

House ownership is important for meaningful participation in both society and the economy. National believes that to encourage home ownership there needs to be a more responsive zoning of land so more can be made available for housing. And long-term state house tenants need to be actively encouraged to embrace home ownership.

Labour has up to 12,000 people languishing on state housing waiting lists. However, no government can ever be the sole provider of rental housing to low-income earners. Good quality, safe and affordable housing for all New Zealanders can be achieved through ensuring equity between private rentals and state rentals.

NATIONAL WILL:

- Promote the concept of home ownership.

Home ownership is a key contributor to social stability. However, fewer people are buying their own homes than were 20 years ago as housing becomes less affordable. Problems include a lack of available land, essentially raising the price of homes beyond many people, and high personal indebtedness of potential first-home buyers.

- Investigate proven home ownership schemes.

National is wary of the perils of offering a one-off grant to help people into first homes. Overseas examples tend to suggest such schemes have many loopholes and ultimately the cost of housing rises to match the size of the grant. Other overseas examples are worth investigating.

- Examine the impact of the RMA on the availability of land for housing.

Housing is less affordable than it was 20 years ago partly because of the lack of available land. National believes there must be a more responsive zoning of land to open up more of it for housing. Reforming the RMA will help to achieve this.

- Reintroduce and encourage the Home Buy scheme for HNZC tenants.

The Home Buy scheme was a suspensory loan from Housing NZ Corporation for 10% of the purchase price up to a maximum of \$15,000. If ownership and occupation remains static for seven years, the loan was written off. National will ensure that money from Home Buy sales is put back into Housing NZ Corporation stock.

- Maintain the Accommodation Supplement.

So all New Zealanders have access to affordable housing, National will maintain the Accommodation Supplement to provide a mechanism to deliver fair support to low income New Zealanders needing assistance. We will ensure there is equity between private rentals and state home rentals, and will ensure direct payment of the Accommodation Supplement to the landlord if the tenant agrees. Currently, such assistance is only available to Housing New Zealand Corporation tenants.

- Conclude the review of the Residential Tenancy Act

This Act was enacted in 1986, and a review was initiated by Labour. National will conclude the review and draft legislation that will eliminate anomalies and deliver a fair balance between the interests of landlords and tenants.