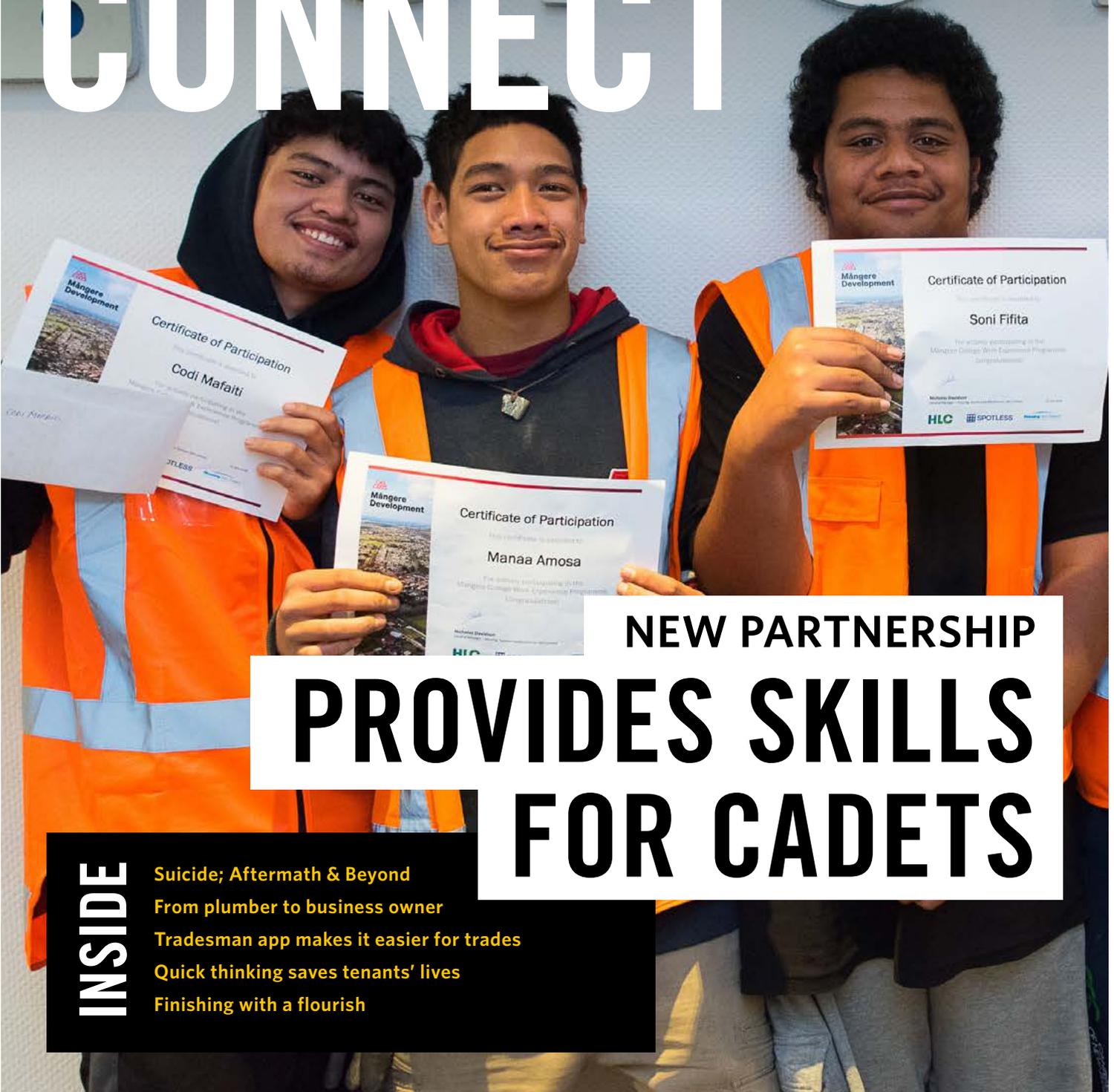


CONTRACTOR CONNECT



NEW PARTNERSHIP PROVIDES SKILLS FOR CADETS

INSIDE

- Suicide; Aftermath & Beyond
- From plumber to business owner
- Tradesman app makes it easier for trades
- Quick thinking saves tenants' lives
- Finishing with a flourish



FROM THE EDITOR

Kia Ora,

As I write this it still feels like winter, with cold winds and rain around the country. With the weather people assuring us warmer weather is just around the corner, let's hope that by the time you read this edition of Contractor Connect spring is here.

