

FUTURES TIMES

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“Communities creating our future together”



Community-led Visioning and Development.

Yvonne Curtis

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Recent media and local, national and international events have contributed to a perception that the 'answers' to major problems are the domain of central government, with any 'community contribution' seen as largely irrelevant.

But my recent experiences over the last few months leads me to challenge this perception. I have attended a number of AGMs, forums and workshops that have showcased the strengths, often hidden, that New Zealand communities have to respond to their local needs to give hope for the future. On each occasion I came away with a sense of being energised, motivated and more informed of different ways that communities can dream together and then work together to create more positive futures for themselves.

These meetings have had characteristics in common that have made the gatherings memorable.

1. The composition of the leadership planning group which deliberately includes members from a number of sectors with different viewpoints that have an interest in the main theme of the conference. This breaks down the "silo" effect often noted as not being helpful for long-term planning.
2. The programme will, of course, have a specific theme or objective, but opportunities are provided for hearing a more holistic framework of views, as a backdrop and check list, to better understand longer term consequences of present actions.
3. The expectation that all participants will be actively involved in the forum - a mix of sharing stories, actions and reflections. Different formats that enable more people to speak and act - conversations and doing together.

4. A commitment to actively follow-up on the new contacts and information after the event. An acknowledgement that it is never easy to translate the experiences of the meeting into the routine of everyday life.

Some recent meetings, listed chronologically, that I have attended that give cause for optimism for the 'future of community' are:

Welfare Working Group Forum

A two day forum in June 2010 was used to launch the work of the **Welfare Working Group**. This was established by Cabinet to undertake an expansive and fundamental review of New Zealand's welfare system. The Group's primary task was to identify how to reduce long-term welfare dependency.

The format of the forum allowed a wide range of voices to be heard in a setting that enabled useful debate and exchange of information and ideas. It gave an opportunity for key people from many diverse perspectives in grass roots community action to focus on the issue of "welfare" even when they have very different views. It provided a good platform for the input and submissions to the reports that have followed. These include a "shadow" report from an **Alternative Welfare Reform Group** formed post-forum to present a co-ordinated response of alternative ways to address the issues raised.

Welfare Working Group <http://ips.ac.nz/WelfareWorkingGroup/Index.html>

Alternative Welfare Working Group <http://alternativewelfareworkinggroup.org.nz/?sid=1>

Signs of Change

A national e-conference showcasing the transition to sustainability.

This two day event in November 2010 trailed a new way of meeting that included both virtual and face-to-face meetings. The theme of the conference was the exchanging of stories of sustainable practices actually happening in New Zealand while minimising the carbon footprint of the event. This included: most presenters being able give 10 minute presentations from their home base; live question and answer sessions between contributors at different venues; and face to face conversation among the members of the groups that physically gathered in each of the seven venues. <http://www.signsofchange.org.nz/>

StrategyNZ: Mapping our Future

The **Sustainable Future Institute** held a two day event in March using *“the latest in strategy development and technology to address the question: Where do we want New Zealand to go? We will bring thinkers and designers together to articulate and communicate a preferred future direction for New Zealand.”*

The “thinkers” were about 100 people representative of New Zealand, ranging in age from teenagers to over seventy year olds, myself included. Introductory presentations by invited speakers provided a rich background on the likely future issues and context, and then the ten teams each created their vision for New Zealand in 2058. Four of the team visions were chosen for presentation to a wider audience, including politicians and diplomats, in the Legislative Council Chamber on the final evening.

http://www.sustainablefuture.info/Site/StrategyNZ/StrategyNZ_Mapping_our_Future.aspx

ACE Aotearoa AGM 2011

Following their 2011 AGM **Ace Aotearoa** arranged a two-day event in June that gave participants the opportunity to be actively involved as

well as being informed and entertained by knowledgeable people from different perspectives. I particularly appreciated being able to hear from some of those actually working in two communities that I had read about in the media unfortunately not good news. The presenters told of working with the residents, local government agencies and voluntary organisations to turn the sad news stories into hopeful news stories.

<http://www.aceaotearoa.org.nz/events/conference>

Victory Village Forum

Family-centred, community-led development.

In response to the requests of many people to see at first hand the achievements of the Victory Village community of Nelson, a two and half day forum was held there in July. The **“Organising Group,”** with members from **Victory Village, Inspiring Communities** and **The Families Commission**, planned the forum, as a one-off event, to meet the requests as a way that would be less disruptive to the every-day life of the community. Having gathered the people from all over New Zealand, it was also an opportunity for sharing stories about initiatives in other communities, discussing together how to continue to learn from each other, and build on what has already been achieved.

