



Changing demographics pose problems for tenants and landlords

More than 60 people attended a major summit in Tauranga late last month, which looked at the problems faced by older renters in the housing market, which are worse in parts of Bay of Plenty than the national average. Priority One, the Population Ageing Technical Advisory Group (PATAG) and SmartGrowth supported the event.

By DAVID PORTER

The key theme of the summit was how to generate a rental sector and rental stock that is responsive to older tenants.

Dr Natalie Jackson's cohort analysis of changes in home ownership and renting based on census data from 1986-2013 showed the clear decline in home ownership and rise in renting in every New Zealand territorial authority area.

Among the greatest declines in home ownership and increases in renting, particularly for the 65-plus age group, were in Tauranga and Western Bay of Plenty, according to case study areas for the Life When Renting project.

PATAG chair Anne Pankhurst said the group had been delighted to support the research, which is part of the Ageing Well National Science Challenge.

"We always felt that as the housing issue grows and home

affordability bites, home ownership will drop, as indeed the figures show," said Pankhurst.

"We always knew there would be an impact on the rental market, which is largely driven by the market in New Zealand, unlike Europe when tenure is much more secure and often for lifetime. What this piece of work shows is that particularly in the Bay, this is a growing problem and in fact greater than the national average. The work is timely when taken in context and around the housing challenges the region and the country is facing."

Dr Kay Saville-Smith talked about the challenges and opportunities the ageing population pose for landlords. Many landlords are not aware of the demand for housing from older tenants, the subsidies available to assist older tenants, and how landlords might be able to work together with service providers.

The housing providers and property managers inter-

viewed so far are interested in developing good practice around providing accommodation for older renters, she said.

A wide range of organisations from Bay of Plenty, Hamilton, Auckland, Wellington and Marlborough to part in the summit, which reported back on early findings.

In a report on the summit by Smart Growth implementation manager Bernie Walsh, she said a highlight of a lively day was the guest address by Dr Rob Wiener, executive director of the California Coalition for Rural Housing and continuing lecturer in community and regional development at the University of California, Davis.

Wiener presented four best practice case studies of Californian rental housing for very low-income older people. These showcased universal design and adaptability, services and amenities-enriched housing, intergenerational housing, and housing for spe-

cial-needs seniors.

He also spoke about the National Neighbors Silver programme, which helps older people deal with economic insecurity, financial fraud and abuse.

Professor Jackie Cumming, Dr Janet McDonald and Megan Pledger's analysis of NZ Health Survey data showed older renters are more likely than older home owners to report chronic conditions such as diabetes, asthma and angina. Renters are also more likely to report depression, anxiety disorder and chronic pain.

Interviews with older renters and service providers in Tauranga, Western Bay of Plenty and Auckland are continuing, with Dr Bev James, professor Robin Keams and his team, and Dr Fiona Cram.

Early findings are that moving from home-ownership to renting is common, mainly due to financial or personal "shocks."

Most rent from private landlords, and they have varying experiences, she said. The majority are on limited,

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

The Life When Renting team has prepared six working papers for PATAG, available on <http://www.smartgrowthbop.org.nz/research/new-research/>

Presentations from the summit will be available on <http://renting.goodhomes.co.nz/>

fixed incomes and rely on the accommodation supplement to assist with their housing costs. Some struggle to find warm and suitable housing that is affordable and accessible.

Others do not feel secure. Common reasons for having to move are unaffordable rents, and the house they are living in is sold.

Cram's work with kaumātua highlighted how housing is part of their cultural positioning system. She noted their input into designing papakāinga housing and the use of innovative lifetime design.

Dr Elsie Ho and her team are conducting interviews with older Asian new settlers. Elsie noted the importance of cultural concepts of elder care, as well as older Asians' appreciation of living close to services, public transport and family.

Adrienne von Tunzelmann, member of the Ageing Well summit, setting the research in the context of the Ageing Well National Science Challenge. She congratulated the Tauranga/Western Bay of Plenty community in leading the way in contributing to and leveraging from the Challenge.



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- PATAG chair Anne Pankhurst.

Scion's 70th anniversary

Rotorua-based Scion will be celebrating the 70th anniversary of its existence as a crown forestry research institute by hosting an interactive exhibition in the Rotorua central business district during the winter school holidays.

Locals and visitors will get to see some of the cutting edge science and innovation that takes place just five minutes from the centre of town. Different technologies – from 3D printers to fermenters – will be on display.

They invite visitors to drop in and discover how Scion can help New Zealand move from a petrochemical economy to a renewable, forest-based bioeconomy.

The exhibition will be open from



10am – 4pm weekdays, July 10 - 21, 1201 Erutera Street, Rotorua.