It certainly feels like it has been a particularly cold and wet winter and one of extremes. On behalf of Housing New Zealand, thank you for all your hard work and commitment to ensuring our tenants across the country live in warm, dry and healthy homes.

This spring/summer edition of Contractor Connect is packed with variety. Our cover story is about a new partnership providing skills and work experience for five Mangere College students. We also share a very personal story about Switched On Group subbie Paul Lynch, who is now a published author, having written a book to help him deal with the tragic suicide of his brother.

We've included an aspirational story about the journey of Spotless' John Clifford from plumber to business owner, and stories about what you have been doing to keep your teams safe and healthy in the field.

We also highlight a pilot project in the Hutt to improve the thermal performance of 66 of our older homes. And it wouldn't be Contractor Connect if we didn't showcase some of the great teamwork we know happens every day of the week.

When your teams are out in the field working in tenants' homes, we know it makes a real difference when the tenant is at the centre of everything you do. So keep up the great work.

Ngā mihi

Angela Pearce

National Maintenance and Upgrade Manager



Mangere College cadets with their certificates

NEW PARTNERSHIP PROVIDES SKILLS FOR MANGERE COLLEGE CADETS

In the last school holidays, five year 13 Mangere College students traded their holidays for early starts, heading to local Housing New Zealand homes to install showers and do repairs.

It might sound like some cruel extension of detention, but it was the start of an important partnership between the school, HNZ, PBMC Spotless, and Housing New Zealand subsidiary HLC, who are leading the Mangere Development project.

The Mangere Development is a large redevelopment project that will replace ageing state houses with new, warm, dry homes for HNZ tenants, first-home buyers and other property buyers.

A major goal of the development is also to create better communities in which to live and work.

At the same time, Mangere College is expanding a career-oriented programme called Vocational Pathways, which gives students a mix of trades training through the Manukau Institute of Technology and targeted NCEA studies.

Spotless also has a work experience programme.

The stars aligned, and a pilot cadetship programme for the school holidays was born, providing young people from Mangere with the chance to gain practical work experience in trades like building and plumbing.

HLC Community Development and Engagement Co-ordinator Karla Beazley says it's been great working alongside Mangere College's principal, Tom Webb.

"It's been terrific to find good opportunities for students to be involved in the work we're doing here in Mangere. Not only are the students getting valuable work experience, they are also being exposed to all kinds of construction-based trades through the Spotless programme.

"This is just the beginning of our partnership and we are already talking about how we can extend this further."

John Kunitau, whose deep connections to Mangere have made him an invaluable community engagement advisor for the Mangere Development, says the cadet programme ensures the development partners are doing more than simply building new homes and facilities.

"We want to create a development project that also does good in the community it affects - not just by making warm, dry homes, but by using our opportunities to make people's lives better. For instance, we can use our connections to the building and construction industry to create local job opportunities."

For Mangere College Principal Tom Webb, the pilot scheme was another way for his students to shake off the stereotypes of teenage boys and show they were engaged and hungry for experience.

"These young men recognise the value of an opportunity. They willingly gave up a fortnight of sleep-ins because they know they have a chance to progress towards a career when they see one.

Suicide; Aftermath & Beyond, a book written by subbie Paul Lynch



Christchurch subbie and author Paul Lynch

After suddenly losing his brother to suicide six years ago, Switched On Group (SOG) subbie Paul Lynch is sharing his story and experiences in the hope he can raise greater awareness of mental health. Paul is calling on Kiwi blokes to have courageous conversations with their mates about the hard stuff.

The number of people taking their own life in New Zealand is continuing to rise. In 2017 just over 600 people died by suicide in our country, almost double the number who died in car accidents.

