



## Aide-memoire

### Uninhabitable housing and lack of basic amenities – Release of numbers in the statement of evidence by He Kāinga Oranga researchers for Wai 2750 Kaupapa Inquiry into Housing Policy and Services

Date:	24 March 2021	Security level:	In Confidence
Priority:	High	Report number:	AMI20/21030474

#### Information for Minister(s)

Hon Dr. Megan Woods Minister of Housing	<p><b>Note</b> that a Wai 2750 statement of expert evidence was published on the Waitangi Tribunal website on 11 March that includes an estimate of uninhabitable housing (59,800 people).</p> <p><b>Note</b> that when this is added to the (previously published) other categories of severe housing deprivation (41,600) the total comes to 104,500 people, or an estimated two percent of the New Zealand population.</p> <p><b>Note</b> that while this expert evidence will not be heard until hearing Week Two (17-22 May) of the Tribunal hearings, claimants or claimant counsel may reference it before then. Hearing Week One commenced Monday 22 March.</p> <p><b>Note</b> that reactive lines have been provided in Annex 2.</p>
Hon Peeni Henare Associate Minister of Housing (Māori Housing)	
Hon Marama Davidson Associate Minister of Housing (Homelessness)	

#### Contact for discussion

Name	Position	Telephone	1 <sup>st</sup> contact
Miranda Devlin	Senior Advisor	04 832 2469	s 9(2)(a) ✓
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#### Other agencies consulted

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#### Minister's office to complete

- ☐ Noted
- ☐ Seen
- ☐ See Minister's notes
- ☐ Needs change
- ☐ Overtaken by events
- ☐ Declined
- ☐ Referred to (specify)

#### Comments

Date returned to HUD:

# Aide-memoire

## Uninhabitable housing and lack of basic amenities – Release of numbers in the statement of evidence by He Kāinga Oranga researchers for Wai 2750 Kaupapa Inquiry into Housing Policy and Services

**For:** Minister Woods, Minister of Housing  
Minister Henare, Associate Minister of Housing (Māori Housing)  
Minister Davidson, Associate Minister for Housing (Homelessness)

**Date:** 24 March 2021 **Security level:** In Confidence

**Priority:** High **Report number:** AMI20/21030474

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### Purpose

1. To advise you that:
  - a. As part of the evidence for the Wai 2750 Inquiry, new data in relation to uninhabitable dwellings from the 2018 Census has been released. This data indicates that there were 59,800 people living in uninhabitable dwellings at the time of the 2018 Census, significantly increasing the number who are classified as severely housing deprived and therefore considered 'homeless'.
  - b. There is the potential for increased media attention regarding these figures.
  - c. Due to the timing of the Wai 2750 Kaupapa Inquiry, the researchers Howden-Chapman, Amore and Viggers have provided the 'uninhabitable dwelling' statistic to the Tribunal, before their final report has been provided to HUD.
  - d. Further work is being undertaken on uninhabitable dwellings by this research team and it will be reported in detail later in 2021.

### Background

2. For the first time the 2018 Census allowed the enumeration of uninhabitable dwellings as part of data collection around severe housing deprivation. The severe housing deprivation figure, particularly the existing components that have been previously reported, is used as a measure of homelessness.
3. Te Tūāpapa Kura Kāinga (HUD) first commissioned analysis on severe housing deprivation in 2018 from the University of Otago's He Kāinga Oranga researchers, Dr Philippa Howden-Chapman, Dr Kate Amore and Ms Helen Viggers. The first stage of this work was the 2018 estimate of homelessness released in July 2020. The second stage of this work was to provide an estimate of uninhabitable housing, and HUD is awaiting a final report on this from the researchers.
4. Howden-Chapman, Amore and Viggers' joint statement of evidence was published via the Waitangi Tribunal website on 11 March 2021  
[[https://forms.justice.govt.nz/search/Documents/WT/wt\\_DOC\\_169457570/Wai%202750%2C%20C014.pdf](https://forms.justice.govt.nz/search/Documents/WT/wt_DOC_169457570/Wai%202750%2C%20C014.pdf)].
5. Severe Housing Deprivation estimates have been previously reported for three categories of homelessness. As at 6 March 2018, those totalled 41,600 people:
  - a. 3,522 people who were considered to be living without shelter (on the streets, in improvised dwellings – including cars - and in mobile dwellings).

- b. 7,567 people who were living in temporary accommodation (night shelters, women's refuges, transitional housing, camping grounds, boarding houses, hotels, motels, vessels, and marae).
  - c. 30,555 people who were sharing accommodation, staying with others in a severely crowded dwelling.
6. These figures reflect the situation two years ago and do not reflect the impact of more recent developments through implemented policies and programmes, or the impact of COVID-19.
7. Much of the work included in Howden-Chapman et al's statement of evidence draws on previously published work. However, it includes two new areas of information (see pages 4 to 6 of the statement of evidence in Annex 1):
  - a. An estimate of the fourth category of severe housing deprivation – uninhabitable housing, and therefore also an updated new estimate of the total count of people experiencing severe housing deprivation once this new category is included.
  - b. Percentages of Māori who were living without access to one of six key basic amenities in their dwelling at the time of the 2018 Census. These figures have been provided alongside the total New Zealand population figures.
8. Howden-Chapman, Amore and Viggers include in their statement of evidence an estimate of 59,800 people in uninhabitable housing. They then add that to the 41,600 people estimated to be in the other three categories of severe housing deprivation and state the total comes to 104,500 people, or an estimated two percent of the New Zealand population are in severe housing deprivation.