<http://www.confer.co.nz/victoryforum/>

COMMUNITY VISIONING – 2001 to 2021

With international consultant Steven Ames

The **New Zealand Futures Trust**, with the support of the **New Zealand Planning Institute** and **Development Action Ltd** held a series of day-long community visioning workshops in August 2011 to review the impact of

the 2002 Local Government Act on long-term community planning and to consider what could be possible in the next ten years.

In 2001 the NZFT, with its aim of promoting futures thinking to New Zealanders, hosted several workshops around New Zealand in which Steven Ames from Portland, Oregon introduced the “Oregon Model” of community visioning to New Zealand community planners and policy makers. Communities in the USA had already used this model for nearly ten years and he was able to give practical examples of successful community visioning and subsequent development that helped set expectations for the 2002 Act.

It was timely in 2011, therefore, as local authorities begin their next round of reviews of their Long Term Plans (LTPs), to invite Steven back to share his, and local New Zealand, experiences of the last ten years with community planners, and look at what could be possible for the next ten years.

http://dl.dropbox.com/u/8760947/Community_Visioning_Flyer_Final.pdf

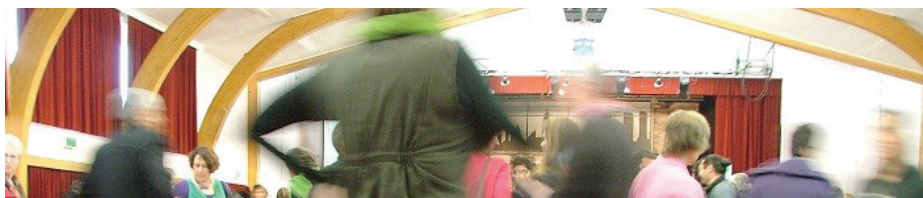
This Issue of Future Times

In this issue I have invited the Victory Village Forum **Organising Group** members to tell their stories, their way. An article on community housing issues by Sven Solen complements these stories.

In future issues there will be a further report from the Victory Village Forum and a series of reports from the Community Visioning 2001 – 2021 series.

Yvonne Curtis is the Executive Director of NZFT, editor of Future Times, a Board member of the NZFT and has been actively involved in the work of the NZFT for 29 years.

Victory Village Forum – sharing stories of family-centred, community-led development



“The forum has shown that communities from all around the country are using their strengths to achieve amazing and positive outcomes for families and

whānau” - Mark Brown, Principal, Victory Primary School

The Victory Village Forum was the first family-centred, community-led development forum of its kind to happen in New Zealand. It was held in Nelson from 27 to 29 July 2011, and brought together 250 participants from throughout the country and from many sectors including community, iwi, health, business, education and government.¹ The diverse mix of people represented the individuals, groups, agencies and organisations that work at all levels of family-centred, community-led development. The forum was full to capacity by the time early bird registrations closed.

After being named ‘KiwiBank New Zealand Community of the Year’ in 2010, Victory Village community received a large amount of calls from people who wanted to visit the school and see first hand the changes that had been made.

The forum was conceived as a way to showcase the Victory community. It provided an opportunity for people to visit, and to celebrate and share wider knowledge and thinking about family-centred, community-led development. It was jointly organised by Victory Village,² Inspiring Communities and the Families Commission.

Forum programme

The forum maximised opportunities for information sharing and for networking. Two plenary panel sessions offered big picture themes and thoughts from a variety of panelists about why family-centred community-led development matters, and the strategic approaches being taken from a variety of perspectives, and by different sectors. Two sets of workshops (one focused around themes and the other around skills) were run by facilitators who work within the family-centred and/or community-led development space. Three ‘Homegroup’ sessions³ were seen as safe places to share ideas and experiences about successes and challenges, reflections and learnings. The World Café was an intentional way to create a living network of conversation around questions that matter, and was held towards the end of the forum. Throughout the event there were informal networking opportunities over breaks and mealtimes, and the level of conversation and energy was palpable.

Key messages emerging

Overwhelmingly the messages that came out of the forum were of pride, achievement and positivity. Participants shared stories of communities using their strengths to lead locally run initiatives, local government and businesses understanding the importance of applying the ‘family lens’ and successes ‘against the odds’. The forum provided an overriding endorsement for, and emphasis on, the importance of local communities leading family-centred action. There was a clear understanding that change must be driven from the ground and that communities must ‘own’ the visions and processes in order for them to be successful.

The high level of attendance and energy at the forum, and analysis of feedback, indicate an appetite to learn more about taking family-centred, community-led development approaches in Aotearoa. The forum’s organising group is currently working on identifying some next steps, based on the information shared at the forum and via the evaluation process. The outcomes of this work will be covered in the December edition of Future Times.

