



Stakeholder Perspectives and Experiences of Housing and Affordability in Nelson, Tasman and Marlborough

A report for the *Affordable Housing in the Nelson, Tasman and Marlborough Regions: A Solutions Study* Research Programme

PREPARED BY

Public Policy and Research / CRESA

FOR THE

**Centre for Housing Research,
Aotearoa New Zealand**

AND

Ministry of Economic Development

AND

**Work and Income – Nelson, Marlborough
and West Coast Region**

APRIL 2006

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report was produced for the Centre for Housing Research, Aotearoa New Zealand (CHRANZ), the Ministry of Economic Development, and Work and Income – Nelson, Marlborough and West Coast Region. The CHRANZ Board gratefully acknowledges the financial and other support provided by Housing New Zealand Corporation.

DISCLAIMER

The opinions in this report reflect the view of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the CHRANZ Board or the funding organisations. No liability is accepted by the CHRANZ Board, the Ministry of Economic Development, or Work and Income – Nelson, Marlborough and West Coast Region, for the accuracy or omission of any statement, advice or information in this research report and for any commercial, investment or other decisions made upon the reliability of this research report.

**Stakeholder Perspectives and Experiences of Housing and
Affordability in Nelson, Tasman and Marlborough**

**A report on the Interviews and Focus Groups for the
Affordable Housing in the Nelson, Tasman and Marlborough Regions:
A Solutions Study Research Programme**

**Bev James, (Public Policy & Research),
Kay Saville-Smith & Ruth Fraser (CRESA)**

April 2006

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

CRESA would like to acknowledge all of those who contributed as reference group members, or shared with us their experiences and reflections on affordable housing in Nelson, Tasman and Marlborough over the process of this research.

DISCLAIMER

CRESA, its contributors, employees and Directors make every effort to ensure the accuracy of content and validity of interpretation of its reports. Much of the data used to compile these reports and contributing to our interpretation is supplied by others. We shall not be liable for any loss or damage sustained by any person using this report whatever the cause of such loss or damage.

Contents

	Page
1. Introduction	1
2. Methods and Approach	2
3. Affordable Housing Issues	4
4. Other Housing Issues	9
5. The Rental Market	12
6. Home Ownership	16
7. Vulnerability to Housing Need	20
8. Impacts of Affordable Housing on Labour Supply	25
9. Stakeholders Views on Housing Solutions	31
10. Conclusions	33

Annexes

Annex A Interview Guidelines	36
Annex B List of Organisations Interviewed	38

1. INTRODUCTION

This report presents data from interviews with a wide range of individuals and representatives of organisations in Nelson, Tasman and Marlborough (NTM). The interviews are part of the data collection undertaken for Component Two of the research programme: Affordable Housing in the Nelson, Tasman and Marlborough Regions: a Solutions Study. This study is concerned with identifying the causes of housing stress that have emerged in recent years in NTM. In particular it focuses on the interactions between the housing market and the changing local labour markets, and housing-related stresses experienced by workers, families and employers in emerging export industries. The research findings will be used to develop a range of options aimed at alleviating the identified housing stresses.

The purpose of Component Two is to understand the housing experiences of people involved in the NTM housing markets and implications for affordable housing in those regions. This component focuses on:

- Establishing the positioning of key stakeholders in the housing market.
- Establishing the current dynamics of the housing market and stakeholder experiences and perceptions of housing outcomes including:
 - Housing amenity and affordability
 - Impacts of housing prices
 - Supply-side constraints including land access, planning, construction industry capacity, and rental investment
 - Demand-side constraints including the impact of prevailing wage structures and employment certainty
 - Impacts of housing affordability issues on labour force participation, employment and unemployment and labour supply.

This report is the first of two papers in Component Two concerned with establishing the dynamics and perceptions of housing experience in Nelson, Tasman and Marlborough. The second paper presents the findings of a survey of Nelson, Tasman and Marlborough (NTM) residents about their views on housing affordability.

Collection and analysis of qualitative data from interviews provides the study with key insights into the range of housing experiences in NTM, and stakeholders' perspectives on affordable housing and related housing issues. In particular this report contributes to greater understanding of:

- The range of stakeholders and their interests in housing
- Stakeholders' views on the key characteristics of and issues facing local housing markets
- Factors that make housing more or less affordable
- Responses that people have to unaffordable housing
- The interactions between local housing markets and local labour markets
- Housing-related stresses experienced by workers, families and employers in emerging export industries
- Housing issues faced by seasonal workers
- Perspectives on options and solutions for addressing the identified housing stresses.

Where relevant for context and greater understanding of the qualitative data emerging from interviews, this report also presents findings from a survey of NTM residents

about their views on housing affordability (referred to as the NTM Survey). This survey was conducted in NTM late 2005 and consisted of telephone interviews with 612 households (156 in Nelson, 154 in Tasman and 302 in Marlborough)¹.

The structure of this report is as follows:

- Section 2 outlines the general approach and methods used.
- Section 3 provides an overview of affordable housing issues in NTM. This section discusses general affordability issues around rental housing and home ownership.
- Section 4 covers other housing issues that were highlighted in addition to affordability. These were: quality of housing, overcrowding, and security of tenure.
- Sections 5 and 6 look in more detail at rental accommodation and home ownership.
- Section 7 discusses groups that were identified as experiencing housing problems; specifically older people, people with disabilities, students and viticulture workers. All three areas also identified specific gaps in housing provision, namely for supported housing and emergency and interim housing.
- Section 8 considers the impacts of the problem of affordable housing on labour supply, including difficulties in recruiting and retaining employees, and ensuring a reliable supply of housing for seasonal workers.
- Section 9 outlines a number of practical solutions suggested by interviewees.
- Section 10 makes some concluding comments and recommendations for addressing affordable housing problems in NTM.

2. METHODS AND APPROACH

Individual and group interviews were undertaken with key stakeholders from all three NTM areas. Key stakeholders were identified in a number of ways. In the first instance reference group members likely to be involved in NTM's housing market and/or have knowledge of the interaction between NTM's labour and housing markets were identified as potential interview candidates. Secondly a snowballing method was used where reference group members made suggestions of other key people and/or industries that should be included in the interviews.

To facilitate data collection interview guidelines were developed around housing experiences across NTM. The topics explored with key stakeholders included:

- existing housing stresses and issues
- changing demands in relation to housing
- identification of existing housing services
- options for improving the current housing situation
- suggestions as to who should be involved in the provision of affordable housing.

A copy of the interview guidelines is provided in Annex A.

¹ K. Saville-Smith, R. Fraser and B. James 2006 Public Perceptions on Housing and Affordability in Nelson, Tasman and Marlborough A Report for the Affordable Housing in the Nelson, Tasman and Marlborough Regions: A Solutions Study.

Reference group members had already received an outline of the research programme. Stakeholders who were non-reference group members were sent information outlining the research prior to the interview. Each stakeholder was contacted individually by phone and/or e-mail to discuss interview scheduling. Some flexibility with timing was required to fit in with work schedules and other commitments. Where possible a number of dates and repeat visits were scheduled to each region in order to ensure opportunities for face-to-face interviews. In a small number of cases where a face-to-face interview was not possible, stakeholders were interviewed by telephone.

Preliminary interviewing commenced in November 2005 with the majority of interviewing completed between December 2005 and February 2006. A small number of interviews were completed in March and May 2006 to fill information gaps and pick up interviews that were unable to be completed earlier. In all, 54 individual and group interviews were held with a total of 79 people. In addition to the individual interviews a research team member also attended a meeting of the Marlborough Community Workers' Forum and a meeting of the Marlborough Workforce Development Viticulture Group.

A wide range of stakeholders were interviewed including local government representatives, social service organisations, employers, health organisations, iwi representatives, real estate agents, community housing providers, landlords, property managers, mortgage brokers, building industry representatives and representatives of businesses covering a range of primary industries.

Some organisations/groups that were identified in preliminary scoping were not able to be interviewed. In some cases interviews were sought with businesses that were unwilling to participate in the study. For instance, while mortgage brokers were happy to participate, the major banks approached declined to be interviewed citing commercial sensitivity. In other cases, suggested stakeholders were unavailable for an interview within the allotted timeframe or there were difficulties identifying a key stakeholder for a particular area of interest.

A list of the businesses, organisations and community groups interviewed is included in Annex B. More interviews were conducted in Marlborough than in Nelson/Tasman. There were several reasons for this. The residence of two of the research team in Marlborough meant that they were contacted by many additional individuals wanting to talk about the research, and they were given many additional contacts to follow up, most of which could not be done due to time and resource constraints. Marlborough, unlike Nelson and Tasman, does not have a long history of community involvement in housing and established community housing organisations. Consequently, a wider range of agencies with interests in and concerns around housing needed to be interviewed. Furthermore, the nature of the development of new industries in Marlborough and their impacts on housing required a wide range of stakeholders to be interviewed. In both areas the range of contacts covered went beyond that initially scoped.

Each individual or group interview was recorded by hand. Qualitative data was subject to thematic analysis for reporting purposes.

3. AFFORDABLE HOUSING ISSUES

In all three areas of NTM, problems of affordability are apparent in both the rental and home ownership markets. The NTM survey found that the majority of NTM respondents considered that there is a problem with a lack of affordable homes to rent or buy. Over two thirds of respondents described the lack of affordable rental housing as a problem in their communities, and almost three quarters considered that access to home-ownership was a problem. Housing was considered to be more problematic than crime or pollution in their communities.

The survey also found that 80.2 percent of NTM respondents said they were worried that the cost of housing is too expensive for the workers needed in the area, and 61.4 percent were worried that the cost of housing is hurting the local economy. Furthermore, 60.5 percent of respondents were worried that their children, grandchildren or other family will not be able to afford to live close by.

The interviewees considered that housing affordability affects a wide variety of residents in NTM, and is not confined to any one location. In all three areas, groups having difficulties in accessing affordable housing were identified as those on low incomes, renters, and first home buyers in particular. Other sections of the population were also identified as experiencing problems in accessing affordable housing (see Section 7).

Below is a more detailed discussion on the range of affordable housing issues identified in Marlborough and Nelson/Tasman.

