

# HOUSING

Building Better Public Services



## Building better housing

Good housing is important for the health and wellbeing of our families and our communities.

When National came into office, many state houses were run down, in the wrong areas, not the right size, and not going to those families most in need.

National is reversing this situation. We're ensuring that state houses are located in areas of greatest need, and going to families who need them most, for the duration of their need. We're also upgrading and insulating old houses, and helping more families get into homes of their own.

We're partnering with social housing providers through the Social Housing Unit. This is providing cash injections, land provision, and the transfer of surplus housing stock to groups who have a great track record providing social housing, and who want to work with Government to build on that.

National's aim is to ensure that all New Zealanders have a warm, dry, and healthy place to live.

*“National will ensure that, by the end of 2013, every state house built before 1978 that can be practically insulated is insulated.”*

## Key points

- 1000 more state houses.
- Completed 50,000 upgrades to state housing, including clean heating and necessary maintenance.
- Created 2000 jobs during the recession through state housing upgrades.
- Made more than 133,000 private homes warmer and drier through our *Warm Up New Zealand: Heat Smart* scheme
- Assisted 4400 first-home buyers to get finance.
- Moved 400 tenants on for vandalism, fraud, and other serious anti-social behavior, and replaced them with tenants in genuine need.

## National has...

### Provided more affordable housing

- ✓ Increased the overall state housing portfolio by more than 1000 homes.
- ✓ Helped facilitate and grow social housing providers. The newly-established Social Housing Unit will lead to even more social housing for New Zealanders.
- ✓ Provided \$40 million in Budget 2011 to facilitate the growth of social housing providers, which will help to increase the stock of affordable housing.

### Put in place reviewable tenancies for state houses

- ✓ Committed to provide state housing for those in need, for the duration of that need.
- ✓ Put in place reviewable tenancies for new state housing tenants.
- ✓ Supported tenants who no longer needed state housing to find alternative accommodation, freeing up homes for those most in need.

### Balanced the needs of landlords and tenants

- ✓ Passed the Residential Tenancies Act to balance the needs of tenants to maintain secure and comfortable housing and the needs of landlords to be able to manage their rental properties well.
- ✓ Passed the Unit Titles Act 2010 replacing the previous 1972 Act with a more flexible and relevant regime for apartment owners.

### Repairing leaky homes

- ✓ We've taken leadership and stepped up with a \$1 billion financial assistance package to help owners of leaky homes get their houses fixed faster.

### Helped more people into their own homes

- ✓ Implemented an Options and Advice Service to help people look at a variety of housing options not just state housing.
- ✓ Kept interest rates lower, and reduced income tax across the board to make home ownership the most affordable it's been for a decade.
- ✓ Increased the Welcome Home Loan cap allowing more first home buyers to access affordable finance.
- ✓ Streamlined the Resource Management Act and building consenting to help first-home buyers through lower redevelopment and building costs.

## Our successes so far

- ✓ Completed more than 50,000 upgrades to state houses, including insulation, clean heating, retrofits, and essential maintenance.
- ✓ Invested an extra \$120 million upgrading and building state housing as part of our *Jobs and Growth* stimulus package. This created an estimated 2000 jobs during the recession.
- ✓ Insulated more than 133,000 privately-owned homes through our *Warm Up New Zealand: Heat Smart* scheme.
- ✓ Helped over 4400 extra people buy their own homes through changes to the Welcome Home Loan cap.
- ✓ Moved 400 tenants on for vandalism, fraud, and other serious anti-social behavior, and replaced them with tenants in genuine need.

## What we will do next...

### 1. Provide warmer, drier homes

- Complete, by the end of 2013, the insulation of the 4600 remaining state houses built before 1978 – when insulation standards were introduced.

National will ensure that, by the end of 2013, every state house built before 1978 that can be practically insulated will be insulated.

Warmer, drier homes mean energy savings, lower power bills, and healthier communities.

Funding to achieve this ambitious promise will be allocated from existing Housing New Zealand's baseline.

- Continue our \$347 million *Warm Up New Zealand: Heat Smart* scheme to retrofit at least 188,500 privately owned homes.

A large number of homes have inadequate insulation and heating. Alongside insulating all state houses, National is ensuring private homes are warmer and drier too.

### 2. Ensure that landlords and tenants are clear about the law

- Allocate additional court sitting days in Auckland and Christchurch to address long tenancy tribunal waiting times.

We will work further to avoid delays across the country.

- Introduce a suspensions policy so that a state house tenant evicted for illegal behaviour may not be eligible for another state house for up to one year.

We have a no-nonsense approach to tenant behaviour. We will not hesitate to remove tenants for vandalism, fraud, or serious anti-social behaviour.

### 3. Increase the supply of social housing through the more effective use of existing resources

- Work closely with social housing providers and Community Housing Aotearoa to grow the total amount of social housing available, in areas of most need.

We are working to use social housing support more effectively.

When National came into government, there was not enough housing stock in areas of high demand, too many houses were of the wrong size to meet requirements, and a large proportion of state housing was in poor and rundown condition.

- Rapidly progress options for financial assistance to social housing providers through the Social Housing Unit.

This will include opportunities for land provision and surplus state house transfers.

- Work with iwi on housing provision particularly on significant rural housing initiatives.

We are committed to increasing the supply of social and affordable housing in our main cities and towns as well as in rural areas. With significant land holdings and an understanding of whanau needs, iwi are well placed to partner with the Government.

- Give HNZA the flexibility to reconfigure their housing stock to increase the number of houses in areas of high demand for those most in need of a home.

It's not fair that a single person might be living in a four-bedroom house, while a family of six waits in substandard accommodation.

## Labour would take New Zealand backwards

### Labour would:

- ✘ Drive up rents by introducing a capital gains tax and hurt the most vulnerable low-income tenants.
- ✘ Let the state housing stock fall into serious decay focusing only on a “more state houses” mantra while ignoring their quality.
- ✘ Abolish reviewable tenancies, going back to a state-house-for-life policy. Houses would be occupied by those least in need while others languish on a waiting list.
- ✘ Make Housing New Zealand property managers focus on providing intensive social services, when working alongside professional agencies is much more sensible and safe.
- ✘ Not act for owners of leaky homes. Labour stood by for nine years, saying it wasn't the government's responsibility to help owners of leaky homes.

**We can't afford another dose of Labour.**