

Contractor Connect

A Housing New Zealand quarterly update for its head contractors and their subbies

Subcontractor SW Scaffolding's new recruits



Left to right - Scaffolders Santos Abobo, Alfredo Zamora and SW Scaffolding Operations Manager Stan Sunguturanga

We talk to two new recruits from the Philippines who joined subcontractor SW Scaffolding last year.

Scaffolding services are required for any work being carried out at height, for example exterior painting and roof and chimney repairs.

SW Scaffolding General Manager Reuben Aberhart says when the time came to hire more staff for their Wiri, South Auckland, business they decided to have a look overseas. Reuben says this is because there continues to be a shortage of scaffolders in New Zealand and in the Auckland market in particular.

After completing immigration requirements, Alfredo Zamora and Santos Abobo - both from the Philippines - joined the team in mid-2017.

They decided the best option would be for both to work alongside Operations Manager Stan Sunguturanga. Stan has been in the scaffolding game a long time and is a very experienced member of the team, Reuben says.

"We knew Stan would be just the right person to support our new recruits, both on the job and with settling into their new life in New Zealand. In addition to supporting and guiding them while out in the field, Stan warmly welcomed Alfredo and Santos to his own family gatherings."

It's now March 2018 and Alfredo and Santos still work alongside Stan, an arrangement Reuben says continues to work very well.

"Alfredo and Santos have been able to learn all aspects of the job and also learn more about life in New Zealand and being a Kiwi."

SW Scaffolding is a team of 25 from a wide range of backgrounds and cultures and Reuben says Santos and Alfredo have become very popular and respected team members, for both their hard work and their 'can do' Kiwi attitude.

"It's fair to say we're looking forward to having Alfredo and Santos in the SW Scaffolding team for many more years to come," Reuben says.

Hello from the Editor

A very warm welcome to our summer edition of Contractor Connect. The start of the year and into February has certainly surprised us with extremes in weather for most parts of the country.

There have been very hot and drought-like conditions, with temperature records being set in some places. Other areas, like the West Coast and Dunedin, have seen another sort of extreme, with wind, rain and cyclones.

So for this issue we've included a story about West Coast subcontractor McKay Contracting. The McKay team did a great job to mitigate the impacts of Cyclone Fehi and Cyclone Gita for tenants living in Greymouth and Hokitika.

You can also read about very hot weather followed by very wet weather in Dunedin, and Christmas giving wrap-ups in Auckland and the Wellington/Hutt Valley regions.

We update you on recent tenant workshops held in Manukau and Porirua to enhance our Repair Finder tool used by the Customer Support Centre; and there's a feature on Noggin, our new health, safety and security reporting system, which went live on 1 February.

It's fair to say we're continuing to make good progress in achieving tenant satisfaction with the way we manage repairs and maintenance in their homes, and we pass on to you more comments from some of these satisfied tenants. Our story "Keep up the good work – positive feedback from tenants" tells you more about this.

And you'll be pleased to know we've set up a dedicated email address for Contractor Connect, which will make it easier for you to tell us your stories – find out more on page 8.

Wishing you all a good year in 2018.



Angela Pearce
National Maintenance
& Upgrade Manager

South Auckland subcontractor new recruits (cont'd from p.1)

Alfredo

Q How is life working out for you in New Zealand?

A Everything is all good especially now my wife has arrived in New Zealand. We're very excited to start a brand new life here as Kiwis.

Q What are some things you like about New Zealand?

A I like seeing the city and all the beautiful places. I also like how New Zealand drivers strictly observe the road rules. In the Philippines, drivers don't usually follow and obey the rules when driving on the road. I love everything about New Zealand.

Q How do you like the diversity of New Zealand?

A I enjoy interacting with different nationalities in New Zealand and especially people of Samoan and Tongan descent. Personally I find them very friendly and really like them all.

Q What are your end goals?

A To be a citizen in your prestigious country.

Q How are you adapting to New Zealand culture?

A I think I'm doing pretty well and already feel like a Kiwi living here in New Zealand.

Santos

Q How do you like New Zealand?

Q I feel New Zealand as a country does offer a better way of life with more opportunities for everyone including free education for children.

Q How do you feel about the New Zealand way of living?

A I love the New Zealand way of life. It's a great place to live and also a great place to work.