¹ Breakdown of participants: 103 people from non government organisations, 74 people from various central government agencies, 30 people from schools, 26 people from local government, 10 people from funding agencies, 4 from academic and research institutions, 2 from the business sector.

² Victory Village is made up of Victory Community Health Centre and Victory Primary School and their communities.

³ Small groups of ten people from different sectors and places. Randomly selected, and each with a facilitator and common focused questions and tasks

The place of community-led development in Aotearoa New Zealand's future - what we are learning about community-led development?

Inspiring Communities (IC) is a non-profit trust that supports initiatives and policies that strengthen local communities, and their capacity to take leadership. Working at local, regional and national levels IC is intent on building the knowledge, understanding and practice of community-led development, and noticing the real and sustainable differences which community-led development approaches can make. The opportunity to co-create the Victory Village Forum was seized, both to profile the local story, and to create an inaugural national opportunity for sharing and learning about how the two lenses of family-centred and community-led can work hand in hand.



So what is community-led development?

Community-led development has many faces. It may be Iwi creating jobs in Opotiki, neighbours coming together in Taita, or Porirua people working together to overcome cycles of debt in their community.

Community-led development:

- is about place – local communities, the people who live, invest, work and care in that community
- is about people from all sectors (residents, business, funders, iwi, local and central government, schools) within local communities working together to create local visions, and harness local resources, energy and ideas to maximise opportunities and solve problems



Strong and resilient families and strong and resilient communities are interlinked. The skills, tools, knowledge and practices that grow strong families also grow strong communities – David Hanna, Chair

of Inspiring Communities

- includes economic, cultural, social and environmental issues – with the driver being local vision and priorities
- is not a service delivery model, project or programme, but a planning and development approach, underpinned by several key principles.

Further information and stories about community-led development can be found on www.inspiringcommunities.org.nz

Being family centred

The Families Commission is a strong advocate of family-centred, community-led development approaches. As a centre of excellence for knowledge about families and whānau the Commission's purpose is to discover, create and share knowledge that actively contributes to family and whānau wellbeing. The Commission is committed to utilising and showcasing positive examples of social innovation and family-centred community-led development. Sharing the Victory 'story' has been a priority for the Commission.

The Families Commission supports the 'Victory approach' that places families at the centre of education and community development to create tangible, positive and long lasting

results. A case study report was commissioned to capture the community's achievements. During 2009 and 2010 researchers spent time within the community to listen, talk with and follow day-to-day activities. They worked collaboratively with Victory Village staff to design and produce the 'Paths of Victory: Victory Village (Victory Primary School and Victory Community Health Centre): a case study' report which was released in November 2010. Combined with the 'Working Together: The Victory Primary School Story' DVD, both resources outline the changes that were made in order to put families at the centre of the Victory community, including changes to professional practice and service delivery. Key outcomes are highlighted so that

families commission kōmihana ā **whānau**

> Giving New Zealand families a voice *Te reo o te whānau*

other communities and organisations can use and adapt them within their own settings.

As Carl Davidson, Chief Families Commissioner explains "Our research has shown that Victory Village created an environment where people worked together and took collective responsibility for child and family well-being, with great results. It is a fantastic example of social innovation, where solutions to complex and seemingly intractable problems have been found by establishing new ways of working."

The 'Paths of Victory' report can be downloaded from the Families Commission website. www.nzfamilies.org.nz

Putting family-centred and community-led approaches together



At the Victory Village Forum Rebecca Harrington, from Lifewise and Takapuna Methodist Church, shared her views on family-centred, community-led development: *“Family centred/community led development is about keeping families and residents at the centre of everything, so instead of having predetermined solutions, like programmes to give to communities, it’s starting with listening to what people want and then tapping into shared resources within communities and organisations, to help bring their own visions and dreams to light.”*

Community-Led Development Principles




- ▶ ‘Place’ at the core
- ▶ Local voice and leadership valued and empowered
- ▶ Working together across boundaries
- ▶ Strength and asset based
- ▶ Growing collaborative community leadership
- ▶ Being intentional, adaptable and demonstrating progress
- ▶ Whole systems change



Family-centred Principles

- Family whānau at the centre of everything
- Collaborative and holistic
- Respectful responsive relationships



families commission
kōmihana ā whānau

For many decades Aotearoa New Zealand has followed other Western democracies both politically and institutionally, and has ended up with very fragmented and specialized systems. These systems are not capable of dealing with complexity, and can only produce fragmented partial solutions. We must therefore support innovation and find new ways to respond to seemingly intractable ‘problems’.