**Table: Severely housing deprived people by broad housing deprivation category, as at March 2018.**

		2018 estimate	Source
Previously included in estimates of homelessness	Without shelter	3,522	2020 Report
	Temporary accommodation	7,567	2020 Report
	Sharing accommodation	30,555	2020 Report
Added in this new report	Uninhabitable housing	59,800	Joint Statement of Evidence

## What is uninhabitable housing?

9. The fourth category of Severe Housing Deprivation, uninhabitable housing, has not been previously reported and includes people who are not defined as homeless under the other three categories and are:
  - a. living in permanent private dwellings (i.e., not boarding houses, marae, campgrounds, etc)
  - b. owners or renters: this may be a public rental, a private rental, or they may have another arrangement with the owner
  - c. not already counted in the 'severely crowded' category of severe housing deprivation
  - d. living on incomes that are below 60 percent of the median equivalised income – i.e., living in poverty – this is a proxy for lacking access to minimally adequate housing, or a lack of adequate housing options
10. As well as these factors, an uninhabitable dwelling is defined as one that lacks access to at least one of six basic amenities: cooking facilities; tap water that is safe to drink; a kitchen sink; a bath or shower; a toilet; electricity.

## **Housing that lacks access to basic amenities (new to Census 2018)**

11. Howden-Chapman et al have provided some further figures in their statement of evidence for all households that lack access to one of the six basic amenities noted above (see para. 1110). These figures are not limited to severe housing deprivation and include households at any income level, with any number of occupants, for private occupied dwellings of any type (i.e., including mobile and improvised dwellings, and rough sleepers).

### **The following key points regarding housing that lacks access to basic amenities were made in the joint Statement of Evidence:**

- a. Māori had higher rates of lack of access to tap-water that was safe to drink (4.5 percent vs 3.3 percent).
  - b. The rates of people living in houses with insufficient access to amenities was particularly higher for Māori compared with the total population in older age groups - 65 to 74 (7.1 percent vs 4.4 percent) and those over 74 years (6.8 percent vs 4.0 percent).
  - c. Māori had higher rates of lack of access to amenities than the total population across most tenure types, for example, owned 4.4 percent vs 3.6 percent.
  - d. People in crowded households were most likely to have a dwelling that did not have one of the six basic amenities.
  - e. Māori were more likely than the total population to lack amenity in both rural (9.7 percent vs 6.3 percent) and urban areas (6.3 percent vs 5.0 percent).
  - f. The highest rates for lack of amenity, for both Māori and the general population in Hawke's Bay and the West Coast regions. Eighteen months before the 2018 Census Havelock North in Hawke's Bay experienced a water contamination crisis which may have affected how people in the region viewed their water.
12. These figures do not come as a surprise, as potable (safe drinking) water has been a well-documented ongoing issue in rural New Zealand for some time, notably in Northland, Eastern Bay of Plenty and Tairāwhiti for over forty years. However, 2018 is the first time this data has been collected using the Census.

## **Missing data caveat**

13. There was substantial variation in response rates by ethnicity for the 2018 Census, with Māori and Pacific people particularly affected. The main impact on the severe housing deprivation estimate is that around 330,000 people could not be allocated to a household. Māori and Pacific make up almost half of the 330,000 people missing from households and they are more likely to share with family or friends when they cannot access a place of their own.
14. This caveat also applies to the information on housing that lacks basic amenities.
15. Because data allowing us to measure uninhabitable dwellings was collected for the first time in 2018:
  - a. there can be no robust comparison with previous Census data
  - b. the characteristics of the dwellings that fall under the definition of uninhabitable need further analysis
  - c. the populations exposed to uninhabitable dwellings need to be better understood.

## **HUD's work with the authors**

16. Members of HUD's Research and Insights team continue to meet regularly with Howden-Chapman et al regarding progress they are making to produce further breakdowns of uninhabitable housing, as well as a report of some work undertaken to analyse the 2013

estimate information alongside other government interaction data in the Stats NZ IDI (Integrated Data Infrastructure).

17. The authors have focussed this joint statement of evidence on information for the Wai 2750 Kaupapa Inquiry, and hence provided figures for Māori and the total population. They will report figures for other groups e.g., Pacific peoples and Asian people at a later date.
18. The authors have also informed us that the uninhabitable housing estimate provided will be further refined.

## **Next steps**

19. HUD will continue to meet with the authors and provide you with any updates on further breakdowns of the estimate of uninhabitable housing as this nears publication.
20. The first week of hearings into the Kaupapa inquiry into Housing Policy and Services – Stage One Māori homelessness will begin on 22 March at Te Puea Marae. This hearing week is for claimant evidence, with technical expert evidence (including that of Howden-Chapman, Amore and Viggers) to be heard in Gisborne, 17-21 May. Given their evidence is now publicly available through the Tribunal, claimants or claimant counsel may reference it before May.
21. HUD has prepared some reactive lines should you be asked for comment (Annex 2).

