



28 April 2016

Draft Annual Plan

Porirua City Council
PO Box 50218
Porirua 5240

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission on the Porirua City Council Draft Annual Plan. This submission is a request to Porirua City Council (PCC) to host a website dedicated to healthy housing in Porirua with assistance from Regional Public Health (RPH) on content.

Porirua City Council (PCC) and Regional Public Health (RPH) have a common agenda – working with communities where they live, work and play to improve and protect their quality of life. RPH wants to work with PCC to make our common goal achievable and easier for our communities. By finding mutual points of interest and working together we can be more efficient, reduce the burden of engagement on our communities and be more effective in our policy implementation. This collaborative approach will also facilitate smarter use of each agency's finite resources.

In December last year PCC considered a paper that highlighted the challenges to improve the quality of rental housing in Porirua City¹. This paper highlighted the complexity of the rental housing sector, the link between poor quality rental housing and health issues, and the possibility of joining with other agencies to raise awareness of services and support for tenants and landlords in Porirua to promote healthy living environments². The paper goes on further to suggest that:

“4.60 If the Council is to raise awareness of the legislative tools available, it needs to provide an explanation of the purpose, limitations and possible consequences of each law/regulation for tenants. Any education and advocacy work by the Council also needs to bring together information on ways to optimise healthy living environment and places to go for further advice. There are also a number of programmes that can help such as healthy housing assessments, access to free curtains and subsidised home insulation³.”

RPH has been working with your Council officers to help populate the PCC website with current and relevant information housing information. RPH has experience in this area as we run healthy housing programmes and can provide advice, information, access to experts and programmes that

¹ Improving the Housing Quality Through Regulatory Intervention paper considered at Te Komiti 10 December 2015.

² Improving the Housing Quality Through Regulatory Intervention paper considered at Te Komiti 10 December 2015, recommendation d, page 1.

³ Improving the Housing Quality Through Regulatory Intervention paper considered at Te Komiti 10 December 2015, 4.60.

deal with improving housing conditions and ensuring barriers to healthy homes are reduced for our most vulnerable groups.

Not long after PCC had considered the paper on Improving Housing Quality Issues Through Regulatory Intervention, Labour Party MP, Kris Faafoi launched a Porirua Housing website <http://www.poriruahousingproject.org.nz/>. The website has its own domain name and is easy to find, however, it does not have the breadth of information associated with health and housing. While RPH appreciates the intent to provide a housing information platform, as one of the public service agencies involved in the Porirua Heating Project⁴, we will not be able to collaborate on content hosted by the website. RPH suggests that PCC consider hosting a website that will be a portal for healthy housing advice and services in Porirua. The key benefits of this are that the website will be perceived as politically neutral and will allow public service agencies, who are part of the Porirua Heating Project to collaborate, provide links to services, information, legislative tools and local research on housing and health. A PCC hosted website could also provide the council data on the types of issues people are looking up and provide baseline data for future programmes or policies.

It will be important for both a PCC hosted website and the website facilitated by Kris Faafoi to provide complimentary information so as to avoid conflicting information to the community.

We would be pleased to provide further information or clarification on any of the points raised in our submission. The contact point is:

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Yours Sincerely

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⁴ The Porirua heating project group comprises Regional Public Health, Porirua Social Sector Trial, Housing New Zealand, Ministry of Social Development, Sustainability Trust, University of Otago and recently Porirua City Council has been invited.