Q Is living in New Zealand what you expected?

A At first, I was a little worried I wouldn't be able to manage the weather because I had heard it can get quite cold in New Zealand. I'm from the Philippines, which is a tropical country and I've also worked in Qatar, where the weather is always very, very hot. Cold weather would certainly have been a change for me but so far so good; the weather in New Zealand has been great to me.

Q What have you found good about New Zealand?

A Aside from a better salary here, I continue to be amazed by the scenery and abundance of fresh and clean air.

Q What is your end goal?

A To be able to live permanently in New Zealand with my family and also learn to drive in New Zealand.

Going above and beyond to keep tenants safe and dry

McKay Contracting is part of the Dunedin Housing Maintenance Contractors Performance Based Maintenance Contract (PBMC) with Housing New Zealand.



Left to right - Ken and Ally McKay from McKay Contracting and Housing New Zealand Tenancy Manager Debby Williams

As a subbie the McKay team works closely with Housing New Zealand to maintain 259 properties in Hokitika and Greymouth, an area locals fondly call 'the coast'.

In this edition of Contractor Connect we hear from McKay Contracting about their response to two recent bad weather events that hit the West Coast as a result of Cyclones Fehi and Gita.

When asked to explain their response, owner Ken McKay says the first thing they did was discuss health and safety, what they could expect with the incoming bad weather and what they should do to ensure Housing New Zealand tenants were kept safe and dry.

"For Cyclone Fehi the team did a drive around Cobden, a suburb in Greymouth, where there are a number of Housing New Zealand properties. We wanted to see the extent of the damage to Housing New Zealand properties in the area."

The strong relationship they've developed with tenants on the coast made a big difference when they identified damage they needed to repair urgently, Ken says.

"Having this good relationship with tenants meant the team was able to door knock and get the go ahead to carry out urgent repairs on the spot."

Ken says there is no doubt Cyclone Fehi was a very serious weather threat, as a state of emergency was subsequently called and all roads closed in and out of the coast. It also highlights just how isolated the coast is at times like this. Luckily it was only fences and roofs that were damaged, and no one was hurt, Ken says.

And just when we all thought things were about back to normal, the Met Service said a new cyclone, called "Gita", was expected to hit the coast on Tuesday 22 February.

After receiving this weather update and before Gita was due, Ken and the team went out again checking Housing New Zealand homes to see if there was anything that needed securing before the storm hit.

The following day and after Gita had moved through, Ken and the team were back on the road checking for damage and ensuring any urgent repairs to roofs, fences and trees were taken care of.

Looking back at these two significant weather events, Ken says they highlight the importance of a strong partnership with Housing New Zealand.

"Throughout Fehi and Gita, both teams remained in close contact. We phoned in jobs and Housing New Zealand worked hard behind the scenes to log jobs and generate work orders."

"We've always worked in partnership with Housing New Zealand and for an area like the coast that is so isolated we think this is really important," Ken says.

We do too, so thank you again Ken and the McKay Contracting team. We appreciate all your hard work, dedication and commitment to ensure our tenants were kept safe and dry during these bouts of extreme weather.



From 33 degrees to a state of emergency

When you're in the midst of a 33-degree heatwave, the last thing you expect to be doing the next day is having to find your ultimate wet weather gear.

These are the weather extremes Dunedin residents faced in early February.

Record high temperatures caused a fire to spark in an area of forest near Dunedin Housing Maintenance Contractor's (DHMC's) Head Office on Wednesday 31 January 2018. This hot weather incident was soon followed by a 'state of emergency' weather warning being declared by lunchtime Thursday, warning residents of persistent rain flooding roads and encroaching on low-lying areas in and around South Dunedin.

A dedicated army of 19 DHMC employees geared up without hesitation.

A contractor delivered three trucks and one large trailer load of sand to DHMC's workshop.

From there, a well-oiled machine of DHMC staff bagged sand, loaded trailers, and delivered and laid sandbags to protect Housing New Zealand properties identified to be at greater risk from the imminent wet weather.