## **Annexes**

22. Annex 1: Joint Statement of Expert Evidence by Dr Philippa Howden-Chapman, Dr Kate Amore and Helen Viggers
23. Annex 2: Reactive lines in response to new uninhabitable housing figures

## **Annex 1: Joint Statement of Expert Evidence by Dr Philippa Howden-Chapman, Dr Kate Amore and Helen Viggers**

**I Te Rōpū Whakamana i Te Tiriti o Waitangi  
The Housing Kaupapa Inquiry**

Wai 2750  
Wai 2716

Kei raro i te mana o Te Tiriti o Waitangi Act 1975

Ā

I te take o An Inquiry into Housing Policy  
and Services (Wai 2750)

Ā

I te take o A claim by Bonnie Jade Kake and Rau  
Hoskins on behalf of Te Matapihi he  
Tirohanga mō te Iwi Trust and all Māori  
(Wai 2716)

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**Joint Statement of Expert Evidence by Dr Philippa Howden-Chapman,  
Dr Kate Amore and Helen Viggers**

Dated 19 February 2021

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**Counsel Acting: Cameron Hockly & Brooke Loader**

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**Statement of evidence from  
He Kāinga Oranga/Housing and Health Research Programme  
on the Housing Policy and Services Kaupapa Inquiry –  
Homelessness**

**19 February 2021**



**H E K A I N G A O R A N G A**



## Introduction

He Kāinga Oranga/Housing and Health Research Programme is based in the Department of Public Health, University of Otago, Wellington. The programme comprises a large team of multi-disciplinary researchers led by Professor Philippa Howden-Chapman and Associate Professor Nevil Pierse, and works closely with government ministries, Crown companies, councils, and iwi. The group's research has been seminal in demonstrating the relationship between housing and health and is both internationally and nationally acclaimed. The group was awarded the Prime Minister's Science Team Prize in 2014. This submission summarises research by He Kāinga Oranga that relates to aspects of the homelessness phase of the Housing Policy and Services Kaupapa Inquiry.

We have read the Code of Conduct for expert witnesses set out in the High Court Rules, and agree to comply with those standards.

This statement of evidence was prepared by Jenny Ombler, with and on behalf of Philippa Howden-Chapman, Kate Amore, Helen Viggers, Nevil Pierse and He Kāinga Oranga/Housing and Health Research Programme.

Access to the data presented here was provided by Stats NZ under conditions designed to give effect to the security and confidentiality provisions of the Statistics Act 1975. The results presented here are the work of the authors, not Stats NZ or individual data suppliers.

## General points on this statement

- This submission summarises research by He Kāinga Oranga to date, in the areas in which we have expertise, and therefore does not cover the entire breadth of issues covered by the Inquiry. We acknowledge the valuable work of other researchers and research groups relating to many of the areas we discuss and have referenced some of these where relevant.
- We note that the unmet rights of Māori related to housing are represented through Te Tiriti breaches, and also through breaches of international treaties, including: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 25 particularly); the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples; the Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- We note the propensity of high-level statistics, including those presented here, to homogenise Māori, in particular lacking distinctions between iwi affiliations. Wherever possible we have included this information. For information on rural/urban patterns of home ownership, refer to: Statistics New Zealand, "Changes in home-ownership patterns 1986-2013: Focus on Māori and Pacific people", 2016, available from [www.stats.govt.nz](http://www.stats.govt.nz). For information on diverse urban Māori populations, refer to: Ryks, J., Pearson, A., Waa, A., "Mapping urban Māori: A population-based study of Māori heterogeneity", New Zealand Geographer, 2016, doi: 10.1111/nzg.12113; and Waa, A., Ryks, J., Livesey, B., and Kilgour, J., "Responding to challenges: Māori and urban development" in P. Howden-Chapman, L. Early, and J. Ombler (Eds.), *Cities in New Zealand: Preferences, patterns and possibilities*, Wellington, Steele Roberts Aotearoa, 2017.

## Context

Homelessness is the most acute, and most visible, symptom of inadequate housing and social service systems. In Aotearoa, homelessness is a product of discriminatory colonial practices, such as the alienation of land through raupatu and the differential access to government housing subsidies, which have privileged Pākehā norms and aspirations.<sup>1</sup> Within the hierarchy of housing tenure types, Māori bear a disproportionate burden of insecure<sup>2</sup> and poorer quality housing,<sup>3</sup> and benefit far less than Pākehā from the security and intergenerational wealth accumulation that comes with home ownership.<sup>4</sup> The drivers of homelessness are systemic, originating in a colonial system that privileges Pākehā aspirations for individual land and home ownership<sup>5</sup> and that has simultaneously dispossessed and alienated Māori from their whenua, modes of collective title, and whakapapa.<sup>6</sup> These systemic drivers manifest in ongoing disparities and inadequacies across society and government services, including inequities in education (both provision of, and outcomes)<sup>7</sup>; healthcare<sup>8</sup>, (particularly housing-related health conditions<sup>9</sup> and mental health care<sup>10</sup>); incarceration rates<sup>11</sup>; employment opportunities<sup>12</sup>; and wealth accumulation<sup>13</sup>. A systemic view of contemporary homelessness in Aotearoa takes these factors into account, as both drivers and outcomes. An overview of this wider context is provided in the appendix. More detailed evidence will be provided regarding the experience of inadequate housing for Māori more generally, including poorer health outcomes, instability, and economic ramifications, as well as examples of programmes that have successfully reduced inequities<sup>1</sup> for later phases of the Kaupapa inquiry. This statement of evidence pertains to the issues covered by Stage One: Māori Homelessness.

