Holmes, the treasurer, to Rod Macdiarmid, the Trust's architectural advisor, and to the support from BNZ bank and HNZC.

Jon Holmes

Jon is a chartered accountant at KPMG, working with privately-owned businesses. He got involved with the Trust in 2002 when Peter Jones approached a colleague at KPMG to say the Trust was looking for a treasurer with a solid financial skill set. Jon had been at KPMG for a few years at the time and wanted to become involved with a community-based organisation. He welcomed the opportunity to help people through donating his time and using his professional skills. Jon also felt that he would benefit from gaining experience with boards, and in fact training business people to establish and run effective and efficient boards is now an area of focus for his work with KPMG.



Jon enjoys being part of a team that really cares about tenants and about the wider social housing environment and that is comfortable advocating for change. He describes the Trust Board as a *'high performing team'*, because trustees all have their own skill sets and add value in their own ways, and comments that *'the director and her team are superb!'*

The only downside is the limited support available to social housing and the fact that central and local government have not taken the opportunity to tap into the potential of third sector housing providers.

Jon remembers an early AGM that he attended where there was a presentation on Scottish social housing. The presentation was fascinating, but people started to notice a smell of smoke, which soon became overwhelming. It turned out that Peter, the then administrator for the Trust, was so caught up in the presentation he had forgotten the sausage rolls were in the oven and they all but caught on fire. When Jon got home, his wife asked how the AGM went and he answered that it was "terrible, they burnt the sausage rolls." Ever since, whenever he gets home from a Trust event, rather than asking how it was, his wife asks "did they burn the sausage rolls?"

Jon considers that highlights during his time as a trustee include the development at Stoke Street, which *'was a big challenge for us all, but we achieved a fantastic result and what I would consider to be a model for what community housing can achieve. Adelaide Road proved that we learnt from Stoke Street and that was a far more streamlined build.'* The commendations that the Trust has received from high profile people, such as ministers, and organizations, *'thanks to Alison and Chris'*, are also important achievements for the Trust.

4: Strong advocacy

'For affordable housing, better homes and the growth of the community housing sector'

The Trust has been committed to advocating for housing issues since its early days and over the past five years it has continued to develop this role.

Recent years have seen an ever-increasing need for affordable and social housing in New Zealand as a whole and particularly in Wellington, with rising rents and house prices, and the effects of the global financial crisis. Wellington City Council has estimated that 15% of households in the city are in housing need¹.

The Trust has worked hard to advocate for social housing in the city and wider Wellington region. The Trust and Director Alison Cadman were instrumental

"We have absolutely loved this house but it is our time to move on. It's been an absolute pleasure to know you."

Tenant

in setting up and developing the Wellington Housing Forum, which aims to increase social housing stock in the city and increase capacity in the sector. Membership of the forum consists of

organisations that have an interest in social housing in Wellington such as community housing providers, social service agencies, Wellington City Council and HNZA. Alison Cadman coordinated the forum and trustee Clare Aspinall was also a member.

The Trust also helped to establish a Social and Community Housing Working Group in 2010 which aims to coordinate efforts to increase the supply of affordable housing in the Wellington region through a regional housing strategy. Director Alison Cadman chairs the forum.

"The Wellington Housing Trust is a real Wellington institution, working with many other players to provide safe, warm, supportive housing for people in our capital city. This Trust is a model for the development of third sector housing in New Zealand, a sector that must grow to match demand."

The work of the Wellington Housing Trust is invaluable, reaching people who are vulnerable and serving them in times of need. Together we can address homelessness and hopelessness and provide new models for housing in our capital and our region.

Everyone needs a home that is dry, secure and healthy. I applaud the tireless efforts of the Wellington Housing Trust towards that aim in making sure that our most vulnerable citizens can live in healthy homes. I know the Wellington Housing Trust is also committed to the long term."

Celia Wade-Brown, Mayor of Wellington

¹ A Policy for Wellington City Council's Social Housing Service, May 2010. Wellington City

The Trust continues to work with Wellington City Council on local issues including regular meetings with council officials, councillors and the mayor. Mayor Wade-Brown has recently established a working party to explore ways of growing community housing in the city and the Trust is a member of this.

During this time Porirua City Council has held several housing forums to discuss housing needs in Porirua, particularly Porirua East, and these have been attended by director Alison Cadman and trustees Don Borrie and Clare Aspinall. Alison has worked closely with council staff in a number of ways, including as part of a regional working group looking at housing needs in Porirua East. Council staff helped bring together local community housing organisations to explore working together on a project in Cannons Creek.

Don, a retired minister, lives in Titahi Bay and is very active in the community, particularly as an advocate for social housing. He is a committee member of Advance Pacific Housing, a group funded by HNZC to look at the housing needs of Pasifika people in Porirua, and is also involved in local residents associations. Don has encouraged the Trust to establish a presence in Porirua.

“Over the years the Trust has delivered on its commitment to provide affordable social housing in Wellington.

Its record has won the respect of people in Porirua where there is a critical shortage of social housing. The Trust is to be commended for its decision to become a provider in the region, including Porirua. The challenge will be to work in partnership with cultural minorities, including Pasifika, whose needs and hopes go beyond the classic Palangi model of state housing.

