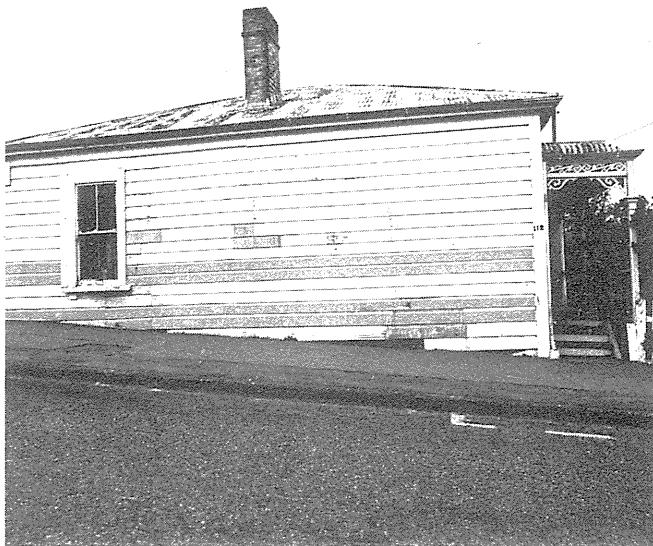


Housing



The Values Party recognises the right of each person to adequate and satisfactory accommodation.

Thanks to the efforts of previous governments, and to the determination of our citizens, New Zealanders are generally well housed. No New Zealand government could tolerate a situation in which large numbers of citizens were without satisfactory housing.

But the general well-being is not shared by all groups. Financial barriers are erected against first home seekers and low income earners, and inner city residents face relatively high rents for relatively poor accommodation.

The present administration has made strenuous efforts to minimise the financial barriers and has encouraged the building of more houses than ever before. But still there is talk of a housing shortage. Thousands of New Zealanders know the frustration of being on a State or Council waiting list.

As in so many other fields, it is not so much a question of shortage as a question of distribution. The number of unoccupied dwellings is tending to increase while the number of occupants per dwelling continues to fall.

Population stabilisation policies would have the most significant long term effect on New Zealand's housing problems. As an illustration of this, the present administration attacked "the housing shortage" vigorously in 1974 by building in the region of 35,000 new houses. But in the same year there was a net gain of 30,000 new immigrants. At the end of it we still had a "housing shortage".

Housing Administration

The Values Party believes that the proper functions of Head Office would be better performed through a Housing Commission than through a centralised Housing Corporation.

The Values Party would

- Encourage the Commission in its functions of research, innovation and policy development. The Commission could also function as an investment commission.
- Divide the Housing Corporation itself into Regional Housing Councils.
- Encourage district and community levels of government to follow the lead set by Wellington's City Council in pursuing a vigorous policy of building accommodation.
- Establish residents' planning committees [through Regional Authorities under the Local Government Act] to examine all planning applications in each community council area.
- Place sole power for subdividing land for urban purposes in regional government.

Public Housing

- Make adequate and satisfactory accommodation for low income groups and first home seekers priorities in public housing. A vigorous policy of dwelling building would be pursued for as long as necessary until population has stabilised.
- Set public house rentals at 20 per cent of occupants' income, with a mechanism for rental reviews.
- Grant public loans for housing up to 90 per cent of valuation, subject only to the ability to repay and with preference to low income earners.
- Set interest rates on loans proportional to income. Lower income earners would have lower rates of interest. Interest rates would be subject to the same kind of mechanism for review as rentals.
- Make finance available to people wishing to buy or maintain sound older homes as well as to those buying or building new homes. The Values Party seeks the conservation and renovation of existing housing stock as far as possible, especially if such renovation will add to the possible number of occupants. However, all such loans would be conditional on some form of rent and speculation control.
- Encourage district and community governments to establish "housing counselling services". The services and expertise of private architects, planners, and valuers would be available to citizens at subsidised rates and those of officers of the local authorities freely accessible.

Progressive Homebuilding

The Values Party would introduce a Progressive Homebuilding Scheme to cater for those who wish to build gradually over a period of time. The scheme would cover newly-planned buildings, partly completed buildings, and completed buildings undergoing extension and improvement. Such a scheme would offer:

- secure land tenure for the occupier;
- professional building services available to the home builder;
- adequate building supervision available to the owner;
- loan assistance for the costs of design, supervision, specialist sub-contracts, materials.

Progressive homebuilding assistance could be conditional upon:

- a housing deposit or building fund being saved;
- design to be completed within 6 months of approval;
- building being sufficiently completed to occupy within 2 years;
- the building being completed as designed within 6 years;
- controls on selling or subletting.

Progressive homebuilding assistance could be tied into suspensory Home Improvement Loans.

Planning and Design:

If New Zealand continues the present patterns of trying to satisfy the residential needs of the community in a piecemeal fashion, insoluble problems will be created for ourselves and our children. The carving up of good agricultural land into 10-acre blocks or suburban subdivisions is not in the national interest. The day of the quarter-acre section is gone for most people in the cities; New Zealand already has enough of them.

The Values Party does not support the massing of large areas of public housing. It supports a planning procedure in which the material and non-material needs of citizens are met by being considered throughout a process of discussion and consultation, and by being mandatory upon private or community developers. Social and commercial services, public amenities, recreation, access to public transport, and the needs of community development must be considered during planning and before building. We are not convinced that existing legislation is satisfactory in this regard.

The Values Party Would take these steps:

- In all new residential areas, except for "feeder roads", road widths would be limited to two-lane traffic only. Pedestrian facilities including walkthroughs would be completed at the same time as private car facilities. Butchers, dairies, groceries, greengroceries, playgrounds, and community centres should be completed at the same time as houses. "Cul de sacs" should be provided wherever practicable. The special needs of women and children should be considered. No plan should be implemented until it has been approved by those currently rearing children.
- High-rise housing would be permitted but only in exceptional circumstances where it could be shown that there is a proven need and demand and if the building design would not be detrimental to the surrounding neighbourhood, or to the occupants.

The same principles would apply to high-rise buildings intended for commercial or office use.

- The policy of giving preference to 'first home-seekers' would be extended to include assistance to those, especially young people, wishing to experiment with alternative residential styles. An alternative residential style would be no bar to participation in the Progressive Homebuilding Scheme.
- Full rights of tenure would be granted to ohu which have progressed beyond the probationary period of temporary tenancy.
- Basic education on housing and accommodation would be provided through secondary schools, and correspondence and Polytechnical courses in basic town planning, home design, and home construction would be made available to intending home owners.
- Licensed cafes and small local 'pubs' without large parking facilities would be encouraged, and the building of large taverns discouraged.
- Speculative building would be discouraged by requiring proof of a definite need before planning permission was given people wishing to erect commercial buildings.
- An immediate investigation would be made to promote improved housing quality, efficiency and longevity.
- Government buildings of any prominence would be the subject of architectural competitions, ensuring that a number of alternative designs are available for consideration.
- Ordinances and model by-laws would be amended so that they do not discriminate against town houses or alternative residential styles.
- A Commission of Inquiry into land and property speculation for capital gain would be established. The terms of reference of the inquiry would extend to the costs and benefits of gradual nationalisation of land.
- Traditional lending institutions would be required to make available a fixed percentage of their total funds for housing mortgage and home improvement loans on the same basis that fixed investment in government securities is now compulsorily separated.
- The Values Party recognises the role of the private sector in housing, including developers, builders and tradesmen, and real estate agents. Its policy aims to ensure that the private sector in general can live up to its claims of providing necessary social service. Values supports a joint approach to housing with public and private sectors working together to provide viable mixed communities.