Affordable housing in Marlborough

Lack of affordable housing has been a long standing issue for some parts of the Marlborough community, and public awareness of the issue appears to be high. The NTM survey showed that Marlborough respondents were more pre-occupied with rental housing issues, than were Tasman and Nelson respondents. Over three quarters (78.6 percent) of Marlborough residents thought lack of affordable rental was a problem. This was a higher proportion than Nelson or Tasman residents. Fifty-one percent of Marlborough respondents described a lack of affordable rental as a 'big problem'.

Stakeholders are agreed that housing affordability has become a critical public issue because of the exponential growth of the viticulture industry, which is the district's largest and fastest growing industry. Accommodation issues affecting viticulture workers have attracted media attention and are widely acknowledged by the Ministry of Social Development, Department of Labour, Marlborough District Council, wine growers, labour contractors, accommodation providers, social service providers and workers themselves. Nevertheless, while viticulture workers' accommodation needs are very evident, interviewees identified a wide variety of groups in the community that may struggle to find affordable housing. They identified both a shortage of affordable rental accommodation, and difficulties especially for first home buyers. The district's increasing and more diverse population is putting pressure on infrastructure, including housing. Marlborough is a recipient of migrants from other parts of New Zealand, and is experiencing growing ethnic diversity, which affects demand for different types of housing.

In Marlborough, several of those who were interviewed considered that problems of affordable housing had negative social impacts. They identified housing problems as causes of other social problems, such as poor health and crime. One social service organisation commented that lack of appropriate housing was also adversely affecting children's school attendance. Interviewees also suggested that problems in providing affordable, quality housing to viticulture workers would negatively impact on the industry's international image and threaten the district's attraction as a tourism destination.

Marlborough social service organisations said that difficulties in accessing affordable housing were a long standing problem for those on low incomes, and those who are renting. It was also noted that people with large families not only have difficulty finding houses with enough bedrooms, but also one that is affordable. Maori providers noted that affordable housing is not a new issue for Maori, and that Maori are increasingly a growing proportion of the district. Housing problems experienced by young Maori were especially mentioned.

Information from social service providers in Marlborough highlights the extent of affordable housing problems. Providers said that they continually deal with housing issues for their clients and are routinely approached to help find accommodation. CAB reported that it fields regular requests for accommodation, as does the Salvation Army, Women's Refuge and local Maori and health providers. Some providers deal with several housing-related cases a week, while one reported that it gets a dozen calls a day from people seeking accommodation. Indeed, during one interview for this project, the provider was rung up by a middle aged person seeking accommodation. Often housing problems are not only concerned with affordability, but with a raft of other housing issues. Housing is uppermost as part of everyday survival and contributes to clients' stress.

Providers report that problems in finding affordable housing are widespread. They are not confined to any particular part of the district, or to newcomers. Certainly, newcomers are vulnerable to being confronted with a lack of accommodation. They arrive with jobs or are looking for work, yet have no accommodation arranged and no information about local accommodation. Often their first call is to social service providers looking for help. Providers are also dealing with ongoing housing problems facing families, who are living in unsatisfactory situations, whose rental accommodation has been sold, or who have been evicted.

Providers are routinely engaged in providing practical housing assistance, and some are even offering temporary shelter although they are not funded to do so. They facilitate clients' dealings with Work and Income, letting agents and private landlords. Some provide money for tents or sleeping bags. In some instances, providers guarantee rental bonds and vouch for the character of clients who are seeking rental accommodation. In other instances, providers have allowed individuals and families without accommodation to stay temporarily in their premises, and staff have even accommodated people in their own homes for a short period of time.

The following are examples of comments about housing from social service providers:

We get women coming just with housing problems. But we can't assist. Can't help them find houses. A lot of people ringing want to come to the safe house because they have nowhere else to go. (Women's Refuge)

Some are living with other family members, can't afford their own home. On HNZN waiting list. Can't afford market rents ... We have had women turning up at Plunket rooms with nowhere to go – desperate. (Plunket)

We get a dozen calls a day about accommodation. ... Had a call from a family at the railway station – can you pick us up? (Church)

Clients are asking for help to find affordable accommodation ... We ring around to find accommodation for clients ... Staff have taken some families home because they've got nowhere to go. We've also slept people in our offices. We get people with no accommodation arranged when they arrive in town, or they've been thrown out of houses when the house has sold. Or people in rental arrears who've been evicted. (Maori provider)

The imperative to deal with both urgent and on-going housing problems affects other facets of providers' work. None of the providers spoken to are specifically funded to address housing problems, although they all routinely do so as part of providing assistance. Public Health, Plunket nurses and Maori providers related how some families move around in search of cheaper accommodation, or stay with friends and relatives to cut housing costs. In such circumstances, the futility of promoting health messages while people reside in inadequate accommodation was emphasised. Health providers also commented that sorting out housing problems was a positive contributor to their health-related work, and to supporting children at risk. Comments included:

We can't focus on well child messages with sub standard housing. Any sort of health promotion is hopeless until housing is sorted ... preventing child obesity while living in an extended family situation where parents lose control over their child's eating habits ... it's difficult to ensure a smoke free environment in extended living situations. (Plunket nurses)

Impact of poor housing on children's safety and health is significant ... demand for housing sometimes results in young single mothers sharing accommodation in situations that are not family friendly, exposure to smoke increases with shared housing, dog safety can be an issue ... there is reluctance for mums to instigate sleep programmes for fear of upsetting other members of the households. (health provider)

Housing's impact on wellbeing is often more of a priority for our clients than the health issues we are contracted to deal with. (Maori provider)

Affordable housing in Nelson and Tasman

Access to affordable housing was identified as a high priority issue by many of the Nelson/Tasman interviewees. Several people said, 'we want action'; the problems relating to unaffordable housing are known and have been stated in several research reports. Practical actions to address those problems are now needed.

Affordable housing has been identified as an issue in Golden Bay for a number of years. Research there in 2003 identified a lack of affordable rental accommodation, the low standard of some rental accommodation, no security of tenure, rapidly rising house prices that put pressure on the rental markets, and waiting lists for the limited amount of social housing available. More recent research in 2005 confirmed the earlier findings and found a worsening situation as house prices and rents had continued to rise while wages had not increased².

Research conducted in Nelson in 2002 identified problems with housing availability and affordability. Rises in rents and shortages in rental accommodation, decline in home ownership, and a trend for refugees and migrants to settle in Nelson were reported³. Submissions to the Nelson Urban Growth Strategy showed that a key theme in relation to intensification was the need for a plan for affordable housing.⁴ In response to expressed concerns about affordable housing, the Nelson City Council facilitates a community housing forum that includes Tasman District Council, community organisations and government agencies with an interest in housing.

The attractions of a sunbelt and lifestyle destination have resulted in strong and sustained population growth in Tasman District and Nelson City. Both are growing at faster rates than the national average, with Tasman being the second fastest growing region in New Zealand. Migrants to Nelson/Tasman originate from other areas in New Zealand and overseas, including from England, Europe and the United States. This inward migration exerts upward pressure on property prices. Several interviewees noted that Nelson has sustained high housing prices for some years, which have only levelled off in the last two years. The NTM survey showed that Nelson and Tasman respondents were more concerned with the costs of entering home ownership, than about the affordability of rental housing.

Significant increases in housing costs have not been matched by increases in incomes. Annual median incomes in Nelson and Tasman are lower than the national median. This phenomenon is referred to locally as the 'sunshine wage.' Many interviewees commented on the discrepancy between incomes and housing expenditure that constitute an affordability gap:

It's a presumption that because people live in a nice place they can expect and receive less wages.

\$10 - \$15 per hour workers are really struggling to access accommodation.

² Golden Bay Workcentre Trust 2005 Golden Bay Social Report, p.35.

³ Nelson Community and Whanau Network 2002 Social Wellbeing Priorities for Nelson City, p31.

⁴ NCC Environmental Policy Department, 2005 Nelson Urban Growth Strategy 2004 Analysis of Submissions. 907 submissions were received.

The economy is partly seasonal, therefore the earning capacity is less ... there's a perception that housing is cheap here but it's not. The prices are driven from external demand.

Wages haven't risen here to cope with rent rises.

I took a 50 percent drop in income when I moved here, yet the cost of living is not correspondingly lower ... I'm only here because of family reasons.

Young couples, first home buyers are finding it hard. There's no reasonable first homes under \$200,000.

Those interviewed in Nelson and Tasman identified affordable housing as a real problem for sole parents with children, single people, and those affected by marriage breakdown. Furthermore, those returning to the community after spending time in residential institutions, such as prison or a mental health service, were identified as struggling to find suitable transition accommodation and affordable housing that meets their needs. Often, housing problems were identified as part of a complex of issues including living costs, access to transport and maintaining a healthy living environment. The low income earners focus group commented that expenditure of around half one's income on accommodation is usual.

The social service providers who were interviewed identified a range of housing affordability problems that they routinely deal with. These include families that have been evicted, struggles with rental arrears, and newcomers seeking seasonal work who arrive with no accommodation. Migrants are also a group in need of affordable housing. Comments from social service providers included:

Rent arrears and debts are continuing problems ... people move around from property to property chasing cheaper rents ... our biggest concern is to encourage women to look at the long term option of owning their own home. (Women's Refuge)

Clients are putting their housing at risk because they could not pay their rent and got evicted. This is the hidden crisis of housing. We spend a lot of time preventing people from losing their house in this way. (Church)

We have desk enquiries with an immediate need, they are about to be evicted or have been evicted. They have no financial resources. We refer them to other agencies or the motor camp. (Church)

Housing is a huge issue for low and middle income earners. Middle income earners invested in property but now can't sustain their mortgages... people out of town are being stung by petrol costs... there's short term rental pressure, people shifting a lot because of the housing rather than work. (Budget Service)

Nelson and Tasman have a tradition of community-based housing organisations. These include not-for-profit organisations providing housing for older people and people with disabilities. Two housing trusts have been established in Nelson and

Tasman in response to the problem of unaffordable housing. These are the Nelson Tasman Housing Trust (NTHT) and the Golden Bay Housing Trust (GBHT). Both are examples of non-profit organisations operating to provide affordable housing to groups whose needs are not readily met through the private market or public housing.