## 1. Homelessness

### 1.1. Definition

In New Zealand, homelessness is referred to as either ‘homelessness’ or ‘severe housing deprivation’. In this statement, we use the term ‘homelessness’. The New Zealand government definition of homelessness is: “living situations where people with no other options to acquire safe and secure housing: are without shelter, in temporary accommodation, sharing accommodation with a household or living in uninhabitable housing.”<sup>14</sup> Amore and colleagues at He Kāinga Oranga further defined severe housing deprivation as “people living in severely inadequate housing due to a lack of access to minimally adequate housing.”<sup>15</sup>

The latter definition is a conceptual development of the government definition, and expands a definition of minimally adequate housing, meaning: “that which provides the basics in at least two of the core dimensions of housing adequacy – habitability, privacy and control, and security of tenure.”<sup>16</sup>

The aspects of these definitions that pertain to people staying with family have attracted some discussion in terms of how they relate to whānau and manaakitanga, in particular whether the

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<sup>1</sup> For example, the Māori Home Injury Prevention (MHIPI) study, and the ACTIVE Study, both led by Associate Professor Michael Keall, showed greater benefits from intervention than for non-Māori.

definitions adequately capture these concepts.<sup>2</sup> There has also been wider critique of Western-oriented definitions of homelessness, in that do not adequately account for alienation from whenua and whakapapa.<sup>17</sup>

## 1.2. Classification

The New Zealand government and He Kāinga Oranga definitions both classify homelessness into the same four broad categories:

1. without shelter
2. temporary accommodation
3. sharing accommodation
4. uninhabitable housing.<sup>18</sup>

Amore and colleagues operationalised these categories for measurement as:

Without shelter includes those sleeping rough, in an improvised dwelling or mobile dwelling.

Temporary accommodation includes those living in night shelters, women's refuges, camping grounds/motor camps, boarding houses, hotels, motels, and marae.

Sharing accommodation includes people living as 'extras' in severely crowded, permanent private dwellings.

Uninhabitable housing includes rented or owned housing that lacks one or more basic amenities: tap water that is safe to drink; kitchen sink; toilet; bath or shower; cooking facilities; electricity.

Across these categories, people were counted as homeless, only if their income was below the poverty line, which serves as a proxy for lacking access to minimally adequate housing.

## 1.3. Homelessness in the NZ population

In 2018, approximately 41,600 people were identified as homeless in the first three categories above, which was 0.9% of the population. There were about 3,500 people without shelter; 7,600 in temporary accommodation; and 30,600 sharing accommodation.

There were an additional 59,800 homeless people in uninhabitable housing in category 4 above, making a total of 104,500 people (2% of the population).

Due to differences in census methodologies, great caution needs to be exercised comparing homelessness statistics over time. Therefore, we have included only the most recent statistics.

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<sup>2</sup> For a discussion of defining homelessness from a Māori point of view, see: Groot, S, and Mace, J, "Problem definition: Māori Homelessness in New Zealand", in *Parity*, 2016, <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/57176f9f20c6478937696378/t/587ee0c746c3c40b372cae33/1484710088391/ProblemDefinition-GrootMace.pdf>

#### 1.4. Homelessness among Māori

People identifying as Māori experience disproportionate rates of homelessness. In 2018, close to 13,000 (1.7%) of Maori were homeless in categories 1-3 above compared with 13,600 (0.4%) of Europeans.

In 2001, 2006 and 2013, Māori who were homeless were more likely to name an iwi affiliation on their census form than the total population of Māori.<sup>19</sup> The iwi affiliation variable was not available in the 2018 Census.

#### 1.5. People living in housing that lacks basic amenities

The 2018 Census included a new question about basic household amenities. Here we present the statistics for all usual residents in dwellings that lack one or more basic amenities. This differs from 'uninhabitable housing' (category 4 of homelessness) as it includes households of all incomes. The basic amenities are: having a kitchen sink; electricity; toilet; bath or shower; potable tap-water and cooking facilities.

These statistics consider access to the six basic amenities in private, occupied, non-visitor-only dwellings in New Zealand. They include a variety of dwelling types, as well as standard houses or apartments also rough sleepers, improvised dwellings, mobile dwellings and private dwellings in a motor camp. The net was deliberately cast wide to include many people.

Considering access to each of the six basic amenities, Māori had similar rates to the total NZ population for a kitchen sink (0.9% vs 1.0%), a toilet (1.0% vs 0.9%), a bath or shower (1.0% vs 0.9%), and cooking facilities (1.2 vs 1.1%), and similar rates of lack of access to electricity (2.1% vs 1.8%). However, Māori had notably higher rates of a *lack* of access to tap-water that was safe to drink (4.5% vs 3.3%).

Māori of all age-groups had *higher* rates than the total population of people living in housing with insufficient amenities. The difference was larger for those over 34 years old in general, and especially for those aged 65 to 74 (7.1% vs 4.4%) and those over 74 (6.8% vs 4.0%).

People living in rental dwellings were more likely to *lack* access to at least one of the six basic amenities. Māori had higher rates of lack of access to the amenities across most of the tenure types, for example, owned 4.4% vs 3.6%. However, Māori in public rental housing had lower rates of lack of basic amenities than the population as a whole (12.6% vs 13.8%).

People in crowded households were most likely to have a dwelling that did not have one of the six basic amenities. Māori in crowded households were less likely to lack amenity in their dwelling than the total population, in similarly crowded dwellings (10.8% vs 12.3%).

