

**SUBMISSION
ON THE
CHRISTCHURCH CITY COUNCIL
DRAFT SOCIAL HOUSING STRATEGY**

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A Submission to the Christchurch City Council Regarding the Draft SOCIAL HOUSING STRATEGY

1. This Submission is from the Alcohol Drug Association New Zealand (ADANZ).
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3. The Alcohol Drug Association New Zealand (ADANZ) is a not-for-profit organisation and has been operating in the South Island since 1982. ADANZ's statement of purpose is
"Improving the health of the community by minimising harm associated with alcohol, other drugs and gambling".
4. Based in Christchurch, ADANZ provides coordination and information dissemination services to Christchurch and the wider Canterbury community. ADANZ's core clinical service is the National Alcohol & Drug Helpline. Other services are the National Directory of Alcohol and Drug Services; Alcohol and other Drug (AOD) Consumer Advisors; Canterbury AOD Consumer Advocacy Service and Problem Gambling Coordination Service along with local, regional and national representation on various AOD and problem gambling advisory committees.
5. Following a list of the main points from this document there is a statement of ADANZ's position on the Council's seven goals and key objectives identified in the Draft Social Housing Strategy document made available in November 2006.
6. It is expected that this input will inform the Council in its planning to meet the various housing needs of the more vulnerable people in the community.

MAIN POINTS The Council should:

- continue to provide social housing
- prioritise housing for consumers of addiction and mental health services
- continue as the landlord for the homes it provides now and in the future
- form/maintain partnerships with Government and other organizations who provide social services and housing to determine how best to meet the housing needs of vulnerable members of our community

COMMENT: THE DRAFT SOCIAL HOUSING STRATEGY

7. Overall, ADANZ agrees with all of the seven goals and the relevant key objectives in the draft Social Housing Strategy but confines its focus to the needs of the addiction and mental health service users including problem gambling service users. ADANZ agrees that the Council should provide social housing and that this should be done in addition to the social housing other agencies provide in the community including Government. ADANZ also agrees that a housing strategy must include communication and partnership with these agencies and other key organisations and agencies that provide social services as per the first goal of the Councils draft strategy.

WHO SHOULD COUNCIL PROVIDE SOCIAL HOUSING FOR?

8. ADANZ acknowledges that there are many vulnerable members in the community who require assistance with housing for various reasons and at various stages. However we wish to highlight the need of consumers of addiction and mental health services (including problem gambling service users) who are re entering the community at the end of their treatment or as part of their treatment.
9. Given the serious impact that alcohol and drug use and problem gambling has on the community, policies that assist the Council to enabling people to maintain positive changes to their addiction behaviours, will go some way to achieving the aim of improving both safety and the general health and well being of the community. A safe environment and accessible housing will support people's recovery and their treatment will encourage people's behaviour changes to be maintained and minimise the risk of relapse.
10. Mental health and addiction problems are an issue across all age and population groups. Because of this it is important that there be communication and partnership with relevant social service organisations as well consumer representation in the council planning process.
11. Because of the number of prisons in the Canterbury area planning must also consider the needs of families of prisoners who relocate to the area. Some of whom may be residents for many years and have problems accessing affordable housing.
12. The needs of women are usually different from those of men and planning for both genders separately is important if a social housing strategy is to be implemented effectively.

13. There are a number of people who 'fall through the gaps' and struggle to manage their lives. Often they are people who do not quite fit the criteria for receiving support from government and various agencies, including the 3% with severe mental illness who are provided for within the Mental Health Blue Print plan. They include people who go through treatment and rehabilitation and return to the community with no support and often struggle to find ongoing work and re-establish themselves. They will likely to return to old haunts because there is no where else to go. Exposed to their old environment with challenging temptations, they can then be expected to fall back into old behaviours.
14. In 2004/5 a small research project was carried out by a student at Weltech as part of his assessment. The research was titled *Homeless Youth in Christchurch* and as the name suggests focused on homeless youth. Although very limited, it did highlight a hidden group of people, including very young people, who were part of our community and would benefit from access to temporary housing and links to appropriate social services.
15. People who experience health issues or injuries that leave them with disabilities that are not usual for their age group, have little support from the government and hence find it difficult or impossible to work or live without help in the community, for example people with brain injury or people under the age of 65 who have experienced a stroke or Korsakoffs (a type of dementia resulting from excessive alcohol use).
16. In conclusion ADANZ supports the seven goals and the relevant key objectives in the draft Social Housing Strategy including forming and maintaining partnerships with Government and other organizations who provide social services and housing to determine how best to meet the housing needs of vulnerable members of our community. We further recommend consumer representation in the council planning process.
17. We recommend that the Council prioritise housing for addiction and mental health service users and those people identified above who are often overlooked or do not fit under the support umbrella of Government social services or community groups.
18. ADANZ thanks the Council for the opportunity to make this submission and acknowledges the benefits of the consultation process.