

**New Zealand Geographical Society/Institute of Australian Geographers Conference, Auckland, New Zealand, 11-14 July 2018, the University of Auckland.**

**Session title:** Supporting Success in Regional Settlements

**Abstract**

This session will outline and stimulate discussion about a research programme supported by the National Science Challenge: Building Better Homes, Towns and Cities which is examining the lived experience of regional small town New Zealand. Part of its mission is to interpret and support local efforts to make these places more attractive in which to live, visit, work and do business. The research team is examining how residents are defining their situation and engaging in initiatives to improve their towns economically, socially, culturally and environmentally. We are examining what initiatives work best as tools for regeneration and supporting the creation of a community of practice - sharing approaches to settlement development - incorporating private, public and third-sector practitioners. Identifying practical solutions for settlement regeneration success is a central goal of this mission-led research, to enable communities to continually innovate and improve regeneration practices as they work towards building settlements that are attractive, prosperous, liveable and sustainable. Among the themes that have emerged from the research are those associated with commercial property development; cultural and environmental heritage conservation; community development and planning; and economic development.

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**Keywords:** Regional settlements, local regeneration initiatives, community of practice

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