

## **Submission to Christchurch City Council on Draft Annual Plan, April 20**

Knox Church is a congregation within the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand. The church is within the inner city and believes in justice and social well being for all the community

### **Proposed 24% increase in rent for Council tenants**

1. At its meeting on March 27<sup>th</sup> the City Council resolved to increase rents for tenants in Council housing by 24%. We object strongly to an increase of this size given the Churches' belief in community justice.
2. **We consider that the Council's recent decision should be set aside and that the rental income from housing should be that set out in the Draft Annual Plan 2008-09, page 29, where the budgeted total rents are stated as \$12.924m.**
3. We understand that total rents of \$12.924m are an increase of about 2.5%. We do not object to such an increase because we recognise that costs for maintenance are increasing.
4. **We object very strongly to the proposed increase of 24% because:**
  - (i) Tenants, residents and ratepayers had no warning that the Council was considering an unprecedented rent increase until a day or two before the Council meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> March.
  - (ii) The Council's Social Housing Strategy (June 2007) did not indicate that the condition of the housing stock would require a huge rent increase within a year.
  - (iii) The Council's Long Term Community Plan 2006-2016 indicated rent increases of only about 2.5% a year.
  - (iv) Using rent from tenants to build a fund of \$34m by 2015 is a new policy on which people should be consulted, in accordance with the Local Government Act and the City Council own policy.

- (v) Christchurch City Council is a signatory to the Healthy Cities Charter that commits the city “to promote and improve the health and well being of the people of Christchurch”. Has the Council forgotten this commitment?

5. **We urge the Council to rescind its decision of March 27<sup>th</sup> to increase rents by 24% and to keep to the rental income set out in the Draft Annual Plan with a rent increase of about 2.5%.**
6. We do not wish to speak to my submission at the hearing.
7. Please acknowledge this submission by sending correspondence to the address above.

Signature Mary E McGiven ONZM  
Justice Committee Convener

  
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