People in rural areas were more likely to live in a dwelling that lacked amenity than those in urban areas. Māori were more likely than the total population to lack amenity in both rural (9.7% vs 6.3%) and urban areas (6.3% vs 5.0%).

Māori had similar or higher rates of lack of amenity than the total population across all regional council areas. The highest rates for lack of amenity, for both Māori and the general population in Hawke's

Bay and the West Coast regions. Eighteen months before the Census Havelock North in Hawke's Bay had experienced a water contamination crisis which may have affected how people in the region viewed their water.

Table 1 Living in housing with insufficient amenities by Regional Council, by Māori and total population, in 2018 Census

	Māori	All individuals in New Zealand households
Auckland	6.5	6.6
Bay of Plenty	5.8	3.8
Canterbury	4.7	3.8
Gisborne	9.2	6.2
Hawke's Bay	12.6	8.0
Manawatu-Wanganui	9.2	5.6
Marlborough	5.9	5.0
Nelson	3.8	3.4
Northland	8.7	6.3
Otago	4.9	3.8
Southland	5.1	4.3
Taranaki	6.6	4.0
Tasman/Nelson	4.1	4.0
Waikato	7.1	5.0
Wellington	5.0	3.6
West Coast	10.3	7.8

### International

There are similar trends in disproportionate rates of homelessness amongst indigenous people in other countries with colonial histories. In Canada for example, First Nations and Inuit people are eight times more likely to experience homelessness than the general population.<sup>20</sup> In the US, people identifying as American Indian or Native Alaskan represent 1.2% of the total population, but represent 4% of all sheltered homeless persons, and 4.8% of sheltered homeless families.<sup>321</sup> In Hawaii, 5.7% of people identify as Native Hawaiian, and represent 28% of those served by shelter and outreach programmes.<sup>22</sup> Despite each example having unique circumstances particular to that context, past and ongoing colonialism has led to similar trends of dispossession, discrimination, and the resulting disadvantage between each of these examples and the experience in Aotearoa. There are also

<sup>3</sup> The number of Native American people in severe housing deprivation, according to the He Kāinga Oranga definition, is likely to be higher than the statistics represented here which only count those in contact with shelter agencies, and particularly so for certain tribal groups, given the housing conditions on reservations. For example, see: Gehrig, S., Bosch, W., Heineman, J., Martin-Rogers, N., "Homelessness and Near-Homelessness on Six Minnesota American Indian Reservations: Findings from the 2015 study" March 2017, Minnesota: Wilder Research, <http://mnhomeless.org/minnesota-homeless-study/reports-and-fact-sheets/2015/2015-homeless-reservations-3-17.pdf>

examples of indigenous homelessness definitions being developed, for example the 'Definition of Indigenous Homelessness in Canada' developed for First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples.<sup>23</sup>

### **Non-governmental agency support**

Non-governmental agencies and community groups have played an important role in supporting people in need of housing, but are not adequately resourced to cope with the scale of need, and have tended to favour Pākehā norms such as individualised treatment over whanau-oriented approaches.<sup>24</sup> Data collected in December 2017 from community emergency housing providers reported a 'turnaway rate' of between 82% and 91%, meaning that only 1-2 in ten people could be accommodated.<sup>25</sup> Anecdotal evidence suggests that people who are turned away from the social housing register will often present to these community agencies, making them the last resort. The extent of this is unknown as MSD do not record the 'turnaway rate' from the Social Housing Register.

The following evidence is derived from the PhD thesis (unpublished) of Clare Aspinall, who has undertaken a study on the implementation and evolution of Housing First in Aotearoa.<sup>26</sup> Government funding for homelessness services has been skewed towards larger existing providers, that tend to be predominantly Pākehā-driven. Competitive funding rounds encourage self-interested behaviours by existing organisations, undermining efforts to enable cross-sector and cross-governmental cooperation. Partnership with mana whenua and/or other Māori-led organisations such as non-iwi urban authorities has not always been prioritised, particularly when funding opportunities have been driven by existing Pākehā-led organisations. Māori-led organisations have been disadvantaged by pre-existing inequities in resourcing, as they have not had the resources and infrastructure necessary to secure ongoing and new funding. This has led to entrenchment of inequitable funding for larger Pākehā-led organisations that are more likely to have stemmed from the mental health, faith-based, charitable, or community housing sectors. Decision-making around homelessness interventions can often lie with local government and District Health Boards, that can have varying relationships with mana whenua and Māori-led organisations.

### **1.6. Experience of homelessness**

Homelessness, and its antecedents and ramifications, is experienced in myriad ways that can entrench inequities.<sup>4</sup> Research by He Kāinga Oranga in partnership with The People's Project in Hamilton has shown that a cohort of individuals who were homeless between 2014 and 2017 had significant need prior to being housed by The People's Project through a Housing First programme.<sup>27</sup> 73% of the cohort identified as Māori. The overall cohort had far higher and sustained interactions with government services in the years leading towards homelessness, in particular with the health, justice and welfare sectors. Of particular note were very high rates of hospitalisations, pharmaceutical dispensings, mental health service usage, incarceration, and receipt of government benefits. Despite prolonged and significant interaction with a range of government services, these individuals have ended up homeless and seeking assistance from a non-governmental organisation. This strongly suggests systemic failings. The People's Project was at the time privately funded, but has since been funded through the government's Housing First programme. Interim outcomes analysis has shown reduced