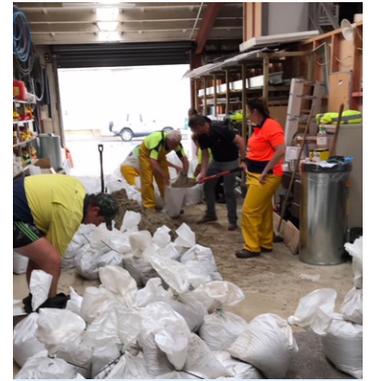
After three hours of hard and heavy work, in 33-degree heat along with 109.6mm of rainfall, all Housing New Zealand houses were sandbagged.

DHMC Operations Manager Gerry O'Connell says that, while this probably isn't what most people would consider an ideal team-building exercise, it was a great example of team work at its best.

Gerry says his DHMC team were pleased to know their efforts were really appreciated by tenants living in those at-risk areas.



Sand ready for bagging



The DHMC's team hard at work

Iraq to Dunedin – meet new recruit Mohammed Ali

In our last issue we shared carpenter Nicolas Osborne's journey from South Africa to Dunedin.



Mohammed at work

In this edition, we've got another similar story – about Mohammed Ali, a painter originally from Iraq, now working for Performance Based Maintenance Contractor Dunedin Housing Maintenance Contractors.

Operations Manager Gerry O'Connell says there continue to be trade shortages in the south and so they have to think outside the square to find tradesmen.

Gerry says they feel like they've struck the jackpot again, this time securing the painting services of Mohammed Ali, a young man with a real passion for using a paintbrush.

Mohammed is 33 years old and lived most of his life in Iraq, where he studied administration and management. From there, he ventured into factory farming, building and painting.

Mohammed then moved to Thailand, where he worked for three years as a chef but always yearned to pick up his paintbrush again. Eventually, Mohammed says, his travels took him, his three brothers and his sister to New Zealand.

Before working at DHMC, Mohammed worked for Silver Fern Farms but says he still had his heart set on painting again.

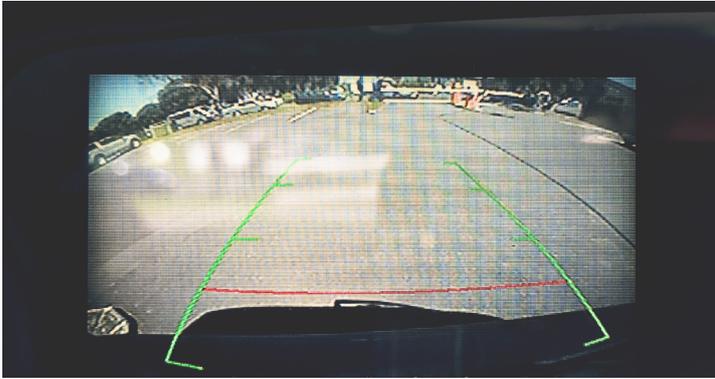
With support from the Red Cross, he was successful in obtaining a job with DHMC, where he has been working for five months now with a paintbrush firmly back in his hand.

Gerry says Mohammed is really enjoying working with the DHMC team and, although he enjoyed being a chef, he still prefers his painting job, even all the prep work.

Mohammed has recently settled back into his job after returning from a trip to the Middle East to get married. Gerry says that hopefully it won't be too long before Mohammed's new wife will join him in his new life in Dunedin.

Spencer Henshaw initiatives – safety, apprenticeship support and quality improvement

Read more about what Spencer Henshaw Ltd is doing to support their team to do their job.



Safety in the field – reversing cameras

Auckland-based Spencer Henshaw Limited (SHL) has a fleet of 90 vehicles and has recently installed reversing cameras in their entire fleet.

Managing Director Murray Stevenson says they got the idea from Barnard Plumbing, a contractor who installed reversing cameras in their vehicle fleet last year. Barnard Plumbing's initiative featured in Contractor Connect last year.

Having reversing cameras is now part of SHL company policy when purchasing new vehicles. It's an excellent initiative because it reduces the chance of an accident involving a small child when contractors are reversing while they're at a Housing New Zealand property, Murray says.



Apprenticeship support

With a continuing shortage of tradesmen in Auckland, SHL has established a scheme to make it easier for their subbies to recruit and retain apprentices.

From 1 March 2018, SHL subcontractors can apply for a financial subsidy for every apprentice who is enrolled through the Tertiary Education Commission and carries out work on Housing New Zealand properties.

