
Aranui Community Renewal Project

Memorandum of Understanding

An agreement documenting the three way partnership between central government, local government and the local community to improve the social and physical environment in Aranui, Christchurch.

The Parties

Aranui Community Trust Incorporated
Christchurch City Council
Housing New Zealand Corporation

Background

In 2000, staff from Housing New Zealand Corporation (HNZC) and Christchurch City Council (CCC) began meeting to discuss their mutual interest in housing and social issues in Christchurch. As a result, CCC and HNZC decided to undertake a community renewal project in Aranui. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to support the initiative was signed between the two parties in September 2000.

The local Aranui community was not formally involved in this early partnership. However, late in 2000, discussions were held with local community representatives who indicated a strong desire for local people to be 'equal' partners in the project.

In March 2001, 150 locals attended a community meeting in Aranui to discuss how they would like to be involved in the community renewal initiative. As a result of that meeting the Aranui Community Renewal Committee was formed and a temporary local community consultation coordinator was appointed to liaise with the CCC and HCNZ. Recognising the need to formalise its structure, the Community Renewal Committee became an incorporated society – the Aranui Community Trust Incorporated Society (ACTIS).

A new three way MOU was later drafted and signed by HNZC, CCC and ACTIS in November 2002.

Benefits of Putting Pen to Paper...

- recognising the community as an equal partner alongside central and local government;
- developing a mechanism for ongoing shared planning, decision-making, and communication between the parties;
- enabling the establishment of collaborative workgroups to address key identified local issues eg. training and employment activities for young people, health etc.

Putting it Together...

Although the Aranui Community Renewal project began as a central-local government project,

strong community involvement was soon recognised as critical to the project's success. This meant that the original MOU between CCC and HNZN had to be reworked to ensure the community was included as a core project partner and that their visions and contributions were included in the documentation to support that partnership.

A new memorandum became one of ACTIS' first tasks. With the agreement of the other two parties they developed a draft document to which the Council and HNZN added their comments. The Memorandum affirms the overarching goal of the three parties to "enhance Aranui as a good place to live."

The 2002 Agreement was reviewed in 2004 and again in 2006. Key differences between the 2002 and 2006 Memorandums include:

- an update of strategic directions for HNZN;
- links to Christchurch's Community Outcomes;
- changes in language from objectives to outcomes and from a Project Steering Group to a Partners' Group.

The latter change reflects the impact of four years of working together and the longer term nature of the relationship now envisaged. For example, the focus of the 2002 Memorandum was specifically on the Aranui Community Renewal Project whereas the 2006 version refers to collaboration to support the community of Aranui more generally.

Key Agreement Features...

- identifies seven key objectives for working together to enhance the quality of life in Aranui;
- enables project governance through a Steering Group made up of representatives from all the parties who meet on a quarterly basis;
- commitment to sharing information and resources where appropriate and to communicating with each other before the media;
- no new legal relationship is created through the Memorandum.

Biggest Challenges...

- getting a shared understanding of what the renewal process was and how things should be done;
- gaining the trust of the community. The fact that the project started off with just HNZN and CCC meant that there was some initial scepticism that the community could really be an equal partner;
- resourcing the community organisation so they can contribute as an equal partner;
- keeping the process relevant to and inclusive of the local community;
- having an agreed understanding of what community development means and the capacity building processes required to ensure community ownership of the renewal process.

Things That Helped...

- transparency, goodwill, and commitment by all parties to working for the common good;
- being flexible and committed to working in ways that support local community development and capacity building;
- resourcing from CCC and the Stronger Communities Action Fund to support meaningful community sector involvement in the renewal project and enabling the community to undertake projects themselves;
- valuing community knowledge and taking the time to allow for meaningful community engagement and participation.

“As part of the goals of community capacity building, Housing New Zealand employs local people to mow lawns and Aranui High School Trades Academy students have painted state houses for work experience.”

- taken from Stronger Together, Ministry of Social Development Publication March 2006

What Has Happened Since...

As part of the Community Renewal project, a number of new collaborative housing, employment, health, crime, recreation, and community social services initiatives has taken place. For example in consultation with its tenants and the community, HNZN has:

- located their tenancy managers in Aranui;
- undertaken significant upgrades to the local housing stock;
- worked with CCC’s urban design team to improve the safety and utility of Wainoni Park.

Key revitalisation changes agreed with the community include a new access road, an upgrade of the playground and recreation facilities, and selling some of the reserve land to enable the construction of new housing that fronts onto the park.