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<sup>4</sup> See also, Groot, S., Hodgetts, D., Waimareia-Nikora, L., Leggat-Cook, C., "A Māori homeless woman", *Ethnography*, 12(3), 2011, doi: 10.1177/1466138110393794.



interactions after being housed by The People's Project, particularly for mental health service usage, as well as higher rates of benefit receipt. These initial findings suggest that the Housing First approach, consistent with international literature, improves outcomes, but in the absence of wider systemic change these improvements will be limited.<sup>28</sup>

The following evidence derives from the PhD thesis (unpublished) of Brodie Fraser, who has undertaken a study on experiences of homelessness for Takatāpui and LGBTIQ+ people. Takatāpui/LGBTIQ+ homelessness also affects Māori. The intersections of LGBTIQ+ identity and Māori identity create added stressors and problems for people experiencing homelessness i.e. on top of experiencing LGBTIQ+ discrimination in the housing and job markets, people also experience racism and the intersections of these two. Experience of racial discrimination from private and public institutions can make LGBTIQ+ Māori who are homeless more sceptical of seeking support and thus (like the wider population of LGBTIQ+ people who are homeless) they will try to support themselves through these difficult times on their own.<sup>29</sup>

### **1.7. International obligations**

In February 2020, the UN Special Rapporteur on housing, Leilani Farha, visited Aotearoa, and published an end of mission statement on the right to adequate housing. Farha noted that understanding the right to housing in Aotearoa requires "recognition and understand of the Treaty of Waitangi (Te Tiriti o Waitangi)", and that homelessness is a burden carried predominantly by Māori, with roots in colonialism. She recognised that the current government is taking some positive steps towards recognition of Te Tiriti as it relates to housing, and applauded initiatives in the Homelessness Action Plan 2020 to partner with Māori, but also noted that there is significant work to be done to ensure self-determination and equity for Māori. She further observed that provision of government programmes to address homelessness for Māori, such as Housing First, must be developed and administered by Māori, with appropriate resourcing and funding. Restoration of Te Tiriti rights and meeting human rights obligations are viewed as mutually reinforcing.<sup>30</sup>

### **1.8. Universal and targeted approaches**

It is imperative to ensure that homelessness solutions work for Māori. Our research on housing has shown that some interventions with a universal plus targeted approach can have greater benefit for Māori. Some of these interventions may also have an indirect impact on vulnerability to homelessness.

The Healthy Homes Initiative is a programme that delivers healthy housing interventions to low-income households in which a child has been hospitalised with a housing-related condition. Fifty-five percent of the children referred before May 2018 were Māori. Pierse and colleagues have shown that the interventions have resulted in improved health overall, including 0.1 fewer hospitalisations, 0.6 fewer GP visits, and 0.6 fewer pharmaceutical dispensings, in the twelve months following intervention. Given the very high rate of Māori children, the Healthy Homes Initiative has likely been effective at improving the housing and health conditions for many Māori households, affecting the children referred, as well as their whānau.<sup>31</sup>

Caroline Fyfe analysed hospital admissions for people whose houses had been insulated through the 'Warm Up New Zealand: Heat Smart' (WUNZ) subsidy programme, between July 2009 and December 2011. The WUNZ programme had greater subsidies for lower income households; aside from this

there was no specific targeting. Fyfe's analysis showed a particular benefit for Māori and Pacific people whose homes had been insulated. For Pacific peoples, this benefit was true throughout the cohort, whereas for Māori the benefit was true only when they had remained in the same house throughout the study period (six year continual occupancy).<sup>32</sup> These findings indicate that as well as ensuring that homes are warm and dry, secure tenure is important.

Secure tenure is linked to homelessness prevention, and is particularly relevant for Māori. A recent paper, led by Oliver Robertson, showed that Māori and Pasifika 0-3 year olds move house more frequently than the overall population.<sup>33</sup> Frequent house moves in children under 4 is a risk factor for socioemotional and behavioural difficulties (SEB); Kim Nathan has shown that children exposed to greater residential mobility are 8% more likely to obtain SEB scores of clinical concern.<sup>34</sup>

Two studies lead by Michael Keall, with interventions targeted towards Māori as part of wider population interventions, have shown that the universal plus targeted approach can be beneficial both in terms of improvement for Māori, and in terms of reducing inequities between Māori and non-Māori. The Māori Home Injury Prevention Intervention (MHIPI) study delivered a package of home modifications to Māori households designed to reduce injuries in the home, such as handrails. Māori experience twice the rate of injury-related health loss (DALYs<sup>5</sup>) compared to non-Māori.<sup>35</sup> The MHIPI Study was conducted as a follow-up to a generalised population Home Injury Prevention Intervention (HIPI) study<sup>36</sup>, and so was able to compare results for both groups. The interventions delivered reduced the rate of injuries by 36% in modified homes; and by 45% for injuries specific to the home-modification. Moreover, the intervention was almost twice as cost-beneficial for Māori homes as for non-Māori homes.<sup>37</sup>

The Model Communities Programme was a transport intervention, in which government funding was directed towards infrastructure, information and education designed to increase uptake of active travel (e.g. cycling and walking), in New Plymouth and Hastings.<sup>38</sup> A focus of the programme was on serving communities with higher proportions of Māori residents. Overall, the proportion of trips that were active (cycling or walking) increased by about 30% in the intervention area compared to the control area from 2011 to 2013.<sup>39</sup> As-yet unpublished analysis shows that the Model Communities Programme differentially benefited Māori more than twice as much as other groups.<sup>40</sup>

## **Appendix:**

### **2. Public housing**

#### **2.1. Definition**

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<sup>5</sup> DALY refers to Disability Adjusted Life Years, a measure of years of life lost due to premature mortality (Source: World Health Organization).



