



## **UTF: Collaboration Is Key To Turning Around Tauranga's Housing Crisis**

**TAURANGA, 20 October 2022:** Members of Tauranga's business and property community gathered together this week for the second of a two-part focus series to examine the drivers behind the region's housing crisis.

Hosted by local property and business industry advocates, Urban Task Force (UTF), the series of events brought experts in areas as diverse as commercial development, banking, tangata whenua and social housing together to share their perspectives on the city's property challenges.

UTF Chairman Scott Adams says the two events fostered a sense of collaboration amongst all levels of leadership in the city to work towards resolving the problems facing the city.

"The Tauranga property market is out of control – we're now the eighth most expensive housing market in the world, again outstripping Auckland as this country's least affordable place to own a home," he says.

"Whether you're a homeowner or a renter; a business owner, or a wage-earner; the unaffordability crisis, a congested supply market and a lack of infrastructure and investment funding from local and central Government make it hard to live in this beautiful city."

At the first of the two focus series held in September, the discussion centred on the current state of the housing market, with attendees hearing from Scott Adams sharing the challenges facing the development community, residential builder and Director of Classic Group, Peter Cooney; Buddy Mikaere and Paora Stanley who shared a tangata whenua perspective and Nick Goodall, Head of Research at property valuation economists, CoreLogic.

“Our first session was a deep dive into land shortage, housing shortage, social and changing housing requirements, and affordability both now and in the short to medium term,” says Adams.

“In the session this week, we followed up with looking at the opportunity – how do we fix the mess we’ve found ourselves in?”

“Our speakers discussed where the available land is and what is holding us back from using it. They covered the social housing strategy for the region and how the current infrastructure can be upgraded and how quickly this can be achieved. Our discussions dug deep to examine just how we can fund the work that’s so desperately needed and if there are any quick fixes that can tide us over in the interim,” said Adams.

Speakers discussing the way forward for the city in the second of the focus series included Commissioner Shadrach Rolleston and Christine Jones, General Manager: Strategy and Growth, Tauranga City Council, who spoke about the availability of land for new development. While Paul Wills, Client Director Property, Bank of New Zealand, discussed the thorny issue of how to fund the changes the city so desperately needs.

Ernst Zollner, Director of Strategic Urban Partnerships, Kainga Ora, shared his perspective on social housing for the community’s most vulnerable. In particular, the Infrastructure Acceleration Fund (IAF) funding package for Gate Pa which is close to being secured and will deliver the infrastructure investment needed to support a significant number of homes being delivered in this area. Kainga Ora are also working on East Town, an area of new land for urban development near Paengaroa.

“These focus series are a critical opportunity to work out the what, the where, the why, and the way forward so that together, as a community, we can combine our resources and skills to make meaningful progress,” says Adams.

“We can’t sit around and wait for central government to fix Tauranga. It’s up to us as business and community leaders to join forces and rebuild the city into something we can all

be proud of. The UTF focus series are just a start; I hope they spark the kind of innovative thinking that drives real change.”

ENDS

For more information about the Urban Task Force, see: <https://urbantaskforce.co.nz/>

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