Submission on the Proposed National Policy Statement on Urban Development (NPS-UD)

Introduction

Te Whare Roimata Trust has just been made aware of the impending closing date for submissions on the Discussion Document relating to the Proposed National Policy Statement on Urban Development. In light of the very tight timeframe along with the breadth, complexity, and significance of the issues raised in this Discussion Document, Te Whare Roimata wishes to support the concerns and arguments raised in the submission from the Christchurch City Council.

Our submission refers to Question 8 from the consultation document.

The Inner City East Community of Christchurch

The Inner City East Community (ICE) of Christchurch is where Te Whare Roimata Trust has long worked from a whanau and community-led model. This old, established neighbourhood highlights the unintended negative consequences of increased density and intensification and the impact urban growth and development can have on the historical traditions and character of the area, amenity values, housing choices and the social, cultural and economic needs of its people.

The ICE community, one of the most marginalised communities of both Christchurch and New Zealand was badly damaged in the Canterbury Earthquake sequence of 2010 – 2012. Much of the low-cost, single person, rental housing was lost, an important part of the housing role this neighbourhood has long played in the housing chain of Christchurch. The push to unbridled redevelopment post-quake and the promotion of building upwards has led to displacement and rough sleeping of low income people who have traditionally found housing in this neighbourhood where social services have strategically been located to be close to their client base.

The impact of intensification and increased density on the type of dwellings has brought significant change to this community resulting in higher income earners colonialising parts of the neighbourhood.
Comment

The ICE experience demonstrates:

- the impact of greater intensification on existing neighbourhoods in particular, the social and physical environment and the character and traditions of a neighbourhood;
- the need to consider local priorities and the unique circumstances of each major urban centre. A “one size fits all” approach from our experience will not work;
- the need to debate what constitutes a quality, urban environment and ensure the often “invisible voices” are also consulted;
- the impact planning policies can have and the unintentional wide-ranging implications they can have on established communities, and
- the need for community involvement in discussions around intensification and the need to consider ways of enabling diversity while also protecting the historic character of a neighbourhood.

Conclusion

We support the suggestions and recommendations advanced in the Christchurch City Council’s submission.

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