

Housing and Urban Development in Aotearoa

Help us shape thriving communities for the future.

Government Policy Statement on Housing and Urban Development Survey

Te Tūāpapa Kura Kāinga – Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is leading the development of the Government Policy Statement on Housing and Urban Development (GPS-HUD).

The GPS-HUD will communicate the long-term vision and change needed in housing and urban development in Aotearoa New Zealand. It will take a multi-decade outlook, with outcomes for people, communities, the economy, and our built and natural environments at its centre.

It will set out how Government and others will work together to make this happen, and shape future government policy, investment, and programmes of work.

We are proposing a vision, outcomes, focus areas, actions, and ways of working to shape housing and urban development over the next 30 years.

Your thoughts are important to us—we would like to hear your feedback to shape a better housing and urban future for Aotearoa New Zealand.

Instructions

We recommend that you read the discussion document before you complete the survey:

<https://haveyoursay.hud.govt.nz/read-the-gps-hud/>

There are 15 sections in this survey, with two to three questions about different topics. You can choose to provide feedback on only one or two, or all sections.

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The future we want to see

To improve housing and urban development outcomes for all New Zealanders, we need a shared vision across the system, to guide the actions of everyone who contributes.

Our vision is that everyone in Aotearoa New Zealand lives in a healthy, safe, secure, and affordable home that meets their needs, within a thriving, inclusive and sustainable community.

See Section 2 of the discussion document.

1. Do you agree with this vision statement?

Yes

2. Is there anything you would like to tell us about the reason for your choice?

This vision statement aligns with the Methodist Alliance vision of:
“A just and inclusive society in which all people flourish.”

We know from our work with the marginalised and most vulnerable in our communities that housing insecurity negatively impacts on their health and wellbeing, and it is not until they are safely housed in a secure, affordable home that meets their needs that they can address issues such as mental health, substance use, violence, etc.

Housing – either the lack of it, or the insecurity or poor quality is the most common trend our members see in the people they work with.

We suggest that “affordable” is defined, so there is a clear understanding of what affordable means in this context. For Kāinga Ora and social housing affordability of rent is determined by the IRRS at 25% of income with the government topping up the balance. Other housing uses a % of market value. Providing a definition would provide certainty.

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Outcomes

We are setting four aspirational outcomes we are proposing the housing and urban development system works towards, to help us achieve our vision.

See Section 2 of the discussion document.

Thriving communities

Everyone is living in homes and communities that meet their employment, education, social and cultural wellbeing needs and aspirations — places that are affordable, connected, environmentally sustainable, safe, and inclusive.

This means that we expect to see:

- a place-based approach to developing communities, making decisions with Iwi and Māori as partners and with local communities
- considered and well-designed homes and communities, that connect people to jobs, schools, services, amenities, sports and leisure activities, and are orientated around public transport and active transport networks
- reduced emissions because of our urban design, public transport and active transport networks, and improved building processes and materials
- resolutions to systemic barriers to building on whenua Māori and building papakāinga, such as funding and financing when building on multiply owned Māori land
- communities growing well within environmental limits, restoring ecosystem health, and actively preparing for, and adapting to, the impacts of a changing climate
- sustainable, resilient and low-emissions infrastructure due to proactive planning and investment.

3. Do you agree this is an important outcome to be working towards?

Yes

4. Is there anything you would like to tell us about the reason for your choice?

We agree with these aspirational outcomes, and suggest that there is an additional one that speaks to the connections and relationships of people living in communities and the mutual responsibilities to receive and offer support – whānaungatanga. It is this interdependence and these relationships with others that are at the core of community and humanity.

Ensuring that everyone has access to housing that is safe, affordable, sustainable and inclusive is the most important means to lift New Zealanders out of poverty and to boost our nation's collective health and prosperity.

It is essential that there is local input to any building of new housing to ensure that there is no displacement of the existing community as well as fostering and strengthening community connectedness.

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Wellbeing through housing

All New Zealanders own or rent a home that is affordable, healthy, accessible, secure, and which meets their needs and aspirations.

This means we expect to see:

- the application of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and its principles by the Crown in housing policy and implementation
- that homelessness is rare, brief, and non-recurring
- affordable homes are built and available to rent and buy in locations that are well connected to jobs, services, and each other
- a greater variety of types of homes being built to meet people's needs more homes that are designed and built to be accessible regardless of ability, illness or age
- improved quality of existing housing and more homes built with efficient designs that improve health, energy and climate outcomes
- people living in the homes and communities of their choice.