Paul, who runs a carpet and vinyl laying business in Christchurch, has been a valued subbie for Switched On for the past six years.

Following the tragic loss of his brother Brett, Paul says his life took a very unexpected turn.

At first he experienced an out of control, alcohol-fuelled downward spiral. This was followed by the realisation he needed to lift himself up and deal properly with the tragic loss of his brother.

Paul set about learning all he could about why people reach a crisis point where they feel suicide is their only option, and he started to write about what he was learning for his own therapy. He says it then dawned on him that what he was learning may also help others.

In September 2017 Paul published his book, *Suicide; Aftermath & Beyond*, on the fourth anniversary of Brett's death.

Paul believes the most important tool for any tradie is the one that sits on their shoulders – not in their toolbox.

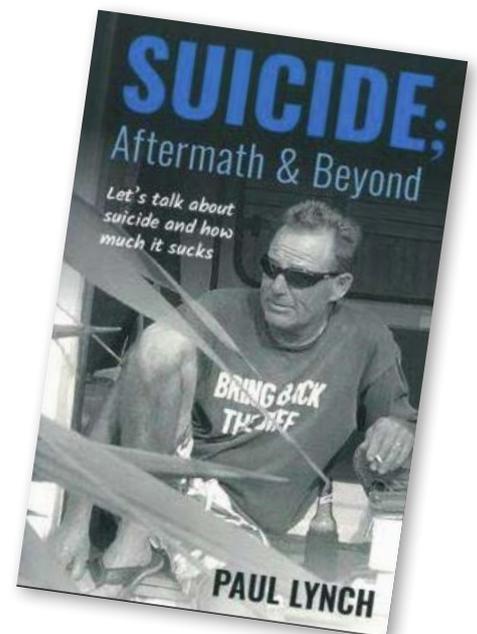
He says health and safety tends to focus on physical safety but pays little attention to mental health and wellbeing.

Paul now has weekly wellbeing toolbox talks with his staff, where they have an opportunity to discuss issues Kiwi tradies tend to keep to themselves. Through his willingness to share his own story, Paul says he has found his staff feel more comfortable discussing their own personal struggles.

As Paul says, this is not about 'touchy feely' stuff but about sharing some of the burdens of life we all experience from time to time. It's also about sharing them before they become a load that is too heavy to bear.

Switched On Trade Services Manager Ken Howat says Paul's personal commitment to raising mental health issues and finding something positive in his brother's tragic death is ongoing and evolving.

"Paul receives regular requests to share his journey and recently delivered a very powerful toolbox talk to all SOG staff. Paul's book is available for staff to read and we've also shared his story with our other contractors. Sadly, tradies continue to be overrepresented in suicide statistics and Paul is doing his bit to change this," Ken says.



Copies of Paul's book can be ordered from www.aftermathandbeyond.co.nz



Ubend Plumbing owners John and Pamela Clifford outside their new office premises in East Tamaki

From plumber to business owner – the evolution of Ubend Plumbing

For many tradies, owning their own business is the ultimate dream. Spotless General Manager Housing Nick Davidson says the journey of John Clifford and Ubend Plumbing shows it can be more than just a dream.

Nick says plumber John Clifford started work with Spotless working on Housing New Zealand homes in the South Auckland (1) and East Auckland regions in 2010.

Move on three years and John was then given responsibility for overseeing Spotless' plumbing work in these regions.

Another year on, John moved into the role of work supervisor for non-urgent repairs and void properties, and a year later he was given overall responsibility for void properties.

2016 turned out to be a big year for John, who felt the time was right to start his own plumbing business and look at subcontracting back to Spotless.

Working from his family home in South Auckland, John started his business with just himself, one other plumber and two sign-written vans. In a very short time Ubend's business had grown exponentially.

John now employs a team of eight plumbers, with five vans out on the road every day working in HNZ homes across South Auckland. And he has recently moved his growing plumbing business into a new office and workshop facility in East Tamaki, Auckland.

Nick says John's journey is proof you can make the move from worker to business owner, and Spotless is continually looking to provide these opportunities to their workforce.

John says it's been personally rewarding to be able to make the transition, and one of the best things he's ever done.