It makes sense to focus the “starting point” for this within local communities, as this is where the full impact of multiple structures and

institutions is experienced over time. Families and whānau are at the heart of all local communities. We need to develop a modern culture of walking alongside them in a more collaborative way, and wrapping around their aspirations and development needs. We need to nurture the potential of every family and young person – our country’s future depends on it!

Done well, this requires commitment and involvement from every corner of our communities. It’s not a “soft” option. It requires hard-nosed questions about whether and how:

- families and whānau are involved

in all kinds of local decision-making;

- facilities and services local families need and use are well connected with each other and, where possible, are located together for easy access;
- local families are considered in resource allocation and decisions across institutions at local, regional and national level.

Families, whānau, neighbourhoods and local communities are the places we need to start working together more, and learning as we go.

The Victory Story

"We call ourselves 'opportunity rich' because we are a low decile school ... Not everything needed to have an educational or a monetary value, there was also social capital." Mark Brown, Principal, Victory Primary School, Nelson.



"The Victory Story" was a highlight in the recently held Victory Village Forum. It described how ordinary people took continuing small steps towards the extraordinary vision of having greater connectedness, and improved access to services and activities to support their health and wellbeing.

A deliberate decision was made to begin the forum at Victory Primary School campus, to allow people to experience "the look and feel" and some of the magic of Victory, especially the school campus and its diverse activities. Participants arrived to join what was a community event of the hangi being prepared and families helping out at the Centre. Over the course of Wednesday evening the Victory story was woven by many of those who have played a part in it - an unfolding story of change over 15 years. Several prefaced their comments by saying how small their role had been, yet as the various strands were drawn together a clear picture emerged of how ordinary people, working together, achieved significant change for the better within their community.

Life hasn't always been rosy for the Victory community. Ten years ago the Victory area was characterised by low income families, who were often solo parented, high levels of crime, high numbers of families moving in and out, and low access to health care. Over one decade that community transformed itself into a place that thrives, with students achieving higher than national averages in some areas, higher levels of safety, improved housing quality and a more settled population that remains

similar in make up to 10 years ago.

Mark Brown, principal at Victory Primary School stressed that everyone matters in Victory. "We don't enrol a child, we enrol the whole family." At Victory they have developed an unrelenting belief that a school and its community can and will promote a safe, trusting, nurturing environment which can dramatically counteract the negative, deficient thinking that characteristically permeates communities.

The Victory story began in 1989 when schools were mandated to be self-managing, and culminated with Victory Village being named NZ Community of the Year 2010. During a community development project between 2005 and 2007 Victory Community Health Centre (VCHC) (which had formed in 2001 yet not been able to fully progress its vision) established its unique partnership with Victory Primary School. One of the project's outcomes was that VCHC would manage the newly built school hall complex on the campus. This was a unique relationship in New Zealand - a school partnering with a charitable organisation. VCHC would begin to fulfill its mission to provide free or low cost, appropriate and accessible services and activities that support health and wellbeing to the community using school facilities.

"We are achieving high levels of participation among all our activities - community garden, recreational, social, cultural activities and many who use our specialist health and social services. We commonly have 2500 people through the centre every month." Kindra Douglas, Centre Director

The Victory story illustrates many of the themes to emerge from the Victory Village forum:

- positive strengths based approaches counteract negative, deficit thinking
- it is good to build on what you have and use existing resources innovatively
- small things, added together, can achieve great results
- be brave and persevere
- everyone matters, and has a role to play, in this mahi - it's about talking and working together
- leadership is important - and important leaders may come from unexpected quarters.

Victory Village demonstrates the powerful changes that can be made by taking a family-centred, community-led approach.



Community-led development initiatives that are making a difference

One of the ways Inspiring Communities promotes family-centred, community led development is by collating stories so they can be shared, and inspire others. These stories are available on www.inspiringcommunities.org.nz. The following is a sample, published with the kind permission of Inspiring Communities, of some family-centred, community led development stories from around Aotearoa/New Zealand, with links to further information.

Project Sunshine - seeds, bees, and community

Great Start's Project Sunshine teaches children around NZ about seeds, bees, and cross-pollinating communities



Taita children, along with a delegation from the UN Youth Model United Nations Conference, recently learned a lot about the importance of bees and what they can do to protect bee populations, and how they can use sunflowers to help not only bees but also their community.

A special event was created on 2 July as part of the national launch of "Project Sunshine", an initiative of Great Start Taita's Children's Gardening Club. Taita children were joined by young people from all over New Zealand who were participating in the UN Youth Model United Nations. Their participation was an outreach programme, as part of the 2011 NZ Model UN conference, designed to promote the delegates as global citizens, and allow students to give back to the community and become involved to begin making changes.

