

LOCAL GOVERNMENT FORUM

30 May 2013

Clerk of the Committee
Social Services Select Committee
Parliament Buildings
WELLINGTON 6140

SUBMISSION: HOUSING ACCORDS AND SPECIAL HOUSING AREAS BILL

The Local Government Forum welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the Social Services Select Committee on the Housing Accords and Special Housing Areas Bill.

The Forum comprises organisations that have a vital interest in the activities of local government. Its members include BusinessNZ, the Electricity Networks Association, Federated Farmers of NZ, NZ Initiative, NZ Chambers of Commerce, and NZ Retailers' Association. The Forum was established in 1994 to promote greater efficiency in local government and to contribute to the debate on policy issues affecting it.

Some individual members of the Forum will be making their own submissions on the Bill and we acknowledge their submissions.

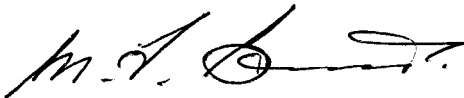
The Local Government Forum wishes to make the following brief points:

- The Forum supports the intent of the Bill which is to enhance housing affordability.
- Forum members have a range of views on the mix of freeing up more land for housing versus intensification of existing housing areas.
- The Forum agrees with the Bill providing a mechanism for central government and local government to work together to address housing supply and affordability issues.
- The Forum believes that 'working together' should involve a genuine partnership between central and local government. The Productivity Commission's Inquiry into Local Government Regulation found "serious weaknesses in the regulatory system" and "shortcomings in the regulatory design process at the central government level, including poor options analysis, a lack of quality engagement with local government during policy development and limited implementation analysis". The Inquiry also found that "there is a poor relationship between central and local government" and that "this is having a detrimental impact on New Zealand's regulatory system". The Commission believes that "if regulatory outcomes are to be improved, then a more

- productive relationship and interface is needed between central and local government”¹.
- The Forum hopes that the Bill provides for such a ‘productive interface’ but we would be concerned if central government were to use the Bill’s powers in a way that perpetuates or exacerbates the problems identified by the Commission.
 - The Forum appreciates the urgency of addressing housing affordability but we are concerned that the two week period for submissions on this Bill raises the risk that important matters of policy or technical issues may not be able to be adequately considered by the Committee.

As Chair of the Forum I would appreciate the opportunity to appear before the Select Committee to speak on the Bill. Please contact Charlie Park (phone: 09 302 9916 or email: cpark@chamber.co.nz) to make the necessary arrangements.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. A. Barnett', written in a cursive style.

Michael Barnett
Chair

¹ Towards Better Regulation, Final Report of the Inquiry into Local Government Regulatory Performance, New Zealand Productivity Commission, May 2013.