"It's always been my dream to own my own business. I appreciate the opportunity I've been given and encourage other tradies to think about whether this could be their next move."

Tradesman app makes it easier for trades contractors and their workers

In June, Spencer Henshaw launched Te Mana, a new job management system that has heralded an efficient and user-friendly way to get the job done.

From Te Mana emerged a new mobile application that trades and contractors can operate on their phones or tablets.

Trades contractors who have started using the new app are talking it up.

Alex Schmalkuchen from AMS Property Services says it's increased productivity and given them a platform to easily upload all necessary information and images and sign off work, all from onsite.

"We can also assign jobs or make changes really easily and warnings and notes are easy to see so we don't miss them," Alex says.

Elma Rens runs a big team of multi trades and they have also found the Tradesman app delivers time savings and makes communication much easier.

"The Tradesman app is a super-efficient way of having control over all jobs that have been assigned to the trades and makes my job of managing workflow much easier," Elma says.

"It's very easy to see which jobs could be running out of time and whether anyone is overutilised or underutilised. My team can be fully mobile to receive, process and close jobs while in the field, in real time. This all means less driving to and from the office for paperwork and less admin time for me."

Tony Wedgwood runs his own carpentry business and works on vacant Housing New Zealand properties. We also asked Tony how he's finding the Tradesman app.

Tony says the app is awesome and he doesn't need to print things anymore. Having the app in his pocket as a good reference gives him everything he needs, like supervisors' details and job details at his fingertips. This means I no longer need to spend time in the evening processing jobs into the portal," he says.

Spencer Henshaw says they are really excited about the uptake of the Tradesman app because it provides benefits for trades contractors and real-time information. In the near future this will allow tenants and Housing New Zealand to track the status and progress of individual jobs.

Alex from AMS nailed it when he said "it's like having the entire office in my pocket".



Alex Schmalkuchen from AMS Property Services Ltd using the Tradesman app

Be lead aware - Spencer Henshaw's new Vacmaster

Spencer Henshaw Limited (SHL) Operations Director Tom Lavery says it's essential for tenants and staff that lead waste is not left behind after a job is finished.

So when Exterior Paint Manager Alfreda Williams suggested changing to the Vacmaster Industrial Wet & Dry vacuum cleaner, SHL agreed to trial the machine on an exterior paint job in the Auckland suburb of Mt Albert.

Tom says the trial was a resounding success.

"The Vacmaster proved ideal for the type of heavy work we were doing. Other features on the machine also went even further than the machines we had been using to protect workers and tenants".

"As the health and safety of our staff and tenants is our top priority, we decided to make the machines available to all supervisors and at no cost to our interior and exterior carpenters and painters and exterior pre-paint maintenance contractors across all four SHL regions," Tom says.



SHL's new Vacmaster machine in action



The Switched On team gets together for a photo after their win

Switched On's team challenge

On Friday 1 June 2018 Switched On, in conjunction with Conservation Volunteers and Christchurch City Council, took part in a tree planting challenge as part of Conservation Volunteers' World Environment Day.

This year's tree planting took place at the Kaputahi Creek on Belfast Road in Christchurch city, a stunning site that looks back onto the Port Hills.

Over time, the site will become part of a much wider native forest network across the Styx River catchment and wider Christchurch city region. This growing native forest is expected to attract native birds back to the city which have become locally extinct over the past 150 years.

With help from three of their subbies, Clean Up Canterbury, Noble Services and For Seasons Tree Care, Switched On took on a team from Lion Group, famously known for their alcoholic beverage lines Lion Red and Steinlager.

Each team ended up planting 750 native trees, flaxes and ferns in just under two hours.

Switched On took away the trophy, planting their 750 trees in just 1 hour and 42 minutes. This number contributed to an impressive 3,921 trees planted across New Zealand as part of World Environment Day. The day was such a resounding success that Switched On has already committed to continuing their ongoing support and reclaiming their trophy again next year.

Find U Lone Worker app keeps staff safe

Ensuring staff are safe at all times and have the right tools while out in the field are top priorities for Programmed Facility Management (PFM).