The Project Sunshine launch took place at Great Start House Taita, which is gaining a "reputation as one of the city's most active and practical community centres" (Simon Edwards, Editor Hutt News, 17 May 2011).

The UN Youth arrived at The Great Start House in a big yellow bus and were fed a beautiful lunch, homemade, all produce from the Great Start garden.

All the children got down on the floor to work together to make up 'Project Sunshine Packs' for the Model UN delegates to take home. These contain information about the initiative, facts on bees and sunflowers, a guide to growing a project in your own community, an invitation to feed back and stay connected, and 2 packets of sunflower seeds – one packet supplied by Eco Seeds, the other were second generation seeds harvested from the Great Start Children's Garden Club's own sunflowers.

Dave Treadwell from Eco Seeds gave a talk about his heritage seed company, who are the suppliers of sunflower seeds for Project Sunshine (these seeds can be harvested to use again the following year, which is not possible with many commercially produced hybrid seeds).

Al Kilminster local Bee Keeper gave a talk on the importance of Bee's and how they need our help. He also brought some of his bees along, which was fascinating for the children. Al also showed children how to build a 'bumble bee box' that would provide a cosy home for bumble bees, when they emerge in spring.

The Great Start Children's Garden Club then took the UN Youth to the local park (designed by Taita's children with support from Hutt City Council, and where they have several community food plots), where they worked together to do a planting of natives to support local bee foraging.

Then it was back to The Great Start House for a well deserved thirst quencher, supplied by Mark Atkin of local company Wildfern, which creates

beverages made from unfloridated Petone artesian water.

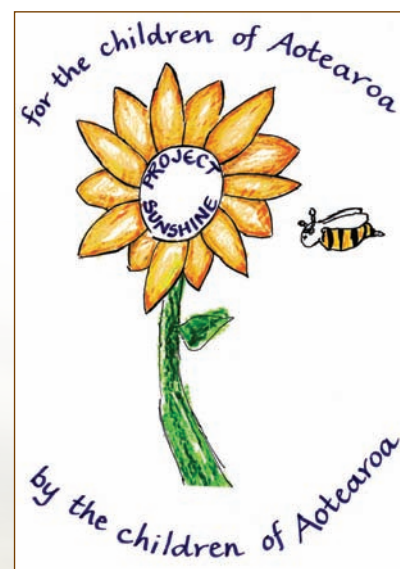
The children and UN Youth students were all given a Project Sunshine T-shirt and a Project Sunshine Pack to take home, where they will work with children in their own communities to plant seedlings. They have been invited to write stories about their experiences and post photos of the resulting plantings on the Project Sunshine Aotearoa Facebook page.

About Project Sunshine

Project Sunshine was designed by the Great Start Taita children's gardening club. In 2010 the club planted hundreds of sunflower seedlings through the streets of Taita to make their community more beautiful. With the planting of the sunflowers, something magical happened: the sunflowers generated pride and joy. The project also supported residents to build connections with each-other and with their physical environment.

As the children learned about sunflowers they also learned about the importance of bees, and their current plight. They realised that sunflower planting could help other children to make their communities beautiful, build connections between people and also ensure the survival of the bee population.

<http://www.inspiringcommunities.org.nz/learning-centre/core-learning-cluster/taita>



Good Cents Porirua

Porirua, like any city in New Zealand, has people who struggle to manage personal and household debt. In Porirua, a range of opportunities and partnerships have been developed that tackle debt and increase people's ability to manage. Good Cents Porirua is one of these partnerships formed in 2010 out of an innovative forum hosted by Porirua City Council and Wesley Community Action.

The forum called together people from all parts of the community – banks and lenders, government and local government, health and social

services, mothers and fathers, church ministers and business people.

Forty people from the Porirua community came together that day to answer two questions:

- What would it be like if there wasn't a high level of crippling debt in our community?
- What is it that we could create together for our future that we can't create alone?

The day was about having a range of people, sharing and listening

and contributing their part to the solution. There were many differing perspectives and these developed into a common purpose through our sharing – a vision of a resilient, well resourced community.

In July 2011, a series of stories appeared in the Kapi-Mana News, Porirua's local newspaper, created with help from Good Cents Porirua and Porirua City Council. The stories profiled real people in Porirua and their courageous stories about changing the cycles of debt in their own lives for the better. Here is Makerita's story.

The only way is up: Makerita's story

The first thing you notice about Makerita Makapelu is her positivity. She's a "the glass is half full" kinda gal. Considering all that's she been through, her radiance is all the more remarkable.

