

NZPI MEDIA RELEASE

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Urban planning not to blame for inequality

Regardless of whether the government accepts or rejects a growing gap in equality within New Zealand, it has agreed that there are a variety of national and international issues that cause inequality, including finance and tax policy, under and un-employment, the pressure of foreign investment etc.

NZPI is therefore surprised and disappointed at Minister Bill English's recent comment that the single biggest contributor to the gap between the haves and have nots is 'urban planning processes'. This view is unsupported in any publicly available government report on inequality within New Zealand. On the contrary, the evidence available suggests that urban planning processes play a negligible part in housing affordability which is now being inextricably linked with inequality.

The regions of New Zealand face quite different pressures. Land availability and housing affordability are not typically problems that face provincial New Zealand and yet poverty is very evident in our provinces.

Local planning policy is one contributor to housing affordability but certainly not the main one. The relative inability to build at scale, relative high cost of building materials, land banking, tax structure, interest rates, profiteering and sentiment towards residential property as an asset class in general have a huge role in housing affordability.

NZPI waits with interest to hear of the Government's proposed changes to the RMA, the legislation that sets the context for all planning policies in NZ.

Ends.

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