5. Do you agree this is an important outcome to be working towards?

Yes

6. Is there anything you would like to tell us about the reason for your choice?

We note that this document does not include the following from the discussion document:

- an increasing supply of homes that meet people's needs now and as our demographics change. For example, larger homes with floorplans that respond to intergenerational and cultural needs, and smaller homes that meet the needs of smaller households
- a decrease in medical conditions and hospital admissions related to or resulting from unhealthy homes
- improved social and education outcomes for people as they move to a new house less frequently and are able to put down solid roots in a community.

We believe these are important and should also be considered.

We look forward to seeing what action flows from these agreed outcomes & expectations.

Some communities and people would benefit from wrap around support services and community led development to identify their priorities, strengths and support to empower, action and grow these to ensure there are strong community relationships.

We support the CEO & Sector Leaders Housing Forum in their submission where they

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state,:

“When considering wellbeing, a holistic approach is required to understand all its determinants, including housing, whānau, poverty/income, ability/disability, food, education, employment, social support, cultural integrity, safety and transportation as the document states. The Whānau Ora approach is about self-determination and empowerment, and challenges us all to think beyond narrow definitions of health and wellbeing. There are opportunities with the development of a new Māori Health Authority and Māori Housing strategy to have a more joined up strategic approach that could ensure the significant role of housing in ensuring better wellbeing outcomes for both Māori and the rest of NZ.”

Partnering for Māori housing and urban solutions

Māori are determining their housing needs and aspirations, supporting whānau prosperity and inter-generational wellbeing, and deciding the means to achieve those aspirations.

This means we expect to see:

- iwi and Māori are supported by the Crown as Te Tiriti o Waitangi partners to lead innovative housing solutions
- iwi and Māori building autonomy and generating intergenerational health, wealth and wellbeing and sustainable futures through housing
- Government and other decision makers are proactive and responsive, enabling bespoke housing and urban solutions for iwi and Māori including solutions for remote and rural communities
- Māori living in quality homes that meet their needs
- an increase in Māori home ownership
- Māori are developing housing and urban solutions on iwi and Māori owned whenua (including urban and rural whenua Māori and Māori Freehold title) without systemic barriers. For example, funding and financing on multiply-owned Māori land
- kaupapa Māori driven approaches and responses, services, and places for Māori.

7. Do you agree this is an important outcome to be working towards?

Yes

8. Is there anything you would like to tell us about the reason for your choice?

The Methodist Alliance is grounded in the Methodist Church of New Zealand/Te Hāhi Weteriana o Aotearoa's commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi and the bi-cultural journey. The Treaty of Waitangi is the covenant establishing our nation on the basis of a power-sharing relationship, and guides how the Methodist Alliance undertakes its

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mission.

The Methodist Alliance works towards a bi-cultural future for Aotearoa New Zealand and we are heartened to see the Crown acknowledging and working with Te Tiriti o Waitangi partners in housing solutions by Māori for Māori.

An adaptive and responsive system

The housing and urban development system is integrated, self-adjusting, and responsive to emerging challenges and opportunities. The system is able to meet the needs of New Zealanders and provide for constant growth and change.

This means we expect to see:

- partnerships and collaboration across the system that meets the needs of communities
- a system that works together to review, respond, and adapt to underlying demand for housing and urban development, and to emerging challenges and opportunities
- regulatory and institutional settings that support and facilitate urban change, and public funding and investment settings that maintain stability in construction pipelines and economic cycles
- central and local government putting processes in place to enable joined-up planning and investment
- a better understanding of how the system works, with decisions based on evidence and insights
- increased productivity, capacity and capability to deliver homes and communities that meet people's needs.

9. Do you agree this is an important outcome to be working towards?

Yes

10. Is there anything you would like to tell us about the reason for your choice?

We note that this document does not include the following from the discussion document:

- effective feedback loops between system enablers, delivery agents and communities

We believe this is important as it provides the opportunity for people living in a community to have their voices heard about what is important to them. To ensure that our housing and urban development system is meeting the needs of New Zealanders, we need to ensure that there is participation from members of the community in decision making.

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11. Are there any other outcomes that you think would help us achieve our vision?

It would be useful to include a specific outcome relating to community housing providers. This would cater for the low income families and Pasifica families which are not specifically mentioned in this document. We note that the document caters well for Māori.

Options under this added outcome could include the government partnering with community housing providers for the provision of specific community-led housing solutions. This may include a variety of options including government providing capital investment or land in areas where there is the most need for more housing. We suggest that the community housing providers be viewed as a critical partner with the government in working together in responding to the housing crisis.

This investment would provide the much needed capital for community housing providers to build much needed homes. It would remove the barrier that many of them face. It would also acknowledge that community housing providers work with the most vulnerable and marginalised in our community and their investment of wrap around support services help maintain the tenancies and improve social wellbeing and grow strong communities.

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Six focus areas

We are proposing six areas to focus collective action by everyone in the housing and urban development system. It will require concerted and ongoing action across all of them to achieve the vision and outcomes.

