

Petone Settlers Museum – House and Home exhibition

The Petone Settlers Museum is the setting for a collaborative arts project and exhibition on state housing called *House and Home*.

Celebrating 100 years of state housing in New Zealand, *House and Home* explores a range of experiences from people who lived in state houses in the past and today; and looks at what 'home' means to them.

The exhibition is being held in Petone, where in 1906 the first state funded workers dwellings were built in Patrick Street. It looks at state housing developments over the years and how they reflected the changing needs of the community.

Senior Visual Arts students from Weltec have worked with children from three local schools in predominantly state house areas – Taita Central School, Pomare School and Naenae Primary – to create a special artwork celebrating their communities, families and lives.

Desmond O'Neil, a state house resident of 53 years, remembers when his family moved into their new home.

"We were absolutely thrilled to come to this brand new house. It was in a row of state houses that had only just been completed and the street was still just gravel. Our daughter was 13 months old and took her first steps the very day we moved in. We only had bare floors; but the children had their own rooms and they had never had anything like that before.

"It was difficult then. We were really struggling from pay day to pay day with our three kids.

"Three more children came along, so with our six and my wife's sister who had 10, the house was often bulging at the seams on family occasions; but the children really made the place a home.

"Years ago we were offered the opportunity to buy the place, but could never afford the deposit. We had the choice of either raising our six children or buying a house; we raised the children who have all turned out extremely well. Owning a house was everyone's wish, but we just had to face facts. We gave our children a good education," said Mr O'Neil.

The exhibition will run from 17 December 2005 to 14 May 2006. For more information you can phone Denise Williams, Director Petone Settlers Museum on (04) 560 3528, or email: settlers@huttcity.govt.nz



Desmond O'Neil, in his home at Taita. Photo by Victoria Birkinshaw.

Garden Awards

The Housing New Zealand Garden Awards occur every two years, with entries for the next awards expected to be called about September 2006.

Chief Executive Helen Fulcher says entries are called fairly early in the gardening calendar, so that by the time winners are announced, gardens are looking their best for television and newspaper photographers.

"So if you're thinking about entering the awards next year, it's a good idea to take pictures of your garden over the next few months when it is looking its best. Then those pictures can be submitted when you enter the awards."

The 2004 Garden Awards attracted entries from more than 3,400 people. The categories include open, edible/practical, small space, children's, new garden and housing for community groups.



Helen Fulcher in her garden.

Language is no barrier to home ownership

– By Tina Simcock

This year – 2005 – was a very special year for Wellington couple Enele and Sulu Ene and their two children. After 14 years renting a state house they finally bought their own home.

The achievement of owning their own home is particularly significant for Enele and Sulu, as they don't speak much English, and relied heavily upon support from the Pasefika Pulse Trust.

Fili Tuifao from the Trust says it provided interpretation into Pacific languages as required, to make sure Enele and Sulu understood the process and knew what was happening.

"The aim of our work is to make sure people can make informed decisions about home ownership – to make sure they can financially support a home loan and also to maintain a home so it retains or increases in value."

Fili Tuifao says home ownership is very important for Pacific people and by providing information through interpretation, they can ensure that language is no barrier.

Enele and Sulu bought their own home in August and are very proud of their achievement. They are now trying to help others achieve the same goal.

"They have had guests staying with them from Samoa and it has meant a great deal to them to be able to tell their guests that they own their own home. They've been talking with their guests about home ownership and are working to inspire them and others to achieve it," says Fili.

The Pasefika Pulse Trust, in partnership with Housing New Zealand, offers a series of educational workshops for Pacific people in Wellington who are considering home ownership. A similar project is also underway in South Auckland with Careerworks Pasifika Ltd

For further information contact Pasefika Pulse Trust on (04) 238 2454.



Pictured above is the Ene family with Fili on the left, and Sue Ah Yuong from Pasefika Pulse Trust on the right.

Contributing to the community

A group of volunteers in Naenae have banded together to organise community events and promote community spirit.

TEAM Naenae has helped paint out graffiti in walkways, organise community barbecues, market days, and local meetings to get ideas from residents about how to make the area a better place.

Marcus Sherwood, Minutes Secretary, says "TEAM Naenae is a great forum for networking and sharing ideas.