Public housing refers to housing that is funded by and/or owned by the public sector, that is developed and managed by a government, non-profit, or for-profit entity, for an established social benefit (e.g., providing affordable housing).<sup>41</sup>

## **2.2 Decline in state housing**

There was a policy under the previous National-led government to reduce the numbers of state housing units, and to diversify ownership and management of social housing, leading to a decline in state housing units as well as social housing units overall. Housing units that are owned or managed by Housing New Zealand Corporation declined between 2011 and 2017. In 2011 the total number of housing units owned or managed by Housing NZ was 69,717, and in 2017 the total number was 62,917. In 2011 the total number owned by Housing NZ was 66,127, and in 2017 was 60,301 – this is the lowest total number since 2000. State owned housing has also declined as a percentage of the total national housing stock. In 2008, state owned housing comprised 4% of the total national housing stock; in 2017 it comprised 3.4%.<sup>42</sup>

## **2.3 Rise in non-state-owned social housing**

The total number of public housing units owned or managed by non-state providers, such as local governments or NGOs rose at the same time that state housing stock declined, but not proportionately. In 2017 alone, the estimated total number of units owned by community housing providers rose from 12,000 to 12,651. The majority of these units are partially funded through Income-Related Rent subsidies, administered by MSD.<sup>43</sup>

## **2.4 Māori and social housing**

Māori are more likely to be in social housing than the general population, and are more likely to be on the social housing register. In 2013, 11.3% of Māori were in social housing compared to 4.8% of the general population. In 2006, this was 12.5% to 5.1%, and in 2006, 13.4% to 5.9%. The proportions of people in state housing, local government housing, and other social housing, are roughly similar for Māori compared to the general population.<sup>44</sup> Between 1991 and 2013 the proportion of the general population renting state housing dropped by 16 percentage points; for Māori the proportion dropped by 29 percentage points.<sup>45</sup> In December 2017, there were 2,773 Māori on the social housing register, representing 45% of the total number of people on the register. This rose from 40% in December 2015.<sup>46</sup>

# **3 Private rentals**

## **3.1 Increase in renting**

The proportion of the total population living in rented dwellings is around 33%. Statistics NZ estimate that between 2007 and 2017, the number of dwellings either rented or provided

rent-free to occupants grew almost 23%. The proportion of people who did not own their own home, living in private rentals rather than state or social housing rose from 60% to 83% between 1991 and 2013.<sup>47</sup>

### **3.2 Increased cost of renting**

Until 2014, rents and wages moved almost in tandem. Since 2014, rents have risen faster than wages, and faster than prices generally. The average rent for three-bedroom houses rose around 25% between 2012 and 2017, whilst wages only rose 14%. Tenants generally pay a higher proportion of their household income on housing than owner-occupiers. 60-65% of households paying more than 40% of their income on housing are tenants, despite making up just 36% of households overall.<sup>48</sup>

### **3.3 Tenure security**

The average length of a rental property tenure is currently just over two years. The Residential Tenancies Act allows landlords to give 90 days' notice of termination without reason, and tenants 21 days. Fixed-term tenancies (the most common fixed-term tenancy is twelve months) require mutual agreement or application to the Tenancy Tribunal to terminate the tenancy.<sup>49</sup>

### **3.4 Residential mobility**

Children born into families living in private rental accommodation are more likely to experience residential mobility than children who live in homes that their parents/caregivers own. Higher residential mobility has health, educational, and social costs, with changing schools as a result of moving house disrupting educational outcomes. Children with very high residential mobility are more likely to receive special education services, show up in truancy data, and have justice interventions.<sup>50</sup>

### **3.5 Māori and renting**

The proportion of Māori living in private rentals increased by 88.3% since 1986, compared to 42.7% for the general population. Between 1991 and 2013, the proportion of Māori renting privately increased from 41% to 77%. Between 1986 and 2013 the proportion of Māori children living in a home that the household owned fell from around half to 39%.<sup>51</sup>

## **4 Home Ownership**

### **4.3 Decline in home ownership**

Home ownership rates have been falling for the general population since 1991. Seventy-five percent of people in households lived in an owned dwelling in 1991, compared to 63.7% in 2013.<sup>52</sup>

### **4.4 Affordability**

Over the past decade, median (middle point of the range) house prices have risen nationally by 40%, and by 30% over the past five years. This rise has been particularly severe in Auckland, with a rise of 65% over the past five years and 90% over the last decade. House prices in Auckland in particular have outpaced wages, whilst in New Zealand overall and in Canterbury

house prices have remained fairly stable against wages and salaries. Lower interest rates since around 2008 have contributed to an improvement in housing affordability (according to the Massey University Housing Cost Affordability Index), though this has been eroded by continued price growth.<sup>53</sup>

