

## **Cities, Communities and Homes: Is the Urban Future Livable?**

- **Paper / Proposal Title:**

Making a Difference with Research for Livable Environments

- **Format:**

verbal presentation

- **Author(s) Name:**

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- **University or Company Affiliation:**

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- **Abstract:**

The paper explores how research can support livable environments by actually getting traction with the key actors that determine the shape of our cities, the quality of our neighbourhoods and the performance of our homes. Taking examples of research projects focused on different scales from the house to the neighbourhood, the paper will demonstrate the importance of aligning research findings with the practical needs of key decision-makers. At the same time, it argues that some research findings, no matter how robust and clear in identifying directions that will optimize the livability of our cities, communities and homes, are destined to have little impact. The paper suggests that one of the keys to getting impact is the ability to identify and work with actors and parties that are willing to change and have, no matter how small, a sphere of influence in which they can and are hungry to innovate. In the building industry that often means focusing less on those dominant in the market and working with builders, designers and developers seeking market share. It always means undertaking research that assists ordinary people to understand the built environment, to articulate their real needs and aspirations, and

enter more equal conversations with those that shape built environments and deliver the housing stock which is to be their homes.

- **Author(s) Biography:**

Kay is a sociologist who has undertaken research into housing markets, housing demand, retirement villages, accessible housing, sustainable housing, the residential building industry and neighbourhoods. She has led a number of public good science funded programmes and components including: Life went Renting; Finding the Best Fit – Housing, Downsizing and Older People in a changing Society – a three year research programme assessing the practicalities of downsizing and the conditions which determine successful transitions; Resilient Communities – Doing Better in Bad Times – a two year programme aimed at helping older people and their communities to be more resilient during adverse natural events and recover better after them; Good Homes – a five-year programme on older people's repairs and maintenance needs in the context of ageing in place; the Sustainable Neighbourhoods Stream for the BEACON Consortium which unravelled the dimensions of livability and their relationship to low environment impact communities and affordable housing. She also leads a research stream in the New Zealand National Science Challenge – Building Better Homes, Towns and Architecture of Decision-Making. She is a trustee for the Marlborough Sustainable Housing Trust which delivers affordable housing through rental and shared ownership provision of high performance housing to people struggling on the housing market.

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- **How did you hear about the conference:**

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