The NTHT has been awarded two grants from the Housing Innovation Fund administered by HCNZ, as well as funding from other sources. NTHT has built four two bedroom units in Nelson and is planning to build others. Its aim is to increase the overall stock of affordable rental housing. The Trust is also interested in investigating home ownership options such as an equity share model, in order to increase the accessibility of home ownership for first home buyers. Currently the Trust is establishing its eligibility criteria for accessing its housing.

The GBHT has presented a proposal to the Tasman District Council seeking to purchase the Council's four community cottages in Takaka to enable the Trust to use the equity from that housing as a community contribution for funding from HNZC's Innovation Fund. The Trust would retain the council as manager of the cottages on existing terms and conditions. Using funds from the Innovation Fund, the Trust would then build affordable housing for rent and sale in the Golden Bay area. The proposal to sell the cottages would require public consultation. The council is currently in the process of deciding whether to approve the sale in principle and initiate a special consultative procedure.

Another community-based organisation working to improve access to affordable housing is Habitat for Humanity, a non-profit non-denominational Christian organisation which has operated in Nelson/Tasman since 1996. This organisation has built six houses and a seventh is being built in 2006. It generally has about 10 applicants for each house. A 'sweat equity' model operates, with the successful applicant/family devoting 500 hours to assisting with building their house, or with other Habitat activities. Volunteers contribute significantly to building the houses, as do organisations that contribute funding and in-kind support. The applicant repays an interest-free mortgage to Habitat that is no more than 24 percent of net wages. Limitations on building more houses are funds, and difficulties in finding reasonable priced sections.

4. OTHER HOUSING ISSUES

In all three areas, other housing issues were highlighted in addition to affordability. The main issues identified were:

- quality of housing,
- overcrowding, and
- security of tenure.

Sometimes direct connections were made between affordability and other issues. For example, overcrowding was seen as a response to unaffordable rents, with individuals and families moving in with others to cut housing costs. Similarly, interviewees considered that a decision to live in poor quality housing is often due to affordability.

Poor quality housing

In the NTM survey, 47.2 percent of respondents said they were worried about people living in poor housing. Overall, 41.7 percent of respondents considered that the supply of affordable rentals of a reasonable quality was 'below average'. Those in Marlborough were more concerned about the quality of rentals, with almost half (47.7 percent) saying the supply of reasonable quality rental housing was 'below average', compared to 41.6 percent of Tasman respondents and 30.1 percent of Nelson respondents.

The concerns about housing quality that were expressed by Marlborough survey respondents, were also highlighted by Marlborough interviewees. Plunket, Karitane and Public Health nurses in Marlborough have systematically collected information on housing and health issues since 2004. In the interviews they reported a range of poor quality housing including:

- people living in temporary accommodation in garages, sheds, buses, caravans and campervans,
- a widespread lack of insulation in houses,
- a lack of basic chattels such as carpets and curtains in rental accommodation, and
- safety issues around lack of fire guards, inadequate outside areas for children to play, unsafe driveways.

Specific examples of poor quality housing observed by health workers on routine home visits include:

- Family living in rental home, one room only occupied. House generally unfit for habitation – draughty. Cannot afford heating (Blenheim).
- Holes in the wall. Damp and cold. Lack of space for two babies and two older children (Renwick).
- Damp and mould. Family moved out after one week as they all had chest infection or asthma due to the damp conditions. Moved into a property they could not afford, under pressure to move again (Picton).

Nelson and Tasman housing trusts, low income earners and social service organisations also reported examples of poor quality housing, including dwellings that lack insulation and are cold and damp. In Nelson the valley areas of the city are known to be damp and smog prone in winter. Several interviewees suggested that renters seek poorer quality or smaller dwellings in an effort to reduce housing costs. Others suggested that, whereas some poorer quality houses would have once been difficult to rent, these are now sought after because of persistent high demand for accommodation.

Presbyterian Support in Nelson reported observing the following problems with housing quality:

- Draughts through windows, floors.
- Inadequate heating.
- Fire risk from the use of portable gas heaters.
- Damp and mould.
- Limited outside space for children to play.
- People living in temporary accommodation such as a converted garage.

Other comments about poor quality housing from Nelson/Tasman interviews were:

A lot of older houses don't have insulation.

There's quite a bit of accommodation around at the moment but some of it's horrid, disgraceful. Really run down, but it's cheap rent so you put up with it.

Quality housing is dependent on the management of tenants and a regular programme of maintenance and repairs.

...a leaky roof, the chimney's dodgy, buckets everywhere because of the rain... it's unsafe for the kids... maintenance hasn't been kept up.

It is not possible to obtain a comprehensive picture of the nature and extent of poor quality housing in NTM only from these interviews. However, shortcomings in both private and public rental dwellings were identified. Specific comments about HNZA housing included a lack of fire guards, curtains and drapes, and reluctance of tenants to live in certain HNZA neighbourhoods due to fears of safety.

Household crowding

There was little reporting of household crowding by Nelson and Tasman interviewees, although it was mentioned by the Nelson/Tasman Housing Trust. However, Marlborough social service organisations in particular highlighted household crowding as a problem and noted its association with lack of affordable housing. They also emphasised the public health implications and risks of household crowding, which include fire, respiratory disease, and smoking impacts on health. Comments were also made about the potential for domestic violence and abuse being exacerbated by household crowding.

In Marlborough examples of household crowding observed by Plunket and Karitane nurses in 2005 include:

- Parents and children sharing a bedroom. Parents wish to have their own home, but rent was so high they live with [grand]parents who smoke indoors during winter. Causes family stress. Mother is on anti-depressants (Seddon).
- 8+ people in house. Solo mother with two children in one room (Blenheim).
- Young family with first baby living with extended family. Cannot afford their own home, name down on HNZA list (Blenheim).
- Mother, father, two teenagers and baby in two bedroom house. Baby sleeps in lounge (Blenheim).
- Young couple with baby sleep in one room of house that includes three other extended family members (Seddon).
- 7 adults and four children in one house. Two of the women are pregnant.

Security of tenure

Lack of secure rental accommodation was identified as a problem in all three areas. The Golden Bay Housing Trust reported that, while some holiday accommodation is rented all year, most of it is not available for long term rental. In the holiday season some tenants must move out for several weeks over the summer. In Marlborough, some interviewees noted a similar situation, with long term residents in camping

grounds having to move out over summer when demand was high. Social service providers in all three areas reported that having to vacate rental accommodation due to it being sold was a common experience of their clients. Providers also observed it was common for tenants to circulate around the area in search of cheaper accommodation. Rises in petrol prices are expected to increase the number of households seeking accommodation closer to work or facilities in order to reduce living costs.

Families are given notice to quit. Often they are not even told why except that the house is to be used for other purposes. (Church, Nelson)

Selling off of rentals is a big issue. It's very hard to get a long term rental. (Social service provider, Nelson/Tasman)

5. THE RENTAL MARKET

In the NTM survey, over two thirds of respondents described the lack of affordable rental housing as a problem in their communities. Forty-four percent viewed the lack of affordable rental housing to be a 'very big' problem, while an additional 24.8 percent saw it as a 'fairly big' problem.

Marlborough respondents were more concerned about affordable rental housing than Nelson and Tasman respondents. Overall, 76.8 percent of Marlborough respondents saw the supply of affordable rental housing as problematic, compared to 51.9 percent of Nelson respondents and 70.1 percent of Tasman respondents. Fifty-one percent of Marlborough respondents described lack of affordable rental housing as a 'big problem'. Nelson respondents were much less likely to see the supply of affordable rental housing as a 'big problem'; 28.2 percent, compared to 46.1 percent of Tasman residents.

Unaffordable rents were a key concern voiced in NTM interviews. The main issues that interviewees mentioned were:

- A lack of rentals in the low-medium band.
- The high costs of getting into a rental, with the need to pay a bond and up to four weeks rent in advance.
- Debt levels,⁵ which impact on ability to sustain expenditure on housing.

In addition, a number of interviewees raised issues concerning the lack of professionalism of landlords (see section below).

Rental issues in Marlborough

Marlborough interviewees identified the main rental issues as:

- A shortage of rental stock across all price ranges. HNZA reports a waiting list of about 87 potential tenants, around 20 of whom have a high priority. MDC reports that its mainly pensioner rental housing has high demand. They do not cater for younger people or families. Older pre-pensioners are at times given access to

⁵ The reasons for debt are wide ranging, however some debt is related to the acquisition and ongoing maintenance and registration of cars. Many low income people need a car because affordable housing is not located close to work or other services and amenities. Furthermore, public transport is limited.

pensioner houses if there are unfilled vacancies and severe housing need. Those singles are typically people who have been living semi-permanently at holiday camps but for health reasons need more adequate housing. HNZC has advocated for more units, but the lag in official statistics relating to population growth and demographic profiles means that the reality of a growing population and increasingly tight local rental market is frequently difficult to demonstrate.

- A shortage of good quality, 'value for money' rental accommodation. Several people, including young professionals and middle-income families compared the quality of rentals in Marlborough unfavourably with what they perceived they could get for equivalent money in other centres.
- A long waiting list for HNZC housing. Social services providers commented that many of their clients do not even contact HNZC as they perceive there is no chance of obtaining a house.
- A high demand for short term and seasonal accommodation that is not being met by existing accommodation providers such as backpackers and camping grounds.

Comments about rental accommodation included:

Single parents are just finding there's a limited number of houses, rentals have skyrocketed.

Picton used to have lots of cheap housing, now rich retired people are moving in and rents have gone up hugely.

I think people would be shocked if they knew the extent of housing problems, it's especially affecting young people.

These concerns with the supply of rental housing were echoed in the NTM survey, where over two thirds of Marlborough respondents saw affordability problems as being generated by an under-supplied rental market.

A number of social service providers highlighted difficulties their clients have in accessing HNZC provided housing:

Clients feel it's such a long waiting list, HNZ is not an option for them.

One day I went in to see them, they said 100 on the waiting list.

A hopeless waiting list. We don't really bother with them, just ring them up as a matter of course, but don't believe you will ever get a house.

