

HOUSING AT THE HEART OF THE REBUILD

HIGHLIGHTS

Labour will:

- **Build 10,000 affordable Kiwibuild homes in Canterbury over four years, providing the first 3,000 of these homes as affordable rentals until the housing crisis is fixed**
- **Build 100 temporary homes immediately to boost the stock of temporary emergency housing in the first three months, and an additional 300 in the first six months**
- **Build affordable medium density housing to revitalise the city centre, as well as suburban and town centres. This will create vibrant communities with high quality urban design, green spaces and decent infrastructure**
- **Increase the accommodation supplement for Christchurch by up to \$50 a week until the housing crisis is fixed to correct the shortfall**

THE ISSUE

Nearly four years after the first earthquake, progress on rebuilding Canterbury's housing stock is still painfully slow.

Deloitte estimates fewer than 1,000 of the 12,000-15,000 new houses needed have been built so far.

Housing Minister Nick Smith says it is "reasonable" for it to take another five years for rents to stabilise and has admitted that only 20 new state houses had been built by April this year.

House prices have risen by a quarter in Christchurch since the earthquakes. The homeownership rate is falling. The average house price has gone up by 25%, and rents are up by a third.

Failure to get the residential rebuild going fast enough has allowed a severe and prolonged shortage of affordable housing to develop. It is holding back the speed of the recovery.

Increasing rents are holding back the recovery for individual families and the wider community and another five years is too long to wait for rents to stabilise.

LABOUR'S PLAN

Labour will kickstart the housing recovery by rolling up its sleeves and actually building affordable housing – 10,000 KiwiBuild homes in our first four years in office. The powers are in place and we will not hesitate to use them.

The only sustainable solution to the crisis is to actively fill the supply shortage. Only then will rents come down and house prices stabilise so people can get on with their lives again.

To provide immediate relief we are going to earmark the first 3000 KiwiBuild houses as affordable rentals for the duration of the housing crisis.

We recognise there are people forced by a broken housing market to live in cars or sleepouts; situations no one in New Zealand should have to put up with. They need action now.

Labour will allocate the first 400 houses built to temporary emergency housing so families in need have a decent roof over their heads while they get help to organise longer term housing. We will also lift the accommodation supplement for Canterbury, eliminating the anomaly that has denied Cantabrians the same level of support tenants get in Auckland.

LABOUR'S PLAN

KIWIBUILD - CANTERBURY

The acute housing shortage in Canterbury cannot be allowed to continue.

Labour will build 10,000 affordable Kiwibuild homes over four years. Most of them will be immediately sold to first home buyers. Stand-alone three bedroom homes will be in the \$350-400,000 price bracket, with flats and medium density homes selling for \$300-350,000. The houses will be architect-designed and built by the country's finest private sector builders.

MAKING RENTING AFFORDABLE

To take the pressure off the rental market, the first 3000 Kiwibuild houses will be earmarked for affordable rental housing.

These will be managed by Housing NZ or other social housing organisations and rented to those with the highest need. Once the crisis is fixed and rents get back to normal, these houses will be sold to first home buyers. Current tenants will have first right of refusal.

Labour will, for the period of the housing crisis, increase the level of the accommodation supplement in Christchurch to the same level as South and West Auckland. This will cost an estimated \$17 million a year and increase the maximum payment by between \$35 and \$50 a week, depending on the size of the household.

TEMPORARY HOUSING

In our first three months in office Labour will build 100 houses in temporary villages specifically for temporary emergency housing for families displaced by the earthquakes or the rebuilding.

Over the first six months we will build an additional 300 Kiwibuild houses and retain them for temporary emergency housing. Tenants in these 400 temporary homes will be supported by social workers to organise longer term housing. The houses will be sold to first home buyers once the housing crisis has been fixed.

A LIVEABLE, AFFORDABLE CITY

Labour will kickstart the redevelopment of the city centre, working with the Council, the community and developers to bring people back into the heart of the city. We will create a vibrant urban community with affordable medium-density housing. We will take the same approach to the revitalisation of New Brighton, and other suburban and town centres such as Addington, Riccarton, Spreydon, Kaiapoi, Rangiora and Rolleston. We will build mixed income communities where people can live, work and play, with high urban design standards, green space, and decent infrastructure.

MAKING SURE PEOPLE GET A FAIR DEAL

To make sure people have the information that they need when buying a home in Christchurch, Labour will require a list of any known unfixed earthquake damage appended to houses' LIMs.

To prevent profiteering during the rebuild and keep the price of new houses down, Labour will ask the Commerce Commission to investigate the construction industry to ensure that prices are fair and customers aren't being systematically ripped off. The Commerce Commission has investigated individual companies' practices and prosecutions have resulted but a whole of industry investigation is needed.