

3. SUBMISSION TO GOVERNMENT ON HOUSING

The Property Manager, Rob Dally, provided background to the previous representations which the Council had made to the government in 1996, seeking the attention of the Minister of Housing to the following:

- (i) *That the Government acknowledge homelessness is a reality in New Zealand, including Christchurch, and provide a statutory definition of homelessness.*
- (ii) *That the Government acknowledge that the policy of requiring Housing New Zealand to achieve a commercial return on its investments while also having social objectives is neither working nor achievable.*
- (iii) *That the Government acknowledge that its market rental policies have resulted in a significant increase in private sector rentals and that it therefore consider a return to a differential rental system related to income, or that the accommodation supplement be increased to 100% of the eligible amount and that it be targeted to meet tenants' needs.*
- (iv) *That low interest loans for low income first home purchasers be made available through the Housing Corporation and that the deposit be income related.*
- (v) *That the Government ensure that:*
 - *Housing New Zealand houses comply with acceptable standards.*
 - *Monitoring of housing standards is enacted.*
 - *Legislation covering issues such as security of tenure is tightened.*
 - *That the Government through its own agencies and in association with the Real Estate Institute promote good practice in the rental market.*
- (vi) *That the Government consider joint venture developments/housing projects with the Council, such as low interest loans, on a similar basis to those provided to councils in the past."*

Whilst the report noted the previous government had acknowledged the Council's concern, little seemed to have happened over the intervening three years which would mitigate the Council's concerns.

Following on from the visit in July 1999 of Councillor Carole Anderton and the Property Manager to Australia, the Council recommended inter alia:

"That central government be lobbied to carry out appropriate research into future housing needs."

Discussions with the new Minister of Housing were therefore seen as appropriate.

Recommendation: That an invitation be extended to the Minister of Housing to meet with the Mayor and Housing Working Party to discuss the issues raised in this report, and to visit Christchurch City Council housing complexes.