Rental issues in Nelson/Tasman

Among Nelson/Tasman interviewees, views differed on whether there is a shortage of rental stock. Some considered that demand is less than a few years ago, when a practice of auctioning tenancies was observed. Others commented that, while there may be sufficient rental stock, rental prices are such that tenants continually seek cheaper accommodation, which is hard to find. In the NTM survey, Nelson and Tasman respondents were more likely to identify inward migration, and the region's income structure as drivers of affordability problems in the rental market, rather than under-supply.

Landlords, real estate agents and property managers who were interviewed noted that the supply of rentals is generally short in Motueka, Golden Bay and in Richmond. One commented that, because of a shortage of low-medium priced houses, people are increasingly choosing to rent rather than to buy, which increases pressure on the rental market. In addition, certain types of accommodation, such as one bedroom flats, are in short supply.

Demand for rentals rises with the return of students early in the year, and with the peak season for horticulture. In winter there is less demand, and one property manager reported that prices will be reduced in order to tenant properties. A representative of the Golden Bay Housing Trust also noted seasonal fluctuations in the availability of rentals. Holiday accommodation is rented out during the year, but tenants have to vacate over summer.

HNZC reports that there are around 176 potential tenants on the waiting list, with about 60 high priority. It was noted, by some social service providers and landlords, that the Accommodation Supplement and income-related rents assist low income individuals and families with housing, however those who fall just outside of eligibility for assistance often struggle with housing costs. Furthermore, although rental prices are similar across the Nelson and Tasman regions, Nelson City and Richmond attract a higher Accommodation Supplement than do other parts of NTM. Two people considered that the Accommodation Supplement also contributed to keeping rentals high⁶ as it enabled landlords to maintain high rents.

Other concerns raised about HNZC housing included the need for more stock to meet demand, planning and design needs to reflect family requirements for space including play areas and perceptions that some HNZC areas are unsafe place to live.

Comments about the rental market included:

The really tight area is the affordable end. (Nelson/Tasman property manager)

Families involved in seasonal work shift around because they can't make the money stretch when they are out of work, they shift to cheaper accommodation. (Nelson/Tasman Housing Trust)

A lot of tenants can no longer afford the calibre of housing they could before and are therefore moving into smaller houses, flats, smaller sections, taking in flatmates or boarders. (Council officer)

About 3 years ago it was very difficult to rent a house and you were paying top dollar.

The levelling off of the market and being able to access more money through the Accommodation Supplement has helped. (Social service provider, Nelson)

⁶ In October 2004 income limits for the Accommodation Supplement were raised. From 1 April 2005 Nelson was included in Area 2 (the second highest subsidy), which also includes parts of Auckland, Wellington and Queenstown. In contrast, Takaka, Motueka and Blenheim are included in Area 3.

Members of the Property Investors Association and some developers who were interviewed perceive that some local planning regulations impact on the ability of investors to build rental accommodation. There is a view that the current planning environment makes it uneconomic to replace older rental properties. These include perceptions about restrictions relating to infill housing, the building of one bedroom units, and the number of car parks required for residential dwellings. They also highlighted the initiative relating to the replacement of wood burners, part of Nelson's Clearing the Air Programme, which provides a 100 percent subsidy to Community Service Card holders, but only a 50 percent subsidy for landlords. The Property Investors Association considered that this was an insufficient incentive. The Council is also concerned about improving uptake of the scheme.

Other developers interested in building accommodation for both rental and sale commented on the complexities of operating with two councils over resource and building consents and other planning matters. There is a view that the two councils have different objectives in relation to housing, and there is a degree of differential interpretation of legislation. Some suggested a co-ordinated regional approach on both resident and commercial development is needed.

Landlords

Interviewees in all three areas, including landlords themselves, commented on the lack of professionalism of some landlords and landlord inexperience. Examples were given of private rental properties that were poorly maintained, lacked insulation and were unsafe. In New Zealand, the majority of landlords own a small number of properties (three or fewer), and there is a tendency for them not to see managing tenanted properties as a business, but rather as an investment only. Interviewees made the point that landlords have a responsibility to act professionally, by running their rentals as a business, knowing their legal rights and responsibilities, providing clear expectations and information to tenants, doing repairs and acting quickly to manage arrears. There was a view that the retention of reliable, long term tenants was an important aspect of running a successful business.

In Marlborough some social service organisations commented that they have experienced difficulties in working with real estate agents and landlords to house Maori clients. They believe that there are racist practices that act as barriers to Maori accessing rental housing. Some interviewees also commented that they had personally experienced difficulties in finding rental accommodation, which they attributed to prejudice relating to their ethnic background or family circumstances. Other interviewees were of the view that viticulture workers were discriminated against by real estate agents and private landlords. Other groups that were identified as vulnerable to discrimination were young people and Pacific families (which are often larger than average).

Across the three areas, suggestions were made for:

- Establishment of a national standard or code of practice for landlords.
- More comprehensive information for new landlords, outlining their rights and responsibilities, and including 'how to' information, best practices and contacts for advice.
- Support for landlords supplying affordable housing.

6. HOME OWNERSHIP

In New Zealand, while some people prefer to rent, there is still a huge desire for home ownership. A number of interviewees commented on their desire to achieve homeownership and their efforts to investigate ways of achieving it. In NTM, home ownership is above the national average, in part because of the older population profiles of these areas. At the 2001 census, Tasman District had the highest proportion of owner-occupied households (at 75.8 percent) of all regions. Nelson City had the greatest dip in home ownership rates from 1991 – 2001, although at 68.6 percent it was still slightly higher than the national rate of 67.8 percent. Between 1991 – 2001 Tasman District had the biggest increase in number of owner-occupied houses, while Marlborough District had the second biggest increase in number. Marlborough District's level of home ownership was 73.6 percent in 2001.

NTM has experienced strong increases in house prices in the last few years. After 2001 the ratio of median house prices to incomes rose sharply in each of the three areas⁷. In particular, Tasman District has experienced a substantial rise in land values since 2002, with residential values rising 79 percent. Although house price growth in Nelson and Tasman was lagging behind the rest of the country in early 2006, interviewees in property businesses emphasised that it now costs considerably more to own a home than to rent one of equivalent value. This is due to debt servicing of large mortgages and high interest rates. When costs of rates, insurance and maintenance are added, the costs of ownership increase further. Estimates were given of weekly mortgage repayments being 50 – 60 percent higher than weekly rents for a home of equivalent value.

The NTM survey found that almost three quarters of respondents believed that access to home ownership was problematic. The survey found that 42.8 percent viewed the lack of affordable housing to buy as a 'very big' problem, while an additional 31.4 percent considered it to be a 'moderate' problem. Nelson and Tasman respondents were more concerned about the costs of entering home ownership than were Marlborough respondents.

Most of the survey respondents were not concerned about their own home ownership situation, yet they were concerned about the ability of their children to own their own home in the local community. Almost half (47.1 percent) of respondents considered that their children would not be able to own their own home in the community. This was a particular worry of Nelson and Tasman respondents (both 54.5 percent), compared to Marlborough respondents (40.1 percent).

Around three quarters of the non-home owner respondents in the NTM survey were worried that increasing housing costs would mean that they would never be able to own their own home. Interviewees in all three areas were concerned that first home buyers and those affected by marriage breakdown are finding it increasingly unaffordable to purchase a home:

⁷ A. Grimes and A. Aitken 2005 Nelson, Tasman and Marlborough Housing: Regional Context and Characteristics, Motu Working Paper

It's never been a cheap place, even to get into a first house at the low end ... it's very difficult to get anything under \$200,000.... (Real estate, Tasman)

We don't see a lot of seasonal workers. Their options for buying locally are very limited. Couples with full employment are the majority of clients ... you really need a double income. (Mortgage lender Nelson/Tasman)

I have extended my mortgage to 30 years and used my superannuation to get into a house. I have very little discretionary income. A lot of women have this problem, they want to own their own home but it's not sensible because of the financial outgoings. (Nelson)

Wages are not allowing savings ... we talk to young people, they want to get out of the rent trap. (Mortgage lender Marlborough)

There's a strong demand for home ownership here but increasingly more people are having to rent because they can't afford to buy. (Real estate Marlborough)

Real estate agents and lenders reported that entry level homes are very limited in number in NTM. Furthermore, more people are now entering home ownership with smaller deposits, and increasingly relying on older family members such as parents to provide substantial amounts for a deposit, including using their property for security. It is very difficult for single income families and individuals to enter home ownership.

There was general agreement that, while saving for a deposit is difficult, it is not necessarily the only, nor the most insurmountable, barrier to home ownership, as servicing the mortgage with high interest rates also needs to be considered. Ongoing housing costs such as insurance, rates and maintenance also have to be budgeted for. One social service provider in Nelson commented that the Council's rates rebate threshold excludes all but very low income earners, and is therefore of limited benefit to those struggling to sustain homeownership. Another provider observed that home owners who cannot afford repairs are unaware of programmes that may assist them. Similarly, home owners would benefit from the introduction of a retrofitting programme in Nelson/Tasman. It was also pointed out that increasing debt levels, including student debt, are affecting people's ability to service a mortgage.

The inability of people to enter home ownership was seen as a key problem for the future development of Nelson and Tasman in particular. Several of those interviewed considered that home ownership increases people's attachment to a job and a community:

Younger people have a different driver – they're less interested in buying a house, and perceive they will never be able to afford a house, therefore they're not interested in saving – it's spending on consumables. There's less interest in doing extra hours, or going for promotion. A motivation problem. They're more transient. (Tasman employer)

It's the emotional impact of lack of affordable housing. If you have no permanent address you become dispossessed. Young people, young families may be in secure rental accommodation, but they can't afford to buy, therefore end up feeling trapped. It's affecting their attachment to a community. Housing's a primary means of belonging to a community. (Church, Nelson)

The community is most in danger of losing young families, so the trust is keen to offer secure tenure to that group. (Golden Bay Housing Trust)

Others in Marlborough commented on the loss of young people from the area, and were concerned about whether high property prices would affect their ability to return in the future.