"This initiative came about when we talked to some of our subbies about the issues they face. We asked them to tell us how we could best support them to grow their pool of trade resources. They told us one of the biggest hurdles they continue to face is the financial commitment of taking on and training an apprentice."

"When we heard this, we decided the best way for us to help them would be through subsidising the cost of apprenticeships," Murray (below left) says, "and that's how this initiative evolved."

"We're really excited about the potential this initiative presents and it's great to now have it underway."



Quality improvement

SHL sees focused training as the best way to deliver ongoing and sustainable quality improvement. It's especially important as they bring on new staff and contracting resources with no experience of Housing New Zealand standards and specifications.

To support this process, SHL has created a trades training library which covers the full suite of trades and clearly illustrates best practice guidelines, standards and specifications for staff and contractors. There are pictures showing good and bad work as practical examples so it's clear what is and isn't acceptable.

"So far 275 individuals have been through our trades training seminars web which are based around these manuals. Feedback from participants is very positive. They've told us they found the seminars really useful and the trades library and guidelines a great help."

"This is certainly the result we're after," Murray says. It means we're providing our staff and contractors with what they need when they're out in the field working on Housing New Zealand properties."

Reporting system launched 1 February

Housing New Zealand's Maintenance Contractor Health, Safety and Security (HSS) incident reporting has changed over to Noggin.

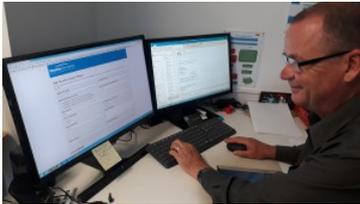
From 1 February 2018 all high-severity incidents are now reported to Housing New Zealand (HNZC) via a Noggin Public web form, which operates on any mobile device with a web browser.

These high-severity incidents should initially be notified to your HNZC point of contact by phone or email and then followed up with an incident report completed via the Noggin Public web form within 24 hours. All other incidents, safety lead indicators, total of job lines and days lost to injury are also reported to Housing New Zealand via a monthly Excel file attachment sent to ContractorHSSInfo@hnzc.co.nz

Housing New Zealand's Health and Safety Advisor Contractor Assurance, Mike Ashby, says Noggin went live on 1 February with 111 events recorded for February 2018, an increase of 56% compared with January 2018 and an increase of 58% compared with December 2017.

"Using Noggin ensures high-severity health, safety and security incidents come through quickly, which allows remedial actions to be taken promptly to keep people safe."

The first maintenance contractor to enter information into Noggin was Prestige Health and Safety Manager Wayne Withey (pictured left).



As Wayne says, 1 February 2018 started like any other day with reviewing a new batch of incident reports he had received.

Wayne says his review identified a serious near miss incident and just as he was about to load this into the system it struck him he would have to log the incident through the new Noggin notification.

Being relatively new to his health and safety role at Prestige, Wayne says he thought to himself he had only just mastered the existing system and now was going to need to log the incident into something totally new.

But to his surprise and after only a few minutes, he had the incident loaded and sent through and notification of a successful upload in his email inbox.

Wayne says now all he needs to do is get his head round the month-end upload, but says he's confident this will go just as well.

"As a regular user of Noggin I find it relatively straightforward and easy to use", Wayne says.

Thanks also to Spencer Henshaw and Responsive Maintenance for coming to the User Acceptance Testing workshop in Wellington in December. At the workshop we wanted end users to put Noggin through its paces and do all the tasks it would need to be capable of doing in the real world of health and safety for contractors and staff.

We've included some helpful tips below on using Noggin.

Tips for using Noggin

High-severity incidents are logged via the Noggin web portal: hnz-afetyevents.noggin.com.au (external link)

Event	Class	Notify Housing New Zealand	Report Housing New Zealand	System
Fatality	Fatality	Phone ASAP	within 24hrs	OCA Public form
Lost Time Injury	Injury	Phone ASAP	within 24hrs	OCA Public form
Medical Treatment Injury	Injury	Phone ASAP	within 24hrs	OCA Public form
Serious Near Miss	Near Miss	Phone ASAP	within 24hrs	OCA Public form
Worksafe Intervention	HSS Intervention	Phone ASAP	within 24hrs	OCA Public form
HSS Team Intervention	HSS Intervention	Phone ASAP	within 24hrs	OCA Public form
Contractor Intervention	HSS Intervention	Phone ASAP	within 24hrs	OCA Public form
First Aid Injury	Injury	n/a	end of month	XLS file exchange
Non Treatment Injury	Injury	n/a	end of month	XLS file exchange
Near Miss	Near Miss	n/a	end of month	XLS file exchange
Environmental Damage	Damage	n/a	end of month	XLS file exchange
Property or Asset Damage	Damage	n/a	end of month	XLS file exchange
Unsafe Conditions	Hazard or Risk	n/a	end of month	XLS file exchange
Other	Other	n/a	end of month	XLS file exchange

