

Media Release

700 new homes announced for Christchurch

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Housing Minister Dr Nick Smith today launched the \$170 million 700 New Builds programme in Christchurch with Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Minister Gerry Brownlee.

"This is the biggest Government house building programme in Christchurch's history. It amounts to a new house being built every working day from now until the end of 2015. It will increase housing supply, provide hundreds of jobs and reinforce the momentum of the Government's earthquake recovery effort," Dr Smith says.

"This 700 New Builds programme is the third phase of Housing New Zealand's response to Canterbury's devastating earthquakes that damaged 95 per cent of the corporation's properties. The first phase was doing 27,000 urgent and emergency repairs to make properties safe. The second phase is Repair 5000 and involves substantial repair work on the 5000 homes it is economic to rebuild. This third phase is about building new homes to replace houses that are too damaged to be economically repaired.

"The programme was launched at the first site of the 700 New Builds programme at 18 Wilding Street in St Martins. The severely damaged 1947 three-bedroom house has been demolished and is being replaced by three two-bedroom units.

"This project is only possible because of the successful settlement of Housing New Zealand's \$320 million insurance claim in April. It has freed the corporation up from simply replacing or fixing damaged homes to being able to write-off stock that is uneconomic to rebuild and reconfiguring its housing portfolio to better meet tenants' needs in relation to size, location and quality.

"This programme enables Housing New Zealand to make four significant changes in its housing stock. Firstly, we are building more one, two and four bedroom state houses to match today's more diverse needs. Secondly, we are making better use of the land and building a lot more homes. Thirdly, we are shifting to a mixed housing model where we will be on-selling some of the new homes to other social housing providers and to first home buyers as affordable homes. Finally, the new homes will be a lot more energy efficient and healthier with double glazing, full insulation and clean heating."

Dr Smith says the 700 homes will be built on existing Housing New Zealand land in the suburbs of Addington, Avondale, Avonside, Bryndwr, Central, Hei Hei, Linwood, North New Brighton, Northcote, Phillipstown, Riccarton, Richmond, St Martins, Shirley, Somerfield, Spreydon, and Upper Riccarton. Contracts have been signed for 49 houses, 215 are under negotiation, 58 are in the market, 340 are out for consultation and the remaining 38 are in the planning stage.

The Minister is also using his time in Christchurch to visit the 100th house being repaired as part of the Repair 5000 programme in Bishopdale and the site of TC2 TC3 foundation repair and re-levelling trials in Aranui.

“The Repair 5000 and 700 New Builds programmes will both be completed by the end of 2015. This will restore stock levels to pre-quake levels of 6100 homes but with the gain that they will be better, safer and warmer.