One example of discrimination in the home ownership market was given, regarding a Pacific family that had tried to buy a home through several real estate agencies. While eventually successful, there was a view that the family had not been seen as a serious applicant for home ownership. The Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs confirmed that Pacific people face barriers on the home ownership market, and noted that the level of Pacific people's knowledge about home ownership is very low. The Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs has identified the need for a Pacific strategy for home ownership.

Building a home

Building a home was seen to be generally unaffordable in NTM, due to a substantial increase in house and section prices, which has not been matched by an increase in incomes. In addition, in Marlborough there is a view that the building industry cannot meet demand in the more lucrative segments of the market and are consequently, hesitant to become involved in a market segment that is seen as having low returns.

Costs affecting affordability include land prices, subdivision costs, construction costs and costs of building and resource consents. Those involved in housing development commented:

No one's doing low costs houses. Why, because of land prices. Both Nelson and Tasman are running out of land that's cheaper to develop. (Nelson/Tasman)

It costs between \$60,000 - \$70,000 to develop a section for subdivision, before even getting a house on it. (Tasman)

Regulatory requirements are burdensome... developer costs and council levies...previously land was one third of the cost of subdivision, now it's one quarter the cost. Any cheap land is cheap for a reason, e.g. drainage problems, which increases development costs. (Tasman)

Several of those involved in subdivisions and house construction in Nelson, Marlborough, and Tasman commented that it was not financially viable to construct lower costs housing, or mentioned difficulties they had had with costs of subdivision.

One interviewee mentioned that some developers who have built low cost housing in the past have stopped because of a drop off in demand.

There are also geographical constraints on building in Nelson City. Much of the land left for residential development is mainly on hills and therefore more expensive to develop. In Tasman District, there are constraints around building on the flood plain at Takaka.

Residential development is also restricted in some areas of Marlborough, due to flood plain, high water table and use of land for horticulture and viticulture. However, an analysis of Blenheim residential 'land bank' found that there will be no shortage of land in at least the next 16 years (from 2005), under a medium or high growth scenario.⁸ The major constraint appears to be a construction industry constraint of high demand and inability to recruit the range of skilled trades people needed in the region.

A big issue identified in NTM is how to manage speculation on land. This was particularly identified in Nelson and Golden Bay as a problem with sections.

Building on multiple-owned Maori land

Interest in building homes on multiple-owned Maori land was raised by one iwi authority and three Marlborough Maori social service providers. There was considered to be an increasing desire to build, as Maori families are returning to live in Marlborough.

Ngati Kuia Trust commented that it is receiving enquiries from people wishing to settle on whanau land around Ruapaka (Canvastown) and the Sounds. They are seeking information on:

- How to identify their ownership in land
- How to negotiate with other owners to use land for house building
- Subdivision requirements
- Arranging finance
- Building costs.

The Trust is currently gauging interest in holding workshops on home ownership, and if so, would like to use information from the affordable housing project. The Trust is also developing plans for marae development, which may include kaumatua housing in the future.

Infrastructure needs related to housing

Interviewees in all three areas noted that increased demand for housing raises issues about the adequacy of supporting infrastructure, including sewerage reticulation, water supply, shops and facilities, power supply, public transport and roads. If smaller settlements are to be used for residential development, significant infrastructural development, particularly of sewerage and water systems may be required. One person described Nelson and Tasman as being in 'catch up mode' as population

⁸ Davie Lovell Smith, 2005 Blenheim Residential Growth Assessment of the Adequacy of the Urban Blenheim Land Bank.

growth and demand for residential development outstrips overall infrastructural development. In Marlborough, issues around water supply, lack of a coherent public transport system, and the dangers of using fertile, productive land for housing were all identified as potential problems.

7. VULNERABILITY TO HOUSING NEED

In all three areas, those on low incomes, renters, and first home buyers were all seen as being negatively affected by poor housing affordability. In addition to those broad groupings, a number of specific demographic or ethnic groups or sections of the population were identified as experiencing housing problems. These include older people, people with disabilities, students, viticulture workers, Pacific peoples and Maori.

Furthermore, all three areas identified specific gaps in housing provision for those groups most vulnerable to housing difficulties and in most housing need. Those gaps are supported housing, emergency and transitional housing, and, quality hostels for single workers.

Population groups

The future housing needs of a growing older population, who may not be home owners, was identified. Older people's housing needs may include a desire to move to a smaller unit or house that is easy to maintain. Ease of access, warmth and a safe environment are also important considerations. Their needs may particularly influence council decisions about the provision of housing.

All three councils have community housing for older people, with their primary focus being on older people with limited means. Nelson City Council owns 142 community housing units in nine locations around the city. Tasman District Council owns 97 dwellings at eight locations. The councils also support Abbeyfield to provide housing for older people⁹. In Nelson City, approximately one third of superannuitants living in rental accommodation live in council properties. The Council estimates that, over the next 20 years, the number of older people in Nelson City in rental accommodation will increase nearly four fold¹⁰.

Marlborough District Council owns 178 units. The majority are located in Blenheim, with others in Picton, Renwick and Seddon. Preference is given to the 60 years and older age group, while a small number of tenants are in the 50 – 59 age group. These are sickness and invalids beneficiaries and have been provided with accommodation when there have been vacancies. There is a waiting list, however some on the list are already housed in Council units and wish to change location, and others are not yet in housing need but wish to be considered for a unit in the future. Few on the list are in urgent need of accommodation, although in the last few years the Council has received an increasing number of applications from people who have recently moved

⁹ Nelson City Council and Tasman District Council Positive Ageing Policy

¹⁰ Nelson City Council, Community Housing Policy.

to the area and are living in camping grounds. Requests for two bedroom units are increasing. The Council is gradually converting studio units to one bedroom units and has a maintenance and upgrade programme. Most units are not accessible for people with disabilities. The Council is currently reviewing its housing policy.

Those with disabilities, including mental illness, were identified as experiencing problems in finding accommodation that they could afford, or that is suitable for their living circumstances. One property manager highlighted the need for support networks for mental health service users to assist with situations when there are complaints from neighbours, evictions or other problems. A Nelson/Tasman service provider suggested that councils and HNZA may be able to work together to provide suitable accommodation for mental health service users. Comments included:

Those coming out of psychiatric care always have the utmost difficulty in finding housing. (Church, Nelson)

They don't have anywhere to go ... if there are problems with non-payment or annoying neighbours, there's no one to look out for them ... we have had problems, we have not known who to contact and in one instance ended up contacting the Police. (Property manager Nelson/Tasman)

There are a lot of people falling into the gap, they are heavily reliant on whanau who can't cope. (Maori provider Marlborough)

Whanau with mental health problems and disabilities, it's almost impossible to find accommodation for them ... We can't get suitable accommodation for people on dialysis, they need extra room for storage of equipment, they can't afford the extra space. (Maori provider Marlborough)

The stress of finding accommodation often contributes to clients' mental health issues. (mental health service Marlborough)

Affordable housing for students was mainly raised in Nelson/Tasman, although it was also mentioned by a few in Marlborough. Nelson Marlborough Institute of Technology (NMIT) has three campuses at Nelson, Richmond and Blenheim, although Nelson campus has 80 percent of staff and students.

The Students Association and student support services reported that affordable housing is a major issue for students. As well as difficulties in finding affordable housing to rent, students sometimes take up accommodation that is distant from campus, which therefore pushes up transport costs. Mature students, of which there are many on campus, experience problems with maintaining their mortgages. If they are renting, they generally require accommodation that is suitable for children, and must take into account location considerations such as being close to a school. Students Association data on student enquiries indicates the extent of housing-related enquiries they receive; in 2004 it was 371 and in 2005 it was 283. The student counselling service reported that housing is the 3rd most common reason why students use the service (on par with childcare and transport issues).

Student allowance doesn't cover housing costs, you can't afford to live by yourself ... finding good inner city accommodation that's affordable is hard.

Housing struggle compounds with other financial problems like the power bills and money for food ... many are only just being able to make ends meet, there's no reserves if anything goes wrong. A lot try to find jobs and get cheaper accommodation. There are some that drop out because of the cost of living.

New accommodation is provided on campus by a private company. There is a mix of studio, two, three and four bedroom self-contained apartments that will provide for up to 96 students. However, this will accommodate only a proportion of student demand. The Students Association operates a list of rental vacancies and board/homestays, which is periodically updated. The Association has developed relationships with some landlords, and is able to advise students on accommodation that is available.

A significant sector experiencing problems of affordable housing is viticulture workers in Marlborough. This is a very diverse group, comprising both overseas visitors on working holidays and New Zealanders from other areas. While the viticulture industry provides seasonal and casual work, increasingly workers are permanent, able to be engaged in vineyard jobs year round. While many workers are singles or couples, increasingly families are moving to Marlborough to find work in viticulture. All these have different housing needs. This issue is discussed at length in Section 8.

Pacific peoples

Pacific peoples are particularly vulnerable to housing need. They are more likely than all five ethnic groups¹¹ to be renters rather than home owners, with over 60 percent of households with people of Pacific ethnicity in rental accommodation. Pacific people are also more likely to have large families and to be living in an extended family household. Statistics New Zealand estimated in 2001 that 27 percent of households with people of Pacific ethnicity were in crowded conditions¹².

Because of acute labour shortages in NTM, these areas are increasingly becoming recipients of Pacific peoples, both from Pacific countries and from elsewhere in New Zealand. Pacific workers are found across the primary industries, (agriculture, horticulture, viticulture, forestry, and fishing) and in manufacturing associated with those. Some come for seasonal work, being part of the quota of Pacific people taking up employment in New Zealand under the Department of Labour. Also, Pacific families from other parts of New Zealand are settling in NTM. It is likely that this trend will grow with chain migration. While Nelson and Tasman have a well established Pacific community that has been developing for at least the last ten years, the Pacific community in Marlborough is relatively new, but growing fast.

Pacific newcomers often need additional supports from the host community, particularly if English is their second language. They may find it difficult to engage with local services and interact with others in the community.

¹¹ Statistics New Zealand data is collected for European, Maori, Pacific, Asian and Other.

¹² Housing New Zealand Corporation 2005 The New Zealand Housing Strategy, p.71.

The Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs has undertaken consultation with Pacific communities in Nelson/Tasman and Marlborough in mid 2005. An indicator of the extent of interest of Pacific people in engaging with their host communities is the turnout of over 50 Pacific people at the Nelson meeting and over 70 at the Blenheim meeting.

The two most critical issues identified through those consultations were health and housing. The main issues related to housing were affordability of rentals, availability of HNZA housing, size of houses, quality of housing and security of rentals, with houses being sold and tenants having to move¹³. Pacific workers tend to be over-represented in low paid work, which limits their ability to access housing.

The Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs comments that South Island agencies and communities tend to be less aware of and less responsive to the needs of Pacific residents. Often agencies have very little or no experience in dealing with Pacific people. Currently the Ministry is preparing a Collaboration Protocol with 19 agencies in Nelson and Tasman, including councils, the DHB and government agencies, to promote engagement with Pacific communities in Nelson and Tasman.

Maori

Maori are increasingly a growing proportion of NTM. For at least the last 20 years, the number of Maori living in NTM has grown. The top of the South has been a recipient of Maori from other areas in New Zealand. Statistics New Zealand projections to 2016 are that Nelson City will experience the largest proportional growth of Maori of any region, followed by Tasman District. Marlborough District's Maori population increase will be slightly higher than the national increase.¹⁴

Maori providers commented that housing problems are major and prevalent issues they contend with. The housing problems experienced by those renting, and by young Maori were especially mentioned.

Maori are more likely to live in rental accommodation; in 2001 this was 51.9 percent of households with at least one person of Maori ethnicity. Nelson region had the highest percentage of renting households with people of Maori ethnicity (59.6 percent). Between 1991 and 2001, Nelson and Tasman regions saw the largest percentage increases in households with at least one person of Maori ethnicity in rental accommodation. However, it should also be noted home ownership among Maori is relatively high in NTM. Nelson, Tasman and Marlborough are among the regions with over 50 percent of households with at least one person of Maori ethnicity that are in owned dwellings.

¹³ See also Marlborough Midweek July 20 2005, "Housing Headache", which describes housing problems faced by Pacific families.

¹⁴ Projection Maori population increases are: New Zealand: 36% (high scenario), 22% (medium scenario), 8% (low scenario); Nelson 53% (high scenario), 40% (medium scenario), 27% (low scenario); Tasman 50% (high scenario), 36% (medium scenario), 23% (low scenario); Marlborough 36% (high scenario), 24% (medium scenario), 13% (low scenario).

Gaps in housing provision

Supported housing refers to support programmes that allow people to live independently in the community with the help of others that assist with housing management (such as understanding tenancy agreements, interacting with neighbours, maintaining a dwelling) and link the individual to any other services that are required (such as health services, counselling or employment assistance). There are various types of supported housing services, including residential services and supports to people in private sector accommodation. Services may be long term and permanent, or provided to assist with short-term needs.

A number of social service providers in Nelson, Tasman and Marlborough identified a need for supported housing for such groups as people out of prison integrating into the community, older people, and people with disabilities, including mental illness. These groups often have difficulties in accessing safe and affordable housing both in the public and private rental markets. A need was also identified for transition accommodation incorporating support and supervision to help those recovering from mental illness or addictions to find their feet and eventually move on to satisfactory and affordable accommodation. Two social service providers in Nelson considered that there is an unfulfilled demand for supported accommodation, and a pressing need to develop services in line with best practice.

A Maori provider in Marlborough identified a need for specific housing responses targeted to young adults with no secure accommodation and often at risk of criminal behaviour. One group, in their teens, are either in transition from school, or have dropped out of school. They tend not to be equipped for entering the workforce and lack living skills such as budgeting. Another group in housing need are in their early 20s, perhaps in the labour force, but of no fixed abode. This provider assesses that there are at least 10 young adults who would currently benefit from a supported housing model:

They are not getting the support within the whanau and they are a drain on the whanau resources which escalates into violence, and they are vulnerable to getting into crime. They are in an unsafe home environment ... currently these kids are just moving around different households.

A lack of emergency and transitional accommodation is seen as a major gap in accommodation services in NTM arising from the failures in the current housing market.

In Nelson, some evidence of homelessness was noted, with people sleeping rough, or frequently moving between the households of friends and relatives. Not well catered for by emergency and transitional accommodation were women, particularly those with children and those coming out of institutions who may need transitional housing.

Nelson has one night shelter for men, and a caravan at Tahunanui camping ground is also available for emergency accommodation. It is understood that the night shelter cannot keep up with demand for beds. In the past, Women's Refuge has provided temporary accommodation for women with housing problems. The Refuge maintains

a safe house for women victims of domestic violence. This is usually only for a short while until the woman's partner is dealt with by the Court and she is re-established in her own home.

The Nelson/Tasman Housing Trust may provide some emergency accommodation as part of the mix of housing services it is planning to provide. Currently the Trust has a memorandum of understanding with seven social service agencies, which have pledged to work together for the provision of interim and emergency housing. The Trust has also been working with HNZA to obtain a house for interim and emergency housing, but it appears that a suitable house is not yet available.

In Marlborough, examples were given of people living in cars and under bridges, or in temporary accommodation such as sheds and garages. Work and Income and Salvation Army have provided tents and sleeping bags to people with no housing.

Marlborough social service organisations report that the reasons why people seek emergency or transitional accommodation include:

- arriving in Marlborough for work and having nowhere to stay.
- collapse of shared accommodation arrangements.
- eviction because the rental accommodation is sold or in arrears.
- inability to find affordable accommodation.
- exclusion from camping grounds over the holiday period.

The Community Housing Action Trust is the only organisation in Marlborough providing emergency or transitional accommodation for families with nowhere else to go. The Trust has one three bedroom house. Clients include both working families and those on benefits. Most of the workers are in vineyards or horticulture. The Trust receives many calls from single people although they are ineligible for the service. The Trust reports that it cannot keep up with demand for its service. There are constant phone calls from people seeking accommodation, and referrals from organisations such as CAB and HNZA. The community house often has two families in residence at same time, and in recent years the facility has been constantly full. Increased demand from larger families has been noticed. Residents are increasingly staying for longer periods of up to six months because of difficulties in finding accommodation. Some residents in the community house struggle to pay the rent there and leave owing rent.

With regard to mainstream housing opportunities, there is a significant gap in seasonal and casual workers accommodation for both families and single workers. Some of that accommodation demand is short-term, but for many workers in the emerging industries, there is a requirement for long-term, stable accommodation. This is discussed at length in Section 8.

8. IMPACTS OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING ON LABOUR SUPPLY

This section considers the impacts of the problem of affordable housing on labour supply. In the NTM survey, a large majority (80.2 percent) of NTM respondents said they were worried that the cost of housing is too expensive for the workers needed in the area. Residents in Tasman (81.8 percent) and Marlborough (81.5 percent) were

slightly more concerned than Nelson residents (76.3 percent) about the availability of affordable housing for workers. Furthermore, 61.4 percent of respondents thought that the cost of housing is hurting the local economy. Residents in Tasman (67.5 percent) and Nelson (65.4 percent) were more concerned than those in Marlborough (56.3 percent).

Interviewees in NTM commented on the effects of unaffordable housing on:

- difficulties in attracting prospective employees to the top of the South,
- difficulties in retaining employees, and
- issues around ensuring a reliable supply of housing for seasonal workers.

Attracting and keeping employees were identified as issues affecting a range of industries. It is not confined to seasonal industries or the primary sector, but also impacts on secondary industries such as construction, and tertiary sector industries such as tourism, education and health. A range of occupations from workers to managers, technical staff, trades people and professionals are affected.

Difficulties in recruiting and retaining employees

In NTM, employers, representatives of the chambers of commerce and the regional development trusts commented on difficulties in recruiting and retaining workers due to unaffordable housing. Those involved in real estate and home financing also identified affordable housing as a factor in employees' movement. It was noted that young people find it especially difficult to remain in NTM because of unaffordable housing. Single income families and workers on modest incomes may all leave in search of more affordable housing.

Examples were given of applicants who accepted jobs, only to decline taking them up because they could not find affordable accommodation. There were also examples of people who moved from Nelson/Tasman to the West Coast or other South Island centres, and of those who were commuting greater distances to work in Nelson (from Motueka or Murchison for example), rather than moving out of the district. Some talked of professional staff moving to other centres with more affordable housing and better infrastructure. It was noted that Golden Bay experiences problems in attracting professionals such as teachers and police to the area and this is attributed to the cost of housing there.

Comments included:

The real issue is to attract people to Nelson. It's felt by all industries, housing is too expensive for people to move in. When people come from Auckland for a job interview they're put off by the price of housing. (Nelson)

It's a struggle to supply [accommodation], but they have to, to attract [orchard] workers. (Tasman)

We have lost and continue to lose staff because either they can't afford to buy a house, or want to reduce their expenditure on housing. This is staff from factory workers to management. In some cases housing is definitely a factor in leaving the district. (Tasman employer)

Anecdotally we hear of workers moving out of the region because of housing costs. (Tasman District Council)

Small to medium businesses face problems of retention of staff. (Nelson)

We won't attract good labour without good housing. (Marlborough)

It's difficult to source apprentices locally in electrical, agriculture, mechanics, engineering, aquaculture and marine. (Marlborough)

One person employed in horticulture pointed out that the affordability of housing is not the only, and perhaps not the primary factor affecting employee recruitment and retention. In seasonal and primary industries such as horticulture, fishing, forestry and dairying, recruitment and retention is strongly affected by the potential worker's perception of the industry – whether the industry offers good pay and working conditions, and whether it's a good career prospect.

Housing the viticulture labour force

Those in Marlborough's viticulture industry, and the Viticulture Workforce Development Group, have identified housing as one of the major factors affecting recruitment and retention of workers. There is a shortage of rental housing and backpackers cannot meet demand, particularly in the peak season. People sleeping in cars and in temporary accommodation is not unusual. Local community organisations have provided sleeping bags and tents to workers with no accommodation.

The industry requires not only a large number of workers at peak times of harvest and pruning, but it is also a year round industry employing an increasing number of workers. The Marlborough Seasonal Co-ordinator at Work and Income, who deals with viticulture labour needs, reports that in 2006, the industry will need around 3,000 workers from May to September. More workers, both permanent and temporary, will be needed in future, as a 30 percent growth rate in viticulture is expected within the next ten years.