See Section 2 of the discussion document.

Ensure that more affordable homes are being built

We need to free up more land, deliver the infrastructure and drive action to build enough homes to support everybody's wellbeing and make homes more affordable.

We need to create a housing and urban land market that credibly responds to population growth and changing housing preferences, that is competitive and affordable for renters and homeowners, and is well planned and well regulated.

We have proposed actions for the Government and others to take to ensure that more affordable homes are being built.

12. Do you agree this should be an area of focus for Government and the housing and urban development system?

Yes

13. What else should we consider when ensuring that more affordable houses are being built?

We need to ensure that the houses being built meet the wide ranging needs of each community.

Some Pasifika aiga need houses with many bedrooms to safely house members of their households, while our growing population of older people need houses with only one or two bedrooms with accessible access to meet their needs of decreased mobility.

We note there is a lack of specific pathways in the document for partnering with Pasifika to address their low home ownership rate. We note that the proportion of Pacific people who lived in an owner-occupied dwelling fell at a faster rate than the total population (Pasifika is down 34.8% compared with a total population decrease of 15.3% - see <https://www.stats.govt.nz/reports/changes-in-home-ownership-patterns-1986-2013-focus-on-maori-and-pacific-people>)

There is an increase in larger intergenerational families living together, so we need to ensure that the houses being built meet the needs of the communities they are built in.

14. What actions do you think Government, yourself or others could take to ensure that more affordable houses are being built?

The Methodist Alliance has three registered community housing providers and we are

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actively working with the Methodist Church of New Zealand Te Hāhi Weteriana o Aotearoa (MCNZ) to use our own resources to meet the housing need of the most vulnerable.

Often the barrier to these build projects is capital investment. If further funds were made available to build these homes our members will not only undertake the build process and the wrap around supports for the tenants.

Provide homes that meet people's needs

We want to ensure every New Zealander has an affordable, safe, warm, dry, and accessible home to call their own, and which meets their needs and changing life circumstances – whether they are renters or owners.

We have proposed actions for the Government and others to take to ensure that every New Zealander has an affordable, safe, warm, dry, and accessible home to call their own.

15. Do you agree this should be an area of focus for Government and the housing and urban development system?

Yes.

We welcome the proposed direct government investment and support towards working with nongovernment providers to increase the supply of purpose-built rental housing and alternative pathways to home ownership.

16. What else should we consider when ensuring that every New Zealander has an affordable, safe, warm, dry, and accessible home to call their own?

The Methodist Alliance members have seen a trend in the increasing numbers of older people reaching retirement age and not being able to afford their current rent on their reduced income. This means that they often have to move into accommodation that does not meet their needs and they are disconnected from the community where they have lived for some time.

There needs to be an increase in the accessible housing stock for older people, as well as the National Superannuation benefit to be paid at a level that allows people to live with dignity. Often older people are facing difficult choices of whether to pay for heating or food as there is not enough disposable income left after rent is paid.

17. What actions do you think Government, yourself or others could take to ensure that every New Zealander has an affordable, safe, warm, dry, and accessible home to call their own?

Provide capital investment to registered community housing providers to increase the housing stock in the areas where they work. And provide funding for wrap around

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services to support and sustain these tenancies.

Implement more of the recommendations of the WEAG report to ensure that our most vulnerable are able to live with dignity.

Support resilient, sustainable, inclusive and prosperous communities

We need our communities to be well equipped to meet long-term climate, social, environmental, cultural, and economic challenges and opportunities.

We have proposed actions for the Government and others to take to support resilient, sustainable, inclusive and prosperous communities.

18. Do you agree this should be an area of focus for Government and the housing and urban development system?

Yes

19. What else should we consider when working to support resilient, sustainable, inclusive, and prosperous communities?

We agree with your vision of inclusive communities that allow people of all incomes to live in the places that provide good access and amenities.

However we realise and have experienced the reality of resistance from existing communities when new social housing is being built in their areas. There needs to be intentional work done within communities to assist in the connection and collaboration to ensure that new people coming into these communities are welcomed and accepted. Community housing providers are well placed to do this as they provide the wrap around supports for tenants to sustain their tenancies as well as the community led development to help build and strengthen communities.

20. What actions do you think Government, yourself or others could take to support resilient, sustainable, inclusive and prosperous communities?

We agree that local leadership should be enabled to play this key role in bringing people together to ensure their strengths are identified and they function to the best of their abilities. Our members have experience in this community-led development work and look forward to partnering with Government in this work.

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Invest in Māori-driven housing and urban solutions

The right to self-determine better housing and urban development solutions for iwi and Māori should be realised.

We have proposed actions for the Government and others to take to enable iwi and Māori-driven housing and urban solutions.