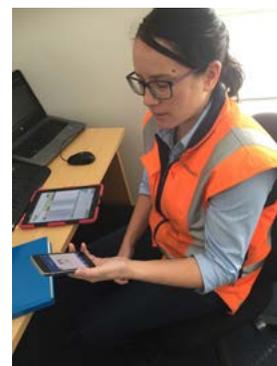
PFM has recently introduced a new lone worker app, called Find U Lone Worker App, to further assist their staff to manage their own personal safety.

Leanne Wardle, PFM's Health and Safety Manager, says the new app will mean staff can immediately raise a silent alarm if they feel their personal safety has been compromised.

The app also has a function to allow for a raised alarm to act as a deterrent. Another feature is the ability to recognise if a worker has fallen - this is picked up by a lack of movement for a set period of time.

Once the alarm has been activated, a message is automatically sent to ADT Security, who then screen the information to decide on an appropriate response.

"We want to do everything we possibly can to ensure our staff are kept safe from harm while doing their jobs. This app is part of our ongoing commitment to their personal safety," Leanne says.



Tenants and teamwork in Takanini

A community clean-up initiative in the South Auckland suburb of Takanini has had a positive impact for tenants. Housing New Zealand's Takanini area team nominated Clarice Place as being in need of some 'TLC'.

Senior Tenancy Manager Alex Temara organised the event, co-ordinating with both HNZ's Regional Maintenance Supervisor, Leena Ram and Spencer Henshaw Limited (SHL). The clean-up included fixing driveways, washing houses and clearing and repairing gutters. SHL organised skip bins for organic rubbish.

The day dawned with a forecast of severe thunderstorms and heavy rain. However, this did not faze the teams, who turned up

bright and early in full high-visibility safety gear and rain ponchos. HNZ had organised a sausage sizzle to keep energy levels high and give tenants, staff and contractors an opportunity to mix and mingle before heading straight back into the mahi.

Leena says the day was a great success and tenants really appreciated everything. Other feedback included that it was really cool seeing HNZ doing something different. "One family also just wanted to thank HNZ for everything we do," Leena says.

Alex says it was heart-warming to have the tenants involved in the clean-up and to see and feel their sense of pride and ownership in their homes and street.

"We plan to do more and more of these clean-ups where we all work together to make a positive difference to the lives of our tenants," Alex says.



The HNZ and SHL teams at the street clean-up



Going the extra mile and much more

We know some of our tenants find it really challenging to look after their homes and these situations are the exception rather than the rule.

In this edition, we hear from Programmed Facility Management about what they did when they came across one of these very challenging cases.

For privacy reasons, the name and location are not included but it was a long-term tenancy of more than 35 years.

In June 2018 PFM found a tenant was living in unsafe conditions and had managed to avoid property inspections, as well as hiding the impact of their lifestyle for many years.

The tenant also had a love of cats and kept four permanently inside the house. Without a dirt box, the cats had no option but to toilet throughout the house. This led to an extreme situation of cat faeces and urine throughout with no surface spared. With the front door open, the smell was evident from the road. A breakthrough came when PFM were able to gain access, with the tenant's consent, and inform HNZ of the condition of the house.

Two tenancy managers could then start a conversation with the tenant. Over a couple of weeks, the tenancy managers got the tenant to agree to wraparound support and for maintenance work to be undertaken on the property.

Before work could start, the cats needed to be permanently rehomed and the tenant moved to a motel that would be their home for the next two months. New clothes and shoes were found for the tenant as household items and clothes had to be disposed of and they could only leave with a few personal belongings.

The property was then scoped to bring it up to void standard. A dedicated team of trades worked over three months to turn the house back into a warm, dry and healthy home for the tenant. To remove the smell, the property had to be completely gutted and ceiling, floor and wall linings replaced.

The tenant has since returned to the property with full wraparound support services in place and regular property inspections are undertaken to ensure they sustain their tenancy and live well in their home.

While these situations present a real challenge, the end result is always worth it. Thanks, PFM, for all your hard work on this one.