The eldest daughter of Samoan migrants, she went through difficult and rebellious teenage years seeing her way through a bare minimum of school and being caught up in a party lifestyle, fuelled in part by a family tragedy.

But it was contacts from those partying days that provided the first opportunity for Makerita to retake control of her life. One early morning she found herself catching a ride home with a person who encouraged her to join his drama group - a group of people passionate about using theatre as therapy. Makerita's story was one of two that the group translated into a play that toured New Zealand several times and became the subject of a documentary.

From her first moment on stage, Makerita says she "knew she had come home". Over the years, she moved from theatre into dance. Transformation that began to occur in her life enabled her to re-look at what she wanted for her future, to begin to claim the future that her parents have given up so much for in order to give

something better to Makerita and her siblings.

But many years of living from day to day, moving from house to house, with no plans for the future meant some significant hurdles to scale over. The stress and isolation of her financial situation had taken on a life of its own and her credit rating suffered.

Makerita turned her energy of investing in her families future. She wanted a future for her children and that included not bringing them up in a state house and making sure that they could live the dream her parents had come to Aotearoa with.

This meant stopping partying and starting to save. It meant training for higher paid jobs and changing lifestyles including planning meals and growing the families veges.

"We lived on a street where everyone knew each other and we made our own fun," she recalls. There were mini discos for the kids and everyone paid a \$1 for a hot dog and drink.

A major step was the decision to buy a house for the whole family, including her parents. It had the major benefits of sharing resources and investing in the future but was also a huge challenge because years of not paying



bills on time and defaulting on hire purchases giving a poor credit rating.

Several years down the track and with a lot of hard work and diligence making hefty loan repayments on the house, their credit rating has improved to the extent that the family now has more options for a mortgage.

But what has kept Makerita strong is her knowledge that she can survive. And she has. After being away from Porirua for so many years, she recalls coming back and seeing it transformed. "If this city can change who it is and what it looks like, then so can I," she says.

For more stories from Good Cents Porirua see:

<http://www.inspiringcommunities.org.nz/learning-centre/core-learning-cluster/good-cents-porirua/543-courageous-stories-of-journeys-out-of-debt>

New book explores responses to collapse

Fleeing Vesuvius NZ Edition: Responding to the Effects of Economic and Environmental Collapse

"Economic growth is over for good and Fleeing Vesuvius is the first book to explore the profound, historic implications.. Its message could hardly be more urgent."

Richard Heinberg, Senior Fellow, Post Carbon Institute, Author, Peak Everything.

"Fleeing Vesuvius NZ Edition is unusual, critically important and refreshingly provocative."

Jonathan Boston, School of Government, Victoria University of Wellington.

"Some are in denial, others are in despair, then there are those who seek to meet the future in the drivers seat – those people will be reading this book"

Laurence Boomert, Co-Publisher and one of the 39 essay writers in Fleeing Vesuvius.

Fleeing Vesuvius confronts our multiple crises, analysing the many aspects: the financial crisis; the collapse of the housing bubble; the urgent need for food security; the enormous challenge of dealing with climate change, and the looming scarcity of essential resources such as fossil fuels – the lifeblood of the world economy.

Fleeing Vesuvius was originally published in late 2010 by Feasta in response to Ireland's economic collapse. Its 27 authors including Dmitry Orlov and Richard Douthwaite are now joined by 12 New Zealand contributors, making this book a compelling tool for all thinking New Zealanders concerned about the future.

Fleeing Vesuvius NZ Edition available from the LIVING ECONOMIES online shop for \$46 plus p&p

<http://www.le.org.nz>

Enquiries: Tel: 06 379 8034

info@le.org.nz

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Neighbours Day Aotearoa

Neighbours Day Aotearoa is about turning streets into neighbourhoods. That means encouraging all of us in New Zealand to go one step further in getting to know our neighbours on a special day each year. Whether it's a first wave or smile, a chat over the fence, inviting someone in for a cuppa or holding a street barbeque, every connection makes our neighbourhoods more friendly, fun and safe. Neighbours Day Aotearoa is also about celebrating the neighbourhoods we have. It's not about big events, but local activity in every street and neighbourhood.

Neighbours Day Aotearoa started in Auckland in 2009 and was first held nationally in 2010. It is something for ALL New Zealanders to be involved in. The long-term vision is for every Kiwi household to mark this day and join in the fun - and to be more neighbourly every day.

There are many ways to celebrate neighbours day, and the Neighbours Day Aotearoa web-site www.neighboursday.org.nz has a page of ideas and tools including:

- a neighbours pack
- a guide to planning a street get together
- a "Know your neighbours" quiz
- tips on how to speed date your neighbours
- stories of what others have done

For example the Orakei¹ neighbourhood celebrated in 2011 by putting on a big do. Inspired by St James Anglican Church and the local Marae many local organisations became involved.