Increasingly the viticulture industry is seeking to establish a stable workforce and is therefore interested in employing workers with families. The industry is trying to build up a core base of skilled viticulture workers who will train others. Three years ago the industry was 40% reliant on transient labour. From 2005 it is predicted that it will be 75% reliant on transient labour, a major indication of the difficulty the industry is experiencing in building up a permanent, core labour force. Retention of a permanent workforce is critical for workforce planning and skill development. One contractor observed that training is a major expense that would be more effectively used if the industry did not continue to lose experienced workers.

Comments from Marlborough employers in the viticulture industry included:

The majority of vineyards have not accepted there is a problem. If they can't get their vines pruned, then they'll have to do something about housing. It will have to be a crisis before they react.

We definitely need families. We can't sustain the industry on backpackers alone ... housing does impact on our ability to attract labour ... [recruiting overseas workers] what happens when they get here? You just can't bring them without help and advice.

It's a huge issue for selling the wine, workers have to be housed appropriately.

The negative impact of poor and unaffordable housing on the image of viticulture, both domestically and internationally, was especially raised in Marlborough, and was also commented on in Nelson/Tasman, although viticulture is a smaller component of that local economy.

A range of backpackers accommodation caters for many overseas visitors working in short term viticulture employment, and for some New Zealand workers. The few employees who were interviewed noted that Marlborough is losing workers to other areas, because of a lack of affordable housing. Employers, contractors and employees gave many examples of seasonal workers experiencing difficulties with accommodation and permanent workers struggling to find housing in Marlborough. These included:

- 12 New Zealand workers recruited and only one retained. Others left due to problems in finding accommodation.
- Two families of skilled viticulture workers specially recruited from overseas and still living in caravans after nine months. The employer is considering buying a house for them to rent.
- Winemakers recruited from overseas living in flatting situations with insecure tenure.
- Workers renting off contractors being charged a high rent.

Several organisations criticised what they perceived to be Work and Income's practice of encouraging workers to move to Marlborough for jobs in the viticulture industry, without assisting them to find accommodation. Those workers then become reliant on community organisations to assist them. The Community Workers Forum and the Community Law Centre have raised their concerns with the Marlborough office of Work and Income.

A contentious issue has arisen concerning the housing of workers. Some employees are housed by contractors that buy or rent houses and then rent out beds in those. Currently this situation appears to be defined by the Council as private rental, rather than a hostel. The local Backpackers Collective has complained to the Ombudsman about what they perceive to be unlicensed proprietors that are operating private dwellings as hostels, but are not bound by appropriate regulations. They estimate that there are 20 – 25 houses in Blenheim not registered as backpackers, which are being used to accommodate workers, with 12 – 14 people in each house. The Collective maintains that its members are unlikely to expand the number of backpacker beds in the area while this situation remains, because it is uneconomic for them to invest in the provision of accommodation with associated compliance requirements while unlicensed operators are undercutting the market.

Further to the debated issue over what is defined as a hostel, several contractors and employers made the point that, while temporary accommodation such as that available in backpackers and camping grounds fills a major gap for housing seasonal workers from overseas, it does not meet the overall demand and is not suitable for permanent workers and families. Furthermore, backpacker proprietors and others commented that some New Zealanders did not fit in with the culture of backpackers and have caused disruption.

Housing workers near their work is another issue that requires attention. For example, with 3,000 hectares now in grapes, the Awatere is an area where workers' accommodation is increasingly in demand and cheaper housing is becoming difficult to find.

A number of developers have sought to establish workers' accommodation recently, but the main barriers have related to meeting planning requirements, and problems in proposed locations concerned with the scale of development proposed, lack of infrastructure, impacts on rural residents and environmental issues relating to poor drainage and high water table. The Council has stated a preference for workers' accommodation to be located in areas with existing infrastructure for roading, water and sewerage.

Examples of housing related assistance provided by employers

Employers were well aware of the potential impact of unaffordable housing on their ability to attract and retain employees. Across the three areas, some employers are providing forms of housing assistance, ranging from help with finding accommodation, to supplying accommodation. The nature and extent of housing assistance differs considerably from employer to employer, and from industry to industry. There were different views on the extent to which industries, and individual employers were both willing and able to provide any sort of housing assistance to employees. Key issues were around:

- The priority that the employer places on providing housing assistance.
- Cost of providing housing.
- Regulatory restrictions.
- Tax implications.

Comments included:

If we want to retain them, have to go that extra mile and help them get accommodation. (Marlborough employer)

We place a high value on attracting good staff. We pay above average wages and have good conditions. Housing is part of that mix. (Tasman employer)

In Marlborough generally winegrowers do not see their role as providing accommodation and prefer to leave it to the private sector to supply. However, some housing-related services provided by viticulture employers are evident. They include:

- Viticulture contractors buying or renting houses for their employees. This includes accommodation for families in some instances.
- Assisting workers to find housing, e.g. by matching up workers with homestays.

- Employer arrangements with backpackers, which supply accommodation and the employer provides transport to work sites.

The Marlborough Seasonal Co-ordinator assists viticulture workers to find accommodation by providing an accommodation directory of backpackers, hotels and camping grounds. The co-ordinator also matches up workers with householders offering board.

Nelson and Tasman have a more diverse range of workers' accommodation than Marlborough, due to the historical practice of orchards providing accommodation on site. Even so, there are still accommodation shortages around picking time. In the horticulture sector, about six large growers supply a significant amount of workers' accommodation that can house up to 50 people. Some old workers accommodation remains and is still in demand, often for permanent accommodation. To replace or convert it and bring it up to current building and health and safety standards would require considerable investment. Very few vineyards in Nelson/Tasman provide workers' accommodation, although one has orchard-style accommodation as well as housing available. Most vineyards are small and would not have the capital available for housing. Like Marlborough, a variety of backpackers and camping grounds provide accommodation for seasonal workers. Some camping grounds provide permanent sites for long stay residents.

In the past, the Tasman District Council has been reluctant to allow workers' accommodation to be built that would be defined under the Tasman Resource Management Plan as a dwelling and as such enable future subdivision to take place. However, the council has also been aware of the sustained demand for workers' accommodation, and has discussed with industry representatives ways of facilitating the development of workers' accommodation without compromising the council's subdivision rules. The approach is that amenities such as ablutions and kitchen facilities should be stand alone and separate from sleeping quarters. This solution provides accommodation for seasonal workers, but does not constitute a dwelling as such. However, it has been pointed out that the approach does not deal with affordable housing for permanent workers such as managers. Nor does it always address the need to convert existing facilities to permanent accommodation.

Other examples of housing-related assistance to employees in horticulture and fishing include:

- Housing rented to employees.
- Transition houses that are rented out to management and supervisory staff until they find their own accommodation.
- Help for staff with sought after skills to re-locate to the area and to find housing.

Not all employees need or want to be accommodated in employer-supplied housing, and the downsides of such housing should be recognised. It can tie an employee to unsatisfactory housing, or if they lose the job, they can also lose their accommodation. However, all agree that there is a definite need for various types of assistance for workers to access accommodation.

Whose problem?

In the interviews no-one thought that the supply of affordable housing is the sole responsibility of particular industries or employers. Nor did anyone see it as only a problem for central or local government to address. It was variously defined as:

- a problem that the community as a whole needs to address;
- something that affected industries, together with local and central government agencies need to work on solutions; and
- a matter for the housing market to 'correct' any current imbalances over time.

The diverse views are evident in these following comments:

Housing is not a wine industry problem, it's a community problem. (Tasman employer)

Housing will be a driver of movement. If it's not addressed, people will leave, schools shut, businesses go. (Golden Bay resident)

Let the market take care of it. (Nelson/Tasman employer)

We've got to take a different approach to housing in this region. There's a need for social responsibility ... government has to be more proactive, you can't leave it to local government, they can't afford it, or to private industries, they are profit driven. (Nelson)

Don't subsidise the grape growers by providing worker housing! (Marlborough)

The most desirable approach is to let the market operate. If the situation is left to itself it will resolve itself naturally through the market. (Marlborough)

It's got to be a combined approach, council, government and [viticulture] industry. (Marlborough)

These clear differences in perspective point to areas for debate when solutions are discussed.

9. STAKEHOLDERS' VIEWS ON HOUSING SOLUTIONS

In the interviews in all three areas, there were strong views about who should be involved in solutions for affordable housing, and the extent to which there should be intervention in the housing market. Some interviewees believed that poor housing is a major social problem that is leading to other problems for their community, including poor health, crime and problems in labour supply. In their view the public impacts need to be managed as the externalities generated by poor housing are costly for all. Other interviewees clearly expressed a preference for minimal intervention in the housing market. In their view, interventions lead to distortions in the market, which have unintended and often adverse consequences for the groups that the intervention seeks to help. These interviewees expect the housing market to eventually re-balance.

They see the private sector as having the ability and capacity to respond quickly and efficiently to changes in demand for housing.

Almost all who were interviewed made suggestions for addressing the problem of affordable housing, or identified what they considered to be the priority issues to tackle. These priorities and suggestions are set out below. It should be noted that some suggestions may be already occurring or in planning. No judgement is made about the feasibility or practicality of the suggestions. They are simply presented to assist the next stage of identifying and discussing options and solutions for affordable housing in NTM.

In Marlborough the priorities in relation to affordable housing were identified as:

- Establish accommodation for workers in the viticulture industry.
- Increase HNZA stock and re-generate existing stock.
- Establish emergency and interim housing.
- Establish supported housing.
- Address overcrowding and poor quality accommodation.
- Address the issue of the operation of private dwellings as hostels.
- Address infrastructure needs related to residential development.

