



MAYOR'S OFFICE

AUCKLAND CITY

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **Mayor gives Minister commitment to good urban design**

Auckland City is putting its money where its mouth is to create New Zealand's most liveable city, Auckland Mayor Dick Hubbard told Environment Minister Marian Hobbs today (Tuesday 28 June) at the launch of *The Value of Urban Design* report.

The report is an evidence-based review of 200 international studies on the social, economic and environmental benefits of urban design – and is part of the New Zealand Urban Design Protocol launched in Wellington in March. Auckland was the first city to sign up to the protocol.

Key members of Auckland City's design and property development industries attended today's launch.

Mr Hubbard said the review was further justification for Auckland City's tougher new standards and controls to ensure all new buildings meet strict design criteria and give officers the power to say no to bad design.

"My mayoral task force on urban design made bold recommendations which we have adopted and are funding. What we all agree on is that we want a city that engenders huge pride," the Mayor said.

"I'm pleased that the report makes it clear urban design is not just about aesthetics. It's not a beauty contest. Looks are only a small part of urban design.

“Key elements include where we place our buildings, how they connect with public transport, how they can be pedestrian friendly and how we create public space that encourages community interaction.”

Such considerations were particularly important for the sustainability of the compact towns and cities of the future.

“Our very latest initiative, hot off the press last week, is for new affordable housing. We’re not just looking at rules for others. We want to be the catalyst for role modelling affordable, healthy homes. Homes that are water and energy efficient, that are not only good for the environment, but good for our economy and our health.”

He said good urban design principles also embraced heritage protection. The council had introduced rules covering 16,300 character homes, ensuring heritage areas gained new status and were no longer under the threat of unwelcome visits by bulldozers.

“All this builds on the work we’ve previously established by being the first city to appoint an urban design panel to review proposed developments prior to consent application.”

He added: “We welcome this report. It reflects what my council is committed to and deserves widespread dissemination and debate.”

- The Urban Design Protocol is a voluntary commitment by central and local government, property developers and investors, design professionals, educational institutes and other groups to undertake specific urban design initiatives. The actions that individual signatories take together will make a significant difference to the quality of our towns and cities. It is part of the government's Sustainable Development Programme of Action and Urban Affairs portfolio.
- *The Value of Urban Design* report was prepared by the Ministry for the Environment, Auckland Regional Council, and Wellington City Council. A review of 200 international studies, it cites less crime, greater safety, improved local economies, vitality in the streets and better health as key benefits of good urban design.

## **Ends**

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