I am confident that the Trust will deliver, providing the Government is realistic in its resource allocations.”

Don Borrie, Wellington Housing Trust trustee and Member of Advance Pacific Housing Management Governance Group

Trustee Clare Aspinall is carrying out research into boarding houses in the city for her masters degree in public health, and this was featured on Radio New Zealand.

Advocacy for social and community housing at a national level is also important to the Trust. In 2007, the Trust commissioned a report ‘Are we really serious about the Community Housing Sector?’ The report, written by Marc Slade of Koromiko Consulting (and generously supported with a donation from The G Trust), found that inadequate funding is a major barrier to growing the community housing sector. The Trust developed proposals for increasing

the level of capital subsidy and introducing a revenue subsidy. This proposal was sent to the Minister of Housing, HNZC, major political parties, and organisations in the sector.

In February 2010, the Ministers of Finance and Housing appointed an advisory group to provide independent advice to the government on New Zealand's social housing sector. The Trust attended presentations and workshops, spoke to members of the advisory group, liaised with Community Housing Aotearoa (CHA) and made a submission to the group. The report of the advisory group Home and Housed: a vision for social housing in NZ was released in August 2010 and recommended growing third sector housing providers.

The Trust meets regularly with Ministers to discuss funding issues, housing need in the city and ways of growing the community housing sector.

“Congratulations on this wonderful milestone. Thank you for 30 years of valuable service for the people in our city. I know you could do more.”

Annette King, MP for Rongotai.

The Trust has worked closely with CHA – until the beginning of 2009 CHA shared office space with the Trust and Alison Cadman was a CHA council member in 2011.

The Trust has featured in the media, both in New Zealand and overseas. There was positive media coverage of the openings of the Stoke Street and Adelaide Road developments, including an article in Progressive Building (the official journal of the New Zealand Institute of Building) which focused on the

“We are so close to everything and we don't use our car much which makes things cheaper. My children walk to everything.”

Tenant

Stoke Street development as a good example of low cost housing and recognised the Trust's work in providing good quality affordable homes. The Trust has also continued to raise awareness about the lack of affordable housing in Wellington, and is

increasingly being approached by the media for its views on housing issues.

In Australia, there has been a strong policy of diversifying social housing and growing the community housing sector and the Trust has been keen to learn from experiences across the Tasman. This has included meeting with Australian housing officials, attending the Australian National Housing Conference in Melbourne in 2009, keeping up to date with Australian housing research and contributing to the Australian Housing Institute Housing Works magazine.

5: From Wellington Housing Trust to Dwell

During the period covered by this update, the Trust has given much careful thought to whether it should expand its role beyond Wellington city. Community groups from the wider region have been increasingly approaching the Trust asking for help, reflecting growing problems of affordability and poor housing. As probably the only local community housing organisation able to grow in the region, the Trust considered that it could have an important role in helping to meet housing needs in the Hutt Valley, Porirua, and Kapiti Coast and decided to step up to help provide affordable housing in the Wellington region.

The Trust's deed confined its operations to Wellington city, so after taking legal advice, the Trust has been working on setting up a new trust that will give the Trust the flexibility needed to tackle housing need on a larger scale. Over time the Wellington Housing Trust is planning to transfer its assets to the new trust and will then wind down over time.

"The Trust has been a leading light in third sector provision of social housing, modelling innovation and collaboration in a very challenging environment. Their achievements to date are a testament to their commitment to providing quality housing for Wellingtonians."

Vicki McLaren, Group Manager, City Housing, Wellington City Council

The Trust gave a lot of thought to what the new trust should be called. The new name needed to be distinctive, relevant to the work of the Trust, memorable and flexible enough to cover what the Trust does now as well as things it might take on in the future. The name that has been agreed for the new trust is 'Dwell' – a word that is closely linked with housing. 'Dwell' also contains 'well', which helps maintain the link with Wellington and provide continuity with the Trust's history, as well as expressing the Trust's aims of helping its customers to live well and improve their wellbeing through providing healthy, comfortable and affordable homes.



Andrew Fyfe from Enspiral developed the name and logo. This is what he said about the logo:

The identity is created from a single shape (a rhombus) which can be replicated and arranged into different pictures. It is similar to the tangram game. You are helping people 'shape' their own futures. The Trust pieces together many parts to create a home. In the primary logo, the picture is a house – two shapes for the roof (half in sunlight, half in shade) and one for the shadow falling on the grass. The negative space shows the shape of the building. The colours are vibrant, warm and happy, just like the Trust's houses.

Meaning of dwell: reside; to live; to live or stay as a permanent resident

"The Trust continues to contribute so much to the social and economic wellbeing of our community. Thinking back over the last five years I'm very pleased about how much we've achieved and continue to achieve.

Our greatest achievement though is that we've made a difference to people's lives – we've seen how affordable, quality homes change lives.

One thing I am really proud of is the fact the Trust has a vision, a vision for what the future of community housing in Wellington and New Zealand could look like."

Alison Cadman, Director, Wellington Housing Trust