The aim of the day was to allow people living and working on a small area to come together and get to know one another. "People

these days live and work almost in isolation from their neighbours," says Vicar Nick Frater. "We wanted to bring together organisations, churches and people who live and work in the immediate vicinity of this reserve."

A steady stream of visitors, including many children, came to enjoy the food and the music and other performances put on.

"When I returned to Orakei after many years away, I was shocked at the lack of community sense in the city. I wanted to do something about it," said Margaret Swan from Orakei Marae.

Churches made a huge contribution to the event from drama, to music, to food and face painting. It started off with a warm welcome from Orakei Marae Kaumatua Bob who wanted everyone to know that neighbourliness has always meant 'no fences' to the three hapu, who have connections to both Ngati Whatua and Tainui, who call Orakei home.

In 2012 Neighbours Day will be 24-25 March. Save the Date!

Got questions or a story about your neighbourhood? Email: kiaora@neighboursday.org.nz or share it on the Facebook page facebook.com/neighboursday

¹ <http://www.auckanglican.org.nz/?sid=766>

Future scenarios for community housing in Aotearoa

Sven Solen

The term 'community housing' isn't one that trips off the tongue of our future policy makers, let alone the wider New Zealand public.

Yet community housing is a relatively common term internationally, has some usage in New Zealand – as promoted for instance by the umbrella organisation known as Community Housing Aotearoa – and is used by several local government authorities in New Zealand to describe a limited segment of housing stock (typically known as 'pensioner housing'). This with Housing New Zealand Corporation stock would, in other countries, be collectively and more simply called public housing.

While community housing is not a serious or intended substitute for our most dominant form of social housing, that is State housing, as historically provided by Housing New Zealand and its predecessors, it does provide one of the few glimmers of a housing future other than business as usual.

It is encouraging then that recent governments now acknowledge the existence of what is sometimes called a community housing sector in New Zealand that is positioned within a larger social housing sector. It largely consists of those organisations who are comfortable to be described as community housing organisations who provide housing as not-for-profit charitable trusts.

These are interesting times for these organisations for a variety of reasons.

Under the current National-led government the policy settings for the social housing sector, as a whole, are being adjusted by the introduction of a "suite of reforms". One of the steps within these reforms was taken through the formation of a seven-member Advisory Group that delivered a report titled 'Home and Housed: A vision for social housing in New Zealand' to Finance Minister

Bill English and Housing Minister Phil Heatley in the first half of 2010.

The Advisory Group then consulted with stakeholders, with their results posted on the Department of Building and Housing website, and by December 2010 the Cabinet Social Policy Committee had agreed to a proposed new direction to the extent of directing officials to develop more specific proposals.

Out of this a Social Housing Unit is being formed for 2011-2012 and officially came into existence as a "semi-autonomous body" within the Department of Building and Housing on 1st July 2011. Its purpose is to advise Government on its investment in social and affordable housing with the aim of growing the total quantum of social housing and "maximising the effectiveness and efficiency of provision over time".

This establishment of a new funder body separate from Housing New Zealand has been cautiously welcomed, although in the world of high-cost housing the projected injection of money to be allocated – at \$37M – is viewed as relatively inconsequential on its own, coupled with the fact there was no clear timing on how or when the allocation will take place.

After repeated commitments from successive governments to acknowledge the important latent potential of an "alternative" community-based housing sector to supplement or balance out the role of Housing New Zealand as the dominant social housing provider, this redirection of funding remains at best a small step towards accelerating any significant growth of that alternative.

By some estimates the stock that Housing New Zealand is commencing to "reconfigure" in the next decade under its own steam, represents approximately 5% of all housing

across all providers. Community housing is perhaps a tenth of that again, all swimming within an ocean of private sector suburbanite housing that in its randomly eclectic form seldom, if ever, rises above an underwhelming mediocrity of urban form.

Future thinking on housing is complex. Such thinking is inevitably tied up with issues related to population and demographic change, with the dynamics of the building and construction industry, with urban planning, design, land use and infrastructure policies of the kind emanating from Treasury's National Infrastructure Unit and the Ministry for the Environment.

The decision by Housing New Zealand to shut down the research arm provided by the Centre for Housing Research (known as CHRANZ) was seen as a sign of the times and generated little protest. So it is fortunate that there is a patchwork plethora of housing-related research constantly in train, as evidenced by the Australasian Housing Researchers' Conference hosted by the University of Auckland in December last year, and high quality applied research coming from example, the New Zealand Centre for Sustainable Cities.