Major progress has been made in the area of employment, with a reported 80% reduction in local unemployment. This has been helped by the placement of a Work and Income employment solutions broker in Aranui. Other key achievements in Aranui include the establishment of a youth drop-in centre and Aranui Heartlands, a one-stop-shop for family services run by the ACTIS as part of a contract with the Ministry of Social Development.

The Aranui Community Renewal project partners continue to meet monthly to review progress. There is a general perception that life in Aranui has improved as a result of collaborative efforts over the past seven years with reported increases in local pride and community empowerment.

Best Advice For Others...

- don’t assume anything, talk things through or write things down to check you are on the same page;
- be patient and take the time to do the ground work properly;
- maintain strong political support throughout both agreement development and implementation phases;
- continuity of key staff is critical to maintaining trust and forward momentum;
- find and nurture champions for the project in key organisations.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

BETWEEN

HOUSING NEW ZEALAND CORPORATION

AND

THE CHRISTCHURCH CITY COUNCIL

AND

**THE ARANUI COMMUNITY TRUST INCORPORATED
SOCIETY**

**IN RESPECT OF ISSUES RELATING TO THE
COMMUNITY OF ARANUI, CHRISTCHURCH**

DATE: _____ 2006

PARTIES **HOUSING NEW ZEALAND CORPORATION**, a Crown Owned Entity
("HNZC")

CHRISTCHURCH CITY COUNCIL, a local authority, of Christchurch ("CCC")

THE ARANUI COMMUNITY TRUST INCORPORATED SOCIETY,
representing the Aranui Community ("ACTIS").

BACKGROUND

- A. HNZC's mission is to provide access to decent homes, helping New Zealanders manage their own circumstances and contribute to community life. A supporting objective is that all New Zealanders have access to affordable, sustainable, good quality housing appropriate to their needs.
- B. CCC has four strategic directions used to define its role in contributing to the achievement of Community Outcomes under the LTCCP. These directions are Strong Communities, a Healthy Environment, a Liveable City and a Prosperous Economy. CCC aims to contribute to the community's social wellbeing by ensuring that support is provided to the community to access social and infrastructure services.
- C. An objective of ACTIS is to assist, through active participation by/with members of the Aranui community, in the process and activity of improving the quality of life for residents of the suburb of Aranui.
- D. The parties acknowledge that a previous Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) dated 8 November 2002 has expired. This MOU outlined the framework for the parties to work together in respect of the "Aranui Community Renewal Project" in Christchurch.
- E. The parties acknowledge that considerable progress has been made in the achievement of outcomes recorded in the previous MOU. They recognize the special relationship the parties have developed over time and wish to ensure that this relationship and progress in Aranui are maintained. They also note that there have been changes in personnel and responsibilities over the last few years.
- F. The parties therefore wish to enter into a new MOU that defines the way they will work in partnership in the future to achieve joint outcomes in Aranui.

PURPOSE

1. The purpose of this MOU is to define guidelines and processes for a positive future working relationship between the parties; and to promote and develop that relationship in a way that will enable all parties to meet their obligations and achieve their desired individual and joint outcomes. The parties affirm that the overarching goal for all their activities in respect of Aranui is to ensure they will 'enhance Aranui as a good place to live'.

OUTCOMES

2. The desired joint outcomes of this MOU are:
 - To continue to broaden the capacity of the Aranui community to take greater ownership of its future
 - To reduce unemployment and crime
 - To increase household income levels
 - To maintain and improve community cohesion and participation
 - To maintain and improve the physical infrastructure and environment
 - To continue to improve housing management delivery
 - To ensure that all improvements are sustainable

SCOPE

3. The scope of the outcomes listed above will be at policy development, service and delivery levels. The parties will continue to explore ways to achieve measurable improvements in the quality of life for the residents of Aranui. This may include community development and improvement of infrastructure and housing stock.

STATUS

4. This MOU sets out the relationship between the parties. The parties will work together to achieve the joint outcomes outlined in Clause 2.
5. This MOU does not constitute or create, and shall not be deemed to constitute, any legally binding or legally enforceable obligations on the part of any of the parties.

IMPLEMENTATION

6. The parties agree that they will pursue the implementation of this MOU through their own organisations and through the management and implementation structure defined in Clauses 14, 15 and 16.

ACT IN GOOD FAITH

7. The parties recognise that each party has a defined mandate, whether it be statutory or otherwise, in respect of its own responsibilities in Aranui.
8. In conjunction with the above-described mandate, the parties will make every endeavour to implement this MOU and will act in good faith in meeting its responsibilities under this MOU.
9. While each party will maintain ownership of their own projects and areas of responsibility, each party agrees to fully consult the other parties and keep them advised of issues that may affect one party as a result of the activities of the other, where this is reasonably practical. The parties may however choose to consult regarding commercially sensitive information, in accordance with clause 19 (iv).