A brand new bathroom for the tenant



QUICK THINKING SAVES TENANTS' LIVES

L-R Tenant Maimoana Talo, Tenancy Manager Engela Beukes, Manahi Kingi, from Edwards & Hardy, and tenant Andrea Sudfelt

National contractor Edwards & Hardy (E&H) provides maintenance services to Head Contractor Prestige Limited in the East Coast/Hawke's Bay and Manawatu/Taranaki regions.

This story shows how quick thinking helped to save the lives of four Napier tenants.

The E&H team had been at the Napier property to replace a roof on a block of four flats. Unfortunately one of the tenants had accidentally left chicken cooking in a pot on the stove. Manahi Kingi, one of the E&H roofers, smelt smoke and heard a smoke alarm sound.

Manahi immediately ordered his crew off the roof and raised the alarm to alert the other tenants in the block. Manahi then raced into the kitchen and placed a wet towel over the pot.

He says he got there just in the nick of time and was able to safely extinguish the burning chicken before it could do any damage to the unit and the rest of the units in the block.

Manager Regional Maintenance Central North Island Mark Bulder says this quick reaction from Manahi stopped in its tracks what could have quickly become a very serious incident.

Mark says he really appreciates what Manahi and the E&H team did.

"When Manahi realised what was happening, he took immediate action to keep both his team and our tenants safe from harm.

"Manahi and his colleagues Connor Kemp-McCourt, Graham Black and Jaedyn Black then spent time reassuring our tenants and providing pastoral support to make them feel safe again."

Mark says it was quite obvious our tenants were really grateful for the care the E&H team had shown them.

"We really appreciated the quick thinking by the E&H team and the support they gave our tenants. As a result, a disaster was quickly averted and everyone was kept safe," Mark says.

While in Napier recently, Mark presented the Edwards & Hardy team with a certificate of appreciation for their efforts.



L-R Steve Wright, National Contracts Manager E&H, Manahi Kingi, Graham Black, Connor Kemp-McCourt, E&H roofers, Mark Bulder, Manager Regional Maintenance Central North Island. Absent - Jaedyn Black, E&H

Quick thinking saves a beloved pet



Subbies James Walsh and Paul Williams with the tenant's dog

Clean Up Canterbury were onsite at a property in the Christchurch suburb of Spreydon, in August, when they heard smoke alarms sounding and saw there was smoke inside the house. They could also see a small dog locked inside.

There is no question the response by Clean Up Canterbury saved the tenant's dog, the house and the tenant's belongings from what Fire and Emergency (formerly NZ Fire Service) says would have been total devastation.

While one of the team called Fire and Emergency, the other two Clean Up team members found an already damaged pane of glass.

As there was no sign of flames, they were able to enter the property safely and track the source of the smoke, which was some clothing draped over a portable heater. After turning off the power, they carefully removed the garment from the heater, and quickly and safely dealt with it. While all this was going on, they contacted their offsite manager, who was trying to make contact with the tenant to urge them to get back as quickly as possible.

Fire and Emergency arrived and did their usual checks. They commented that the house was less than 15 minutes away from catching fire.

Switched On says quick thinking from the Clean Up Canterbury team of Paul, James and Nicole certainly saved a beloved tenant's pet from harm. In the process, they also saved the house from significant or possibly total damage.



One of the Hutt homes in the thermal upgrade pilot

Thermal upgrade for the Hutt

Housing New Zealand is thermally upgrading 66 properties in Lower Hutt to ensure they are warm and dry for tenants.

The pilot has committed \$9.3 million to improving the thermal performance of these homes through insulation, double glazing, thermal curtains, ventilation and new heating to ensure a healthy indoor living environment.

The pilot will help the homes achieve an indoor winter temperature of 20 degrees in the living area, 18 degrees in the bedrooms and 16 degrees elsewhere, which is in line with the World Health Organization's recommendations.

The pilot will also look at how the upgraded homes perform, especially during the colder months. The thermal makeover and renovation are resetting the property's life. As well as providing warmer, drier and healthier environments for tenants, they will also reduce the ongoing maintenance costs of these properties.