In a shared enterprise with Wellington publishers Steele Roberts Aotearoa, the NZ Centre for Sustainable Cities has, for instance, now published four future-focused books that add to the growing literature on sustainable cities and that all merit a close read:

- Sizing up the city: Urban form and transport in New Zealand
- Do damp and mould matter?: Health impacts of leaky homes
- Tāone Tupu Ora: Indigenous knowledge and sustainable urban design
- Growth Misconduct? Avoiding

sprawl and improving urban intensification in New Zealand

A debate about urban intensification, along with close examination of both the promise and limitations of planning models such as smart growth and new urbanism, has not really featured at a national level, even though such a debate is integral to future development in our major cities and is a fundamental question for the Auckland spatial plan due later this year.

Interestingly the last contract commissioned by CHRANZ was a research project with the aim of "improving the design, quality and affordability of residential intensification in New Zealand in order to make residential intensification a more attractive housing option". This contract was let to Auckland company CityScope Consultants Ltd and its results will be keenly studied when they become available later this year.

Two projects in Auckland serve well to illustrate the challenges of a 'green field' development and a 'brown field' or urban renewal project: Hobsonville Point and the Tamaki Transformation. Both merit close watching for lessons for the future.

Hobsonville Point is a development being "facilitated" by the Hobsonville Land Company, a wholly owned subsidiary formed by Housing New Zealand through a public private partnership approach. According to its promotional website this land - situated in the upper reaches of Auckland's Waitemata Harbour comprising 167 hectares of land and 4 kms of coastline - will accommodate 3000 homes.

The Tamaki Transformation Programme is billed as the largest urban regeneration programme in New Zealand. The current interim board for the programme is chaired by Dr Lee Mathias who in July 2011 wrote that priorities for the remainder of the year were to continue the momentum of foundation projects associated with the programme, and to "determine the structure and set of rules that will allow this programme to do what it needs to do over the next 15 - 20 years".

Returning to the topic of future thinking about housing, Housing New Zealand should be commended for the work it commissioned from URS New Zealand Ltd (the URS Corporation is an international environmental and engineering consulting firm) in 2008 to explore future scenarios for social and affordable housing.

This was subsequently released in February 2009 though not widely publicised. Full copies are available on request from Dr Tricia Laing, a senior analyst at Housing New Zealand (email Patricia.Laing@hnzc.co.nz) and the research was the topic of a presentation to the Sustainable Building Conference 2010 held at Te Papa.

In brief the URS future scenarios research arrived at three divergent scenarios for social and affordable housing in 20 to 40 years' time that were developed with the assistance of experts from across the country. Intended to be thought-provoking and challenging to the status quo the three scenarios were dubbed 'Road to Nowhere', 'Eco-nomics', and 'A Stake in the Ground'.

Each scenario examines the various effects of key drivers on social and affordable housing, including economic and political drivers, social attitudes and pressures, environmental pressures and responses, and technologies and skills.

To end with, the summarised findings given below for each scenario do indeed provoke thought and challenge the status quo.

'Road to Nowhere',

In this scenario complacent political attitudes and under-investment in infrastructure lead to a fragmented society and the demise of social housing.

'Eco-nomics'

In this scenario a shift to an economic paradigm that places high value on environmental sustainability and social capital results in new types of communities and housing, with social housing replaced by community housing, and government

taking a role in housing for all New Zealanders.

'A Stake in the Ground'

In this scenario Māori culture provides a model for increases in community cohesion when New Zealand forges a closer alliance with Australia for the purpose of rescuing the New Zealand economy. Drastic changes to land ownership laws result in more communal ways of living. Government no longer provides social housing, instead acting as a facilitator of community-provided housing and support.

An unfolding story to be continued.

Useful website references

- Community Housing Aotearoa, <http://www.communityhousing.org.nz>
- Housing New Zealand Corporation, <http://www.hnzc.co.nz>
- Social Housing Unit, <http://www.shu.govt.nz>
- Department of Building and Housing, <http://www.dbh.govt.nz>
- National Infrastructure Unit, <http://infrastructure.govt.nz>
- Centre for Housing Research in New Zealand, <http://www.chranz.co.nz> and <http://housingresearch.digitalnz.org/en/home>
- NZ Centre for Sustainable Cities, <http://www.sustainablecities.org.nz>
- Hobsonville Point, <http://www.hobsonvillepoint.co.nz>
- Tamaki Transformation, <http://www.tamakitransformation.co.nz>
- Sustainable Building Conference, <http://www.SB10presentations.co.nz>

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