



## **Absolutely Positively Wellington City Council**

Me Heke Ki Pōneke

# **Hon Dr Nick Smith**

## **Minister of Housing**

24 June 2014

## **Media Statement**

### **Wellington Housing Accord proposal to facilitate growth**

A Wellington Housing Accord has been proposed between the Government and council to facilitate increased supply of housing in the capital, Housing Minister Dr Nick Smith and Mayor Celia Wade-Brown announced today.

“We need to increase the supply and affordability of housing in Wellington. This Housing Accord will give us access to fast-track planning and consenting tools that will bring more houses to market more quickly,” Dr Smith says.

“Wellington needs more housing. Over the last few years we have been building fewer homes than we need in the city to meet forecast growth. I am pleased to be able to work with the Government to enable developers to support growth in Wellington. The Accord is one tool to help the council deliver on our growth plans,” Ms Wade-Brown says.

Under the proposed Wellington Housing Accord, the Government and council would work collaboratively to encourage a good supply of quality housing in the capital. It sets a target of 7000 additional homes over the next five years. The Accord is subject to formal approval and is due to be discussed publicly this Thursday at the Wellington City Council.

The Accord will give the council access to powers to streamline and speed up regulations to manage development. It will provide the right environment for developers to kick-start development so that they can build more homes quickly under the new homes. The new rules will see Special Housing Areas identified where resource consents and District Plan changes can be fast-tracked to enable more homes, including affordable ones to be built.

Special Housing Areas are still to be determined and the Wellington City Council will have the ability to recommend to Government where these areas should be. Initially they are likely to be in areas already identified for growth in the District Plan. They include Lower Stebbings (part of Churton Park), Kilbirnie, Adelaide Road in Newtown and Johnsonville.

“Affordability is an issue. Wellington’s housing market is rated as ‘severely unaffordable’ by Demographia with the median house price 5.5 times the median income,” Ms Wade-Brown says.

“Increasing the supply of good quality housing will give people choice and make sure homes are more accessible across a range of different price points, from apartments in the city to first homes in our suburbs. There will be something for everyone.

“Our commitment to housing in Wellington is important. From our Social Housing Upgrade Programme through to providing regulation, the Accord supports our plans for a diverse, healthy and prosperous Wellington.”

“The Accord mechanism is a constructive way in which we can improve housing supply and affordability. It enables us to get local and central government working more closely together while also recognising that the issues in Wellington are different to the challenges in Auckland and Christchurch,” Dr Smith says.

“These Accords, now covering Auckland, Christchurch and Wellington, are just part of the Government’s agenda for addressing the housing challenge. We are freeing up land supply, reducing building material costs, reining in development contributions, cutting compliance costs and investing in skills and productivity in the construction sector.

“This Wellington Housing Accord is a good framework for making progress and I commend the Mayor and the council for their constructive input.”

**Media contact:**

**Seonah Choi (Dr Smith) 027 846 6697**

**Mayor Wade-Brown 021 247 8360 or Phil Reed (Office of the Mayor) 021 247 9720**

*Attachments:*

- 1. Q&A: Wellington Housing Accord*
- 2. Wellington Housing Accord*