

Media Release
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Iwi, private sector, third sector and government poised for housing progress

"Tuesday's joint NZCID, Committee for Auckland, Ngati Whatua and Ngai Tahu hui on social and affordable housing demonstrated remarkable uniformity of vision across the housing sector and sends a clear signal to the next Government that iwi, the private sector, community housing providers and public agencies are all ready to address New Zealand's urgent social housing need," says Stephen Selwood, NZ Council for Infrastructure Development CEO.

"Around 80 leaders from the social housing sector, including representatives from public policy agencies, private financial and development entities, and iwi and community housing delivery organisations, attended the hui. With such a broad range of organisations, each with its own distinct objectives, it would be normal to expect some disagreement.

"In contrast, there was significant alignment of thinking. I think we've reached a stage both where the public sector understands that private investment and coordination are essential to the attainment of public policy objectives and, likewise, the private sector recognises that fostering social and community development makes good business sense. Iwi and community housing organisations, which straddle the social and commercial spheres, are helping drive a more balanced approach to this very complex sector.

"The type of social housing models we now see in Australia and elsewhere have been successful both economically and socially and provide a tangible reminder of what can be achieved here. George Housakos, CEO of Melbourne based Urban Communities, a not for profit property management organisation, told the hui that on-site tenancy management of the Kensington redevelopment has turned a previously derelict part of inner-Melbourne into an integrated social and affordable housing estate commanding market or above market real estate values. Urban Communities has successfully melded a 50 / 50 split of public and private housing into a fully integrated community. Of the 50 per cent of tenants receiving state support, one third were in the highest need category on the state housing list living in harmony with private owners and tenants in a managed and supported community environment.

"Perhaps the most impressive aspect of the Kensington project is its cost. Despite providing much improved social outcomes, the direct cost to the Victorian State Government is equivalent to traditional public housing.

"And we actually have the fundamentals in place here to progress a similar initiative. The social housing sector is active and, thanks in part to the Government's \$37.5 million social housing fund, growing. We have iwi looking to invest equity in commercial housing opportunities and we have a private construction and finance sector ready to go.

"The thing we are lacking to effect a coordinated Kensington style development here in New Zealand is a clearly articulated commitment to integrated land development planning developed in close coordination with the necessary on-site tenancy management interface. Providing social support services and asset management expertise to local residents is critical to maintain a well-functioning community in the long term. That's something the post-November Government can address immediately," Selwood says.