A tenant living in one of the houses that have been thermally upgraded as part of the pilot says she says she's barely turned on the heater at all, despite Wellington going through several particularly cold periods.

Before the upgrade the tenant said she was was running her heat pump all the time resulting in very high power bills and having to layer up with thick clothes and blankets to ward off the cold.

Her 14-year-old son is also feeling the positive effects. He was hospitalised for two weeks for asthma-related issues while living in the old house, and had to visit the doctor every month or two for check ups.

Now he's living in the warmer home, the tenant says his asthma is causing him little trouble and he does not need to visit the doctor nearly as often.

These experiences are exactly what we're hoping for with this pilot so keep an eye out for further updates in Contractor Connect.



One of the Hutt homes in the thermal upgrade pilot

Finishing with a flourish

Below is some of the positive feedback received by our Customer Support Centre about work done recently by our maintenance contractors. Keep up the great work!

Prestige

Job – Repairs to the shower and capping an obsolete hot water cylinder pipe, Hawkes Bay

Tenant feedback – Tenant called to advise she was so happy with her shower and the work done, she was thinking of giving ‘guided tours’.

Spencer Henshaw

Job – Timber windows and back and front doors draughty and not weathertight, especially in winter, East & South Auckland

Tenant feedback – Tenant phoned to compliment the two contractors who came to fix her doors. Said it was the best job she had ever had. The contractors cleaned up after themselves. Tenant said she is extremely happy with what has been done and that her home feels like summer inside. Awesome work!

Programmed Facility Management

Job – Plumbing repairs, Wellington / Hutt Valley

Tenant feedback – Tenant called to advise that the plumber was exceptional. Said he was thorough and clearly explained what he would be doing. Also impressed with the plumber’s timekeeping and would be more than willing to write a recommendation for him.

Responsive Maintenance

Job – Light bulb in the garage short circuiting and not working properly, Waikato – King Country

Tenant feedback – Tenant advised they were very pleased with the work the electrician did. While at the property he also checked the heat pump and advised that a specialist heat pump technician would be required. Great work and the tenant said they appreciated the electrician’s helpful and very professional attitude.

Switched On

Job – Faulty thermostat in hot water cylinder, Canterbury / Nelson / Marlborough

Tenant feedback – Tenant called to compliment the tradesman who finally fixed the problem. Tenant advised that the thermostat had been reset and they were delighted and happy with the workmanship.

Dunedin Housing Maintenance

Job – Window insecure and unable to be closed, Otago / Southland

Tenant feedback – Tenant called wanting to say thank you for the outstanding service today.

Shout outs...

Below is a shout out to subbies that go above and beyond for our tenants, and their commitment to the public and environmental health and safety for staff, contractors and tenants.

ShowerFix Auckland subbie Glen Strachan

Glen just started with ShowerFix and is a ‘machine’. He goes above and beyond and we’re just so impressed.

He’s polite and friendly and is out there getting the work done. He does a lot of work for HNZ and has received several compliments from our tenants.



Subbie Glen Strachan

Thanks to Jamie and his Zap team for caring

This is a special story. For privacy reasons, the name and location of the tenant have been removed.

We had a Hutt Valley tenant who was keen on gardening, and collecting and storing things for the future, which had caused quite a build-up of excess ‘stuff’ in the back yard.

The tenant was also very attached to an apple tree at the rear of the house. The apple tree had been planted by a family member who had since passed away. Unfortunately, where the tree was located was causing it to grow into an open window and push against other parts of the house.

Given how important the tree was to the tenant, Jamie and his team replanted the tree at the back of the property and also created a small garden using some of the stuff the tenant had been saving for a rainy day.

We received a letter from the tenant expressing their utmost appreciation for the efforts Jamie and his team had made.

Thank you Jamie and your team from Zap Services for caring – we appreciate it and so do our tenants.

Contaminated Site Solutions

Spencer Henshaw says subbie Contaminated Site Solutions has recently undergone an annual SiteWise health and safety assessment and been awarded full marks of 100%.

SHL says this great result confirms CSS’ and SHL’s ongoing commitment to public and environmental health and safety for staff, contractors and tenants.