#### **4.5 Home ownership and inequality**

Home ownership contributes to life cycle and intergenerational wealth gain, and consequently contributes to wealth inequality. This is because increasingly only the more well off can afford property, leading to a cycle of wealth gain by few and exclusion for many. Recent increases in housing prices have benefited around 50-60% of adult New Zealanders, contributing to growing wealth inequality. In 2013 people between the ages of 40 and 44 were less likely to own their own home than in 2001. In 2001 69% of 40-44 year olds owned their own home, and by 2013 this had fallen to 58%. This decline by age group will have ramifications as people near retirement, as those in home ownership with low debt upon retirement are more secure and are able to access equity in their home. Home ownership also increases inequality through intergenerational tax-free wealth gain.<sup>54</sup>

#### **4.6 Māori and home ownership**

Less Māori own their own home compared to the general population, and the decline in home ownership has been greater for Māori. In 2013, 28% of Māori adults owned or partly-owned the dwelling they were living in, compared to 57% for NZ European/Pākehā. Rates of home ownership declined by -20% for Māori between 1986 and 2013, compared to -15.3% for the general population, and -11.2% for NZ European/Pākehā.

### **5 Housing Quality**

#### **5.3 Poor housing quality**

Housing in Aotearoa is generally of poor quality, with social housing and private rentals being in generally worse condition than owner-occupied homes. Low thermal efficiency through poor insulation, single-glazed windows, inefficient heating, drafts, and poor ventilation, means that many homes in Aotearoa are cold, damp, mouldy, and expensive to heat.<sup>55</sup>

#### **5.4 Health effects of poor housing quality**

Cold, damp and mouldy homes contribute to, and in some cases cause, illness, hospitalisations, and death, particularly from respiratory and cardiovascular conditions. This is particularly notable for more vulnerable populations, such as babies and children, elderly,<sup>56</sup> and those who are already unwell. A recent study found that children who were hospitalised with housing-related illnesses had twice the risk of re-hospitalisation and three times the risk of death than children hospitalised for diseases not related to housing.<sup>57</sup>

#### **5.5 Energy Hardship**

Homes with poor thermal efficiency cost more to heat. Energy hardship, or fuel poverty, generally refers to situations in which the cost of providing energy to the home is greater than a 10% of household income. Up to a third of Aotearoa households struggle to afford their power bills, spend a larger part of their income on power, or often feel cold. People renting are twice as likely as owner-occupiers to report at least one energy hardship indicator. Low-income households are three times more likely to have three or more energy hardship indicators than all households. Energy hardship leads to less heating of homes, trade-offs (for example, choosing between groceries and heating), heating of only single areas in the home

(often at the expense of bedrooms), and crowding situations in which the household sleep in one room to keep warm, increasing the incidence of communicable diseases. According to a recent BRANZ House Condition Survey, 5% of households did not usually heat living areas at all during winter, and almost half of households did not usually heat any occupied bedrooms.<sup>58</sup>

## 6 Historic discrimination

6.3 The information provided here is summarised from the PhD thesis of Dr Sarah Bierre. Bierre's thesis suggested that there was a 'silence' on continued historic inequalities being represented in current tenure patterns. Research by Paul Spoonley (1975), Judith MacDonald (1986), and the Māori Women's Housing Research Project (1991) revealed policies and behaviours that actively discriminated against Māori people in the private rental market. In the 1930s and 1940s, Māori housing was under-funded, directed towards assimilation, and built and maintained with an assumption of lower quality housing standards than for European housing, as well as with the assumptions of European values and the model of the nuclear family.<sup>59</sup>

6.4 The information provided here is based on a paper by Bierre et al, on historical housing policies. This paper analysed historical records between 1930 and 1945 from the then Departments of Health, Housing Construction, Native Affairs, Justice and Labour. The authors found that Māori were effectively excluded from mainstream government housing policy, as anything regarding 'Māori housing' was thought to be dealt with by the then Department of Native Affairs. The Department was under-funded, with the Under-Secretary writing in a letter in 1939 that the Department only had about 3% of what was required to adequately house Māori. Until the 1950s, Māori were excluded from State Advance Loans to build homes. Even then, historical land confiscations, collective ownership, and assimilation policies, made it difficult for Māori to secure loans: they were only allowed to apply if they were considered to be "living in a European manner" (i.e. not rural), "if the personal factor is satisfactory", and "if the security offered is in an area acceptable to the corporation" (i.e. urban, Pākehā area, private single-holder title). With regards to housing quality, records showed that Māori actively testified as to their poor housing conditions, yet state departments maintained an assumption that Māori had lower housing standards than Europeans.<sup>60</sup>

## 7 UN Recommendations

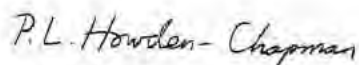
The most recent review of Aotearoa/New Zealand by the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, to which Aotearoa is a signatory, included many recommendations with particular regard for the rights of Māori. Particularly pertinent to this claim, are recommendations 11, 38, 40, and 45.

- Recommendation 11 refers to the "significant detrimental impact unconscious bias has on Māori in all areas of life", and includes recommendations around understanding the impact of unconscious bias, comprehensive training and education, and monitoring.
- Recommendation 38 refers to the right to an adequate standard of living, and focuses on reductions in poverty, particularly for children.
- Recommendation 40 refers to the right to housing, and recommends that Aotearoa 'step up' efforts to provide affordable housing, with particular regard for Māori, and



expresses concern that Māori are more likely to be affected by severe housing deprivation and crowding.

- Recommendation 45 refers to the right to health, expressing concern that Māori have higher rates of poor health, and recommends that Māori health plans are reinstated.<sup>61</sup>



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