"The meetings help to connect people and organisations within Naenae who are all trying to make a difference."

Marcus says they're always looking for volunteers to contribute.

Meetings are held on the first Thursday of each month at 7.30pm at the Naenae Library (back entrance).



Team Naenae is a forum for sharing ideas to help improve the Naenae community.

Home security over the holidays

– By Christine Clarke

Keeping your home safe over the Christmas and New Year holidays only takes a little time, but has potential to make a huge difference to your peace of mind while you're on holiday, says Russ Kalivati of the Naenae Police.

"Make sure a trusted neighbour, friend or family member knows when you're planning to return and how to contact you if they need to. Ask them to open and close the curtains in your home and put on the lights as well so people think someone is home," Russ says.

"The other option is to buy a timer plug to activate a light or radio (not a heater), to switch on and off for a period of time. This can be a very good deterrent to would-be burglars.

"Maybe even ask a neighbour to park a car in your driveway and use the clothes-line so it looks like someone is about."

Russ says an overgrown lawn is another sign that burglars use to work out if anyone is home – so keep your lawns mown.

"Lock the windows and doors, even if you are only going out for a short time, and make sure your television, stereo, valuables etc can't be seen from the outside of your home.

"Keep children's bikes indoors overnight – lots of bikes go missing at Christmas as burglars take them for their own children," says Russ. "And don't leave Christmas presents on display under the Christmas tree – put them out at the last minute. Burglars usually do their shopping at someone else's house. Don't let them do it at your house."

If you have an answer phone, don't have a message that indicates you live alone and don't have a message that advises callers that you are away and when you will be returning.

If you're staying home over the Christmas period and you notice something or someone acting suspiciously, take note of their appearance, maybe the car registration and call the Police.



Russ Kalivati.

Keeping rent payments on track

Do you find it hard to keep up your rent payments at Christmas? Many people spend a bit more than they can afford over the Christmas/New Year period, but regular rent payments still have to be made, says Regional Manager Kathy Parsons.

"Christmas presents, Boxing Day sales, and holidays can all put pressure on our finances at this time of the year. Our Tenancy Managers understand how easy it is to get into difficulty, but they are happy to help work out a plan to keep your rent payments on track.

"It is really important that you plan ahead so that you still pay your rent on time.

"Make sure there's enough money in your bank account to cover your automatic payment. If you think you will have rent problems, please don't ignore it – talk with us and make an arrangement.

"If you agree with us to make regular payments and stick to them, you won't be evicted and lose your home. Contact us as soon as you think you might have rent problems," says Kathy.

"If you're going on an extended holiday in December/January, you need to let us know – it's also handy for us to have a contact name and number for you in case there are problems. And remember – rent payments must continue while you're on holiday."



Kathy Parsons – Wellington/Hutt Valley Regional Manager.

Welcome Home Loans

By now you may have seen or heard about the Welcome Home Loan on television or in your local community newspaper.

Welcome Home Loans are available to people who can afford mortgage repayments but have little or no deposit, and would not normally qualify for a home loan.

Housing New Zealand tenants who are paying market rent and want to buy a house, may be able to get their own home with a Welcome Home Loan. You can't buy a Housing New Zealand home, but you may be able to buy another home of your own.

Banks and building societies offering Welcome Home Loans can lend up to 100 percent of the house price. For homes up to \$150,000, eligible borrowers do not need a deposit. For homes costing more than that, a 5 percent deposit is required. The deposit can be gifted from a relative. Depending on your ability to meet the repayments, you can borrow up to \$280,000.

Welcome Home Loans are available to households earning up to \$85,000 a year, or up to \$120,000 if there are three or more borrowers in the household. Applicants must have a good credit history and intend to live in the house they buy. Housing New Zealand tenants cannot buy the home they're in.

Welcome Home Loans are currently available through: Kiwibank, TSB Bank, Nelson Building Society, SMC Building Society, Southland Building Society, ABS Canterbury, Southland Credit Union and Credit Union Baywide. More lenders are expected to join in time. To find out more about if a Welcome Home Loan might be right for you, visit the website: www.welcomelohome.co.nz or free phone number 0508 Welcome Home, 0508 935 266. General information is also available at www.hnzc.co.nz



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