Where an incident requires immediate action from HNZC, the Noggin web portal should also be used, for example where a dangerous dog has been discovered on a property.

Other events and safety data needs to be sent to HNZC via Excel file by 5pm on the 5th of the following month to: ContractorHSSInfo@hnzc.co.nz

Asking the right questions



Tenants attending the recent workshop hosted by the Customer Support Centre in Manukau

Housing New Zealand's Customer Support Centres (CSCs) in Manukau and Porirua are the first point of contact for tenants needing to arrange repairs.

The CSC teams at both sites recently launched two new two-hour focus groups with tenants to determine how best to communicate when booking maintenance jobs. The aim was to find out if the questions and language we use when tenants report maintenance and repairs are easy for tenants to understand.

"By asking the right questions our staff can work out what repair work is needed and book the best contractor to do the job," Karina Carr, Porirua Customer Support Group Trainer says.

"We'll be using the feedback from these focus groups to improve the customer experience when tenants report requests for repairs and to give our staff better questions to ask tenants."

"This is a first for us and it's very exciting to be working with our tenants in this way and putting them at the centre of what we do," Karina says.

The learnings from the two focus groups will be used in the Repair Finder upgrade scheduled for this month. Repair Finder is the tool our CSC staff use to identify the nature of the repair, the location

in the property and the priority that should be given to complete the work. This helps our contractors to identify the skills needed to complete the repair.

Angela Pearce, National Maintenance and Upgrade Manager, says that Housing New Zealand will be doing more of this type of engagement with tenants to help us understand how to improve on the repair services we offer. "We take for granted everyone knows the name of household items like the water toby or which order bedrooms are numbered in so we can locate the repair easily. Our tenants told us they had different words they use to describe items so we need to provide other terms when talking to our tenants so we know we are both on the same page about what needs repairing."

The tenants selected for the focus groups also received a guided tour of the Customer Support Centre to see for themselves how the centre supports tenants when they phone in.

Tenants who attended commented they appreciated being invited to the workshop as it helped them to understand Housing New Zealand better and how the Customer Support Centre operates.

Another tenant said they were looking forward to similar opportunities in the future.

Stop press ...

Our brand new Housing New Zealand mailbox for anything Contractor Connect related is now LIVE.

This new mailbox can be used by head contractors and subcontractors.

From now on we'd like you to use this mailbox for anything to do with Contractor Connect – story leads, story submissions, questions, queries and if you need us to contact you about something.

We are always keen to hear your stories and celebrate the work of our contractors and the many times they go the extra mile for our tenants. So next time you catch one of your colleagues doing something great, please drop us a line.

Email: contractorconnect@hnzc.co.nz

A fresh approach to inner city state housing begins



In a previous issue we shared a story about one of our oldest heritage buildings in Auckland CBD getting a brand new roof.

Located right next door to this building is Housing New Zealand's largest multi-storey, tenanted building, known by tenants, staff and contractors as '139 Greys'.

139 Greys Avenue was built in 1957 and is a nine-storey, 87-unit block on a 3,918 square metre site. A Housing New Zealand office is also located on the ground floor, where frontline staff are based.

The block is nearing the end of its life and no longer meets the needs of many tenants or the wider community. So until May

2018, Housing New Zealand will be engaging with tenants, neighbours, partners and service providers about redeveloping it.

These conversations will include discussions about what will replace 139 Greys, from both a design and build aspect, as well as discussions around a fresh approach to inner city living that could include wrap-around services to support tenants with various needs to live in the community.

Keep an eye out for regular updates on this major project in upcoming issues of Contractor Connect.

Keep up the good work – positive feedback from tenants

Every three months we survey a representative sample of tenants for feedback on how satisfied they feel about our repairs service.