TERM

10. The term of this MOU will commence from the date of execution by all parties and remain in force for two (2) years from that date, unless any party terminates this MOU by giving thirty (30) days notice in writing to the other parties.
11. At the end of the term of the MOU, the parties are free to negotiate a further term, or further terms as they determine, for the MOU. This clause does not impose an obligation on any party to negotiate a further term(s) and each shall be free to do so at their sole discretion.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

12. All disputes and differences between the Parties in relation to the performance of this MOU will be attempted to be resolved through discussion by the Partners Group.
13. Should the dispute not be able to be resolved by the above means, then such dispute will be referred to the Regional Manager of HNZC; the Unit Manager, Community Support, of CCC; and the Chairperson of ACTIS.

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

14. This MOU is the highest level of documentation in the relationship between the parties in respect of activities in Aranui, and supersedes the expired MOU between the parties dated 8 November 2002. The MOU is executed by the relevant senior representatives noted in Clause 13, and will be enacted by the Partners Group.
15. The Partners Group is a body comprising local management and/or representatives of HNZC, CCC and ACTIS.

16. The parties agree and accept that their respective representatives are required to act on and under the directives of their respective organisations and communities.

COMMUNITY FORUMS AND EVENTS

17. The CCC and HNZN shall jointly contribute to the costs of maintaining an effective community forum to represent the views of the Aranui community. The amount the CCC and HNZN contribute to the maintenance of such forum shall be at the sole discretion of each party. The parties acknowledge that community representation will be inclusive and will not necessarily be limited to any one representative committee or group.
18. The CCC and HNZN shall also jointly contribute toward the operating costs of the annual AFFIRM event organised by ACTIS for the Aranui community. The amount the CCC and HNZN contribute to AFFIRM shall be at the sole discretion of each party.

PRINCIPLES

19. The principles relating to this MOU and subscribed to by the parties in the implementation of this MOU and their joint outcomes are as follows:
 - (i) The parties each have critical roles and responsibilities in respect of providing and facilitating the provision of community development and renewal in Aranui and are therefore committed to using available resources and powers to further these where such actions are consistent with the strategies of each party. This MOU will in no way constrain any party in carrying out any of its duties in terms of its current policies, agreements, statutory requirements and obligations.
 - (ii) The parties, while recognising existing policy positions, are not constrained by previous planning and project commitments and are prepared to review and update previous planning assessments and initiatives.
 - (iii) Each party, while recognising their respective regulatory functions (statutory or otherwise) and roles, will, where possible, exercise its powers, having regard to this MOU and will assist in the achievement of agreed outcomes.
 - (iv) The parties commit to the sharing of appropriate information at no cost to the other parties and agree to the joint use of resources when appropriate and agree that the costs of such are borne by the party who has incurred the cost. The parties acknowledge that the CCC is subject to the LGOIMA and HNZN to the OIA and the parties accept that from time to time

commercially sensitive information may be shared and that this will need to remain confidential subject to the provisions of these Acts.

- (v) Each party commits to consider, investigate and resolve issues as they arise in a manner that maintains the integrity, professionalism and accountabilities (statutory or otherwise) of each party.
- (vi) Where reasonably practical, in relation to information directly affecting all or parts of Aranui relevant to activities that may be covered by this MOU, each party will consult and discuss with the other the contents of any proposed disclosure of information prior to such disclosure to any form of media by that party. This requirement is specified for the purpose of ensuring that the parties present a co-ordinated front through complete understanding to the media and other public forums, and to ensure the appropriate disclosure of information relating to activities arising from this MOU.
- (vii) The parties agree to meet on a monthly basis or as otherwise agreed to ensure that all people involved are informed of issues and that relevant information is shared between them.
- (viii) It is recognised that each party has particular decision making processes and systems that must be adhered to and that there may be constraints, variations and differences in the meeting of responsibilities from time to time. This may be specifically so in terms of obtaining approvals or resolutions to particular policy and operational proposals.

SIGNED for and on behalf of **HOUSING NEW ZEALAND CORPORATION** by



David Griffiths, Regional Manager

Date 18/12/06.

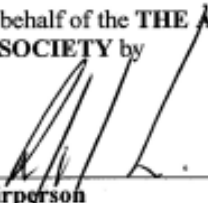
SIGNED for and on behalf of **THE CHRISTCHURCH CITY COUNCIL** by



Catherine McDonald, Unit Manger, Community Support

Date 30/11/06

**SIGNED for and on behalf of the THE ARANUI COMMUNITY TRUST
INCORPORATED SOCIETY by**



Rob Davidson, Chairperson

Date 22/12/06