The solutions suggested by Marlborough interviewees were:

- The Council or central government to appoint a Marlborough housing co-ordinator to work with all stakeholders.
- Focus on infill and 'brownfields' development in Blenheim and the smaller townships, rather than greenfields development.
- Establish accommodation for workers in the viticulture industry. There were varied views on who should do this, with key roles seen for private developers, employers and Council.
- More camping grounds, including long stay facilities for motor homes.
- Expansion of Council housing, with consideration of the extent to which Council has a role in provision of housing for groups whose needs are not currently met on the housing market.
- Enabling the development of quality, medium density housing.
- Investigate a range of tenure models, such as shared ownership and rent-to-buy.
- Central government to develop policies to assist families and those on low incomes to enter home ownership.
- Review Council resource consent processes and planning regulations to assess how they can be more facilitative of housing developments.
- Employers to investigate a collective approach to advocate for the housing needs of the local labour force.
- Support landlords who are supplying affordable housing. The types of supports envisaged were not clearly identified.
- Develop national standards and codes of practice for landlords. Establish an independent organisation to monitor landlord practices and to provide information and assistance for landlords.
- Establish emergency housing and supported housing.

In Nelson/Tasman the priorities were:

- Review councils' resource consent processes and planning regulations to assess how they can be more facilitative of housing developments.

- Establish emergency and interim housing.
- Establish supported housing.
- Address infrastructure needs related to residential development.
- Deal with speculation.

The solutions suggested by Nelson/Tasman interviewees were:

- Development of a regional housing strategy for Nelson and Tasman, supported by both councils.
- A consistent regional approach and consistency across NCC and TDC with regard to planning.
- Develop affordable housing initiatives through partnerships between the public sector, private sector developers and non-profit organisations.
- Consult with industries regarding the best placement of workers' accommodation and transport needs.
- Review councils' resource consent processes and planning regulations to assess how they can be more facilitative of housing developments. Examples include the minimum size of sections and requirements for 2 car parks per house.
- Develop initiatives to raise overall median incomes of the region, including encouragement of tertiary education and training, and attraction of high paying industries.
- Investigate a range of tenure models, such as shared ownership and rent-to-buy.
- Support landlords who are supplying affordable housing e.g. through improving subsidies for replacing wood burners.
- Central government to develop policies to assist families and those on low incomes to enter home ownership.
- Support work being done on the bond bank.
- Continue to facilitate the development of 'comprehensive housing'.
- Re-zone land for residential use and ensuring it's correctly serviced.
- Discourage speculation, e.g. impose a levy if on-sold within a particular timeframe.
- Support local housing trusts.
- Develop supported housing for a whole range of needs including people with disabilities, mental health service users, ex-prisoners, people recovering from addictions. Central and local government to work together on viable solutions for these groups.
- Provide more information and publicity concerning existing programmes such as EECA's retrofit programme and HNZC's essential repairs lending programme and improve uptake of such programmes.
- Greater involvement of community organisations in HNZC's regional planning processes.

10. CONCLUSIONS

The interviews provide a detailed overview of affordable housing issues in NTM, the housing experiences of different groups within the population, and the relationship between affordable housing, the labour market and other social issues.

Across NTM, the main groups having difficulties in accessing affordable housing were identified as those on low incomes, renters, and first home buyers. Interviewees

identified problems of affordability in both the rental and home ownership markets. Within that broad consensus, Nelson and Tasman interviewees were more concerned about the costs of entering home ownership than were Marlborough interviewees. Marlborough interviewees focused more on the supply of rental accommodation and were more concerned about the quality of rentals. A number of interviewees considered that unaffordable housing was a driver of other social problems, such as poor health and crime.

With regard to home ownership, interviewees noted that entry level homes are very limited in number in NTM. The inability of people to enter home ownership was seen as a key problem for the future development of NTM. Interviewees in Nelson and Tasman in particular considered that home ownership increases people's attachment to a job and a community, while Marlborough interviewees were concerned about providing home ownership for young people as a way of giving them a stake in the community.

Three other housing issues were highlighted in addition to affordability. Quality of housing and 'value for money' were seen as critical issues. Marlborough social service organisations in particular highlighted household crowding as a problem and noted its association with lack of affordable housing. Lack of secure rental accommodation was identified as a problem in all three areas.

Several demographic groups or sections of the population were identified as experiencing housing problems. These include older people, people with disabilities, students, viticulture workers, Pacific peoples and Maori. Furthermore, all three areas identified specific gaps in housing provision for the groups most vulnerable to housing difficulties and in most housing need. Those gaps are supported housing and emergency/interim housing.

In Marlborough, while viticulture workers are a key group needing affordable housing, it is also reported that problems in finding affordable housing are widespread. They are not confined to any particular part of the district, to any industry, or to newcomers. Providers are dealing with ongoing housing problems facing families, who are living in unsatisfactory situations, whose rental accommodation has been sold, or who have been evicted.

While many of the housing issues identified by Nelson and Tasman interviewees were similar to those raised in Marlborough, there were also differences. The following factors contribute to those differences:

- A bigger population base.
- A more diverse industrial base.
- Some tradition of housing workers in certain industries such as horticulture, which means that there is an existing stock of workers' accommodation, albeit much is old and not meant to be used for permanent accommodation.
- A strong and sustained housing market, with average house price sales well above the national average.
- Particularly in Nelson, some shortage of flat land and other land suitable for housing.
- A significant demand for lifestyle housing in rural and coastal areas.

Interviewees in NTM commented on the effects of unaffordable housing on attracting and retaining employees in a range of industries. It is not confined to seasonal industries or the primary sector, but also impacts on secondary industries such as construction, and tertiary sector industries such as tourism, education and health.

In Marlborough the accommodation needs of viticulture workers are very evident. There is a shortage of rental accommodation and backpackers are not able to fulfil demand at peak times. A particularly contentious issue is the housing of workers in crowded accommodation that is not licensed as hostels. There are also workers living in cars and temporary accommodation. Some Marlborough interviewees are very concerned that housing problems may negatively impact on the viticulture industry's international image and threaten the district's attraction as a tourism destination. Others point to potential health and safety problems, such as fire in temporary and overcrowded dwellings.

The nature and extent of housing assistance differs considerably from employer to employer, and from industry to industry. There were different views on the extent to which industries, and individual employers were both willing and able to provide any sort of housing assistance to employees. Key issues were around:

- The priority that the employer places on providing housing assistance.
- Cost of providing housing.
- Regulatory restrictions.
- Tax implications.

Priorities in relation to affordable housing are similar across NTM. There is an emphasis on addressing:

- workers accommodation
- resource consent processes and planning regulations
- emergency and transitional housing
- supported housing
- infrastructure needs related to residential development, and
- speculative tendencies.

In Marlborough there are also specific priorities relating to increasing and upgrading HNZN stock, overcrowded and poor quality accommodation, and the operation of private dwellings as hostels.

**ANNEX A
INTERVIEW GUIDELINES**

AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN NELSON, TASMAN, & MARLBOROUGH

Background Information:

The Affordable Housing study is being carried out to address the causes of, and solutions to, housing affordability problems in the Nelson, Marlborough and Tasman regions. The study will look at causes of housing stress in the regions with a particular focus on connections between the housing market and the local economy. The nature of stresses borne by workers, families and employers will also be highlighted. Finally the researchers will work with local reference groups to use the research findings to develop relevant solutions for each of the NTM regions. The research is funded by the Centre for Housing Research, Aotearoa New Zealand (CHRANZ), the Ministry of Economic Development and the Ministry of Social Development, through the Work and Income regional office for Nelson, Marlborough and the West Coast. Final research reports are due in June 2006. A group of researchers are involved, including the Centre for Research, Evaluation and Social Assessment (CRESA).

Questions for Key Interviews:

1. What are the particular housing problems in your local area that affect your service and/or your clients ?
2. How significant are housing problems for your clients, in comparison to other problems they might be experiencing?
3. Are there areas of the region that are affected by housing problems more than others?
 - Where and what type of problems?
4. What are the emerging demands for housing in your local area?
5. What do you do to help your clients who have housing problems?
 - Contact with housing providers?
 - What gaps do you see in local housing services at the moment?
 - Are current housing services easily accessed and available when needed?
6. What housing services do you provide (if any)?
 - Are there services in relation to housing that you would like to provide?
 - If so, what's stopping you from providing them?
7. What do you think is the main priority housing issue to address?
8. What can be done to improve the supply of affordable housing?
9. Who should be involved in the provision of affordable housing?

ANNEX B
LIST ORGANISATIONS INTERVIEWED

Marlborough	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Abel Properties ▪ Backpackers Collective ▪ Community Housing Trust ▪ Individuals on a Working Holiday ▪ Marlborough Chamber of Commerce ▪ Marlborough Contractors Association ▪ Marlborough District Council ▪ Marlborough Resource Development Ltd ▪ Marlborough Resource Development Trust ▪ Marlborough Seasonal Co-ordinator, Work and Income ▪ Marlborough Winegrowers ▪ Master Builders Association ▪ Mataawaka ▪ Mortgage Link ▪ Ngati Apa Social Services ▪ Pernod Ricard ▪ Plunket Nurses ▪ Police ▪ Poumanawa Oranga ▪ Public Health NMDBH ▪ REINZ ▪ Salvation Army ▪ Te Raupuora Health & Social Services ▪ Te Runanga o Ngati Kuia ▪ Te Runanga o Rangitane a Wairau ▪ Vinestay Accommodation Ltd ▪ Women's Refuge
Nelson/Tasman	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Beneficiaries & Unwaged Workers Trust (BUWT) ▪ Focus group of low income earners ▪ Golden Bay Housing Trust ▪ Habitat for Humanity ▪ Master Builders Association ▪ Mortgage Link ▪ Nelson Budget Service ▪ Nelson Chamber of Commerce ▪ Nelson City Council ▪ Nelson Property Investors Association ▪ Nelson Regional EDA ▪ Nelson Tasman Housing Trust ▪ Nelson Winegrowers ▪ PARS Nelson ▪ Pip Fruit Industry ▪ Presbyterian Support Services ▪ Salvation Army ▪ Service and Food Workers Union ▪ Summit Real Estate ▪ Talleys ▪ Tasman District Council ▪ Wakatu Incorporation ▪ Women's Refuge
All NTM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Housing New Zealand Corporation ▪ Ministry of Maori Development ▪ Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs ▪ Work and Income



Centre for Housing Research

AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND

ISBN 0-9582687-5-4