From a maintenance perspective this feedback helps us understand what areas we are doing really well in, what areas may need more focus and whether improvements we've already put in place are making a difference.

The latest survey showed 82% of tenants had repairs or maintenance completed in their home over the past year. Of these, 84% told us they were satisfied or very satisfied with the respect our contractors showed when they were carrying out these repairs.

In relation to the quality of the work, 68% of tenants were satisfied or very satisfied with the quality of the repairs carried out and 64% were satisfied or very satisfied with the time it took for the work to be completed.

Angela Pearce, National Maintenance and Upgrade Manager, says that "these results are really heartening as we know the trades who are working in our homes every day do have a huge influence on how our tenants view the services we provide".

"The level of respect experienced by our tenants from our trades is a real recognition of the quality of people working across the country in our homes. We really appreciate their commitment to working with us to provide this level of service."

These results have already been shared with Performance Based Maintenance Contractors (PBMCs) and Angela says the maintenance team will continue to work with PBMCs to identify areas to improve the customer experience for tenants.

Finishing with a flourish

As you know, we end every issue of Contractor Connect on a high note. Here's just a small sampling of the positive feedback received by our Customer Support Centre about work recently done by our maintenance contractors

Spencer Henshaw Ltd

Job

Installation of an extractor fan in the bathroom and range hood in the kitchen, Northland.

Tenant feedback

Tenant would like to thank the two gentlemen (trades) who attended. Both were helpful and polite and also cleaned up well after finishing the work, and the tenant phoned to say 'thank you'.

Programmed Facility Management NZ Ltd

Job

Request to put panels and shelves in hot water cupboard and adjust seismic restraints on hot water cylinder, East Auckland.

Tenant feedback

Tenant called to say the contractor was a very helpful man and she was really pleased with the work he did. He was also very helpful and the workmanship was great.

Switched On Group

Job

Faulty external front sensor light, Canterbury.

Tenant feedback

Contractor had the utmost respect, manners and patience and was very informative, respectful and professional. Went over and beyond. Tenant said she's had many tradesmen visit but none as amazing as the contractor who did this work.

Spencer Henshaw Ltd**Job**

Toilet waste pipe leaking only when flushed, West and North Auckland.

Tenant feedback

Tenant phoned to advise she was very happy with the service provided by the contractor. They fixed the problem straightaway and went above and beyond; and while they were at the property they also fixed taps in the kitchen that were also not working. Very happy with the service and thankful for the work that was done.

Programmed Facility Management NZ Ltd**Job**

Main water pipe coming into the house leaking and house damp and wet in places, Wellington/Hutt Valley.

Tenant feedback

Compliments to the contractor who repaired the leak! Very impressed with their fast and prompt service. Thank you!

Spencer Henshaw Ltd**Job**

Repairs to floor under the bath and a rotten window seal, South Auckland.

Tenant feedback

Tenant phoned wanting to thank the team that did the work. They did an amazing job and worked really well together. They were also clean and tidy.

Spotless**Job**

Contractor attended to complete work on boundary fencing, South Auckland.

Tenant feedback

Tenant phoned to compliment contractors as they were fantastic. They got the job done straightaway and communicated what work was to be done. The yard was also left in perfect condition and the contractors shut and locked the gate without being asked when they left the property.

Responsive Maintenance Ltd

Job

No hot water, Bay of Plenty.

Tenant feedback

Tenant called to say that the two tradesmen who attended did an awesome job and were very knowledgeable and she would recommend their work and professionalism to anyone.

Prestige Ltd

Job

Replace architraves, door jamb and front door, Manawatū/Taranaki.

Tenant feedback

Tenant wanted to compliment the contractor, who was very professional and friendly and did a great job, including some extra work that also needed doing.

Spotless

Job

Repairs to a wooden gate down a long driveway, South Auckland.

Tenant feedback

Tenant phoned to compliment the contractor. He was courteous and thoughtful and the tenant said they really appreciated the contractor's polite attitude.

Dunedin Housing Maintenance

Job

Heat pump not working and leaking water, Otago/Southland.

Tenant feedback

Tenant would like to pass on their thanks for the speedy attendance and great work. Trades very professional and efficient and heat pump has never been this quiet.

More next issue!