21. Do you agree this should be an area of focus for Government and the housing and urban development system?

Yes

22. What should we consider when enabling iwi and Māori-driven housing and urban solutions?

We welcome an active partnership with central and local government to deliver housing solutions for iwi and Māori. Te Taha Māori of the MCNZ has experience in building housing to meet the needs of their communities. Central and local government could leverage this knowledge and experience to further provide housing solutions for iwi and Māori.

23. What actions do you think Government, yourself or others could take to enable iwi and Māori-driven housing and urban solutions?

An active partnership and collaboration with central and local government and Te Taha Māori would see more houses built for Māori by Māori.

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Prevent and reduce homelessness

Homelessness is rare, brief and non-recurring because people have access to adequate housing, and to the support services that can work with people to resolve the health, financial, addiction and other social issues that place them at risk of becoming homeless.

We have proposed actions for the Government and others to take to support resilient, sustainable, inclusive and prosperous communities.

24. Do you agree this should be an area of focus for Government and the housing and urban development system?

Yes

We agree that homelessness should be rare, brief and non-recurring.

25. What else should we consider when working to prevent and reduce homelessness?

The underlying causes of those experiencing homelessness are often complex and exacerbated by high rental costs and the lack of housing supply.

When rents go up, our most vulnerable are often unable to pay these and when evicted do not have enough funds to pay for moving costs so will often leave everything behind, including their beds and their refrigerator. This results in one in ten children living in rental accommodation that do not have access to a refrigerator, which negatively impacts on their health and wellbeing.

The costs of housing have increased well above the rate of inflation. This is evidenced by the increased costs of insurance, rates, electricity, water etc. Insurance costs have tripled in the past decade – up 217%; rates have increased 63% and electricity increased 32% while inflation over the decade was 18%.¹

When a house is found, it is only part of the issue as ongoing costs of living will often mean that a whānau is soon homeless again as they stretch their income to cover the costs of rent/rates, power, insurance, and food. Often they are faced with difficult decisions on how to spend their income and when an unexpected bill comes in e.g. doctor's visit, they face even more difficult decisions. The only way to combat this is to increase benefits to a level that allows people to live with dignity. We strongly recommend the Government implement the recommendations in the WEAG report.

However there is also an increasing number of the "working poor." People who are in full time work or have several part time jobs do not earn enough income to cover their living costs. These vulnerable whānau are often very skilled at stretching their dollar as much as possible and this is supported by the financial mentors when they seek advice from budgeting services.

¹ Stats NZ (2020) Housing in Aotearoa: 2020, p11, 52

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While we are increasing housing stock, it is likely that whānau will continue to be housed in motels. It would be useful to provide a suite of services that incorporates the management of placements in motels, a code of conduct for their tenancy, advocacy with Work & Income to ensure that they are receiving all their entitlements, access to health services etc.

Youth experiencing homelessness is often a hidden statistic as they couch surf, or staying with whānau of friends. These young people may or may not have been in Oranga Tamariki care and are in need of extra support to ensure they are able to learn life skills and transition easily into adulthood. Our members have experience working with youth experiencing homelessness and helping them with literacy, employment and life skills.

26. What actions do you think Government, yourself or others could take to prevent and reduce homelessness?

Some of our members provide Housing First which is a very successful model that finds accommodation for people who experience chronic homelessness. What we learnt over COVID-19 was that this street community wanted to remain connected, and with shelter and regular good nutrition, their mental health was better and those with addiction issues were more able to work on this.²

Ensuring that the street community is able to remain connected once housed, and are also connected with other supports in the community is key to ensure a successful transition from life on the streets and rough sleeping. Provision of support services including wide ranging health services, addiction services, financial support services, wrap around social support will ensure that they are better able to maintain their new tenancy.

² The men at Hamilton Night Shelter reported this to Methodist City Action who provided meals for men at the Hamilton Night Shelter during COVID-19 lockdown. The men later asked for cooking lessons to learn how to cook nutritious cost effective meals.

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Re-establish housing's primary role as a home rather than a financial asset

Reduce speculative investment in existing housing stock, making home ownership more accessible for first-home buyers, and supporting a more productive, resilient and inclusive economy.

We have proposed actions for the Government and others to take to reduce speculative investment in existing housing stock, making home ownership more accessible for first-home buyers, and supporting a more productive, resilient and inclusive economy.

27. Do you agree this should be an area of focus for Government and the housing and urban development system?

Yes

28. What else should we consider when working to reduce speculative investment in existing housing stock, making home ownership more accessible for first-home buyers, and supporting a more productive, resilient and inclusive economy?

One of our members, Siaola, has existing services that have helped Pasifika aiga into home ownership. Over the last two and a half years, Siaola, our Vahefonua Tongan Methodist Mission, has supported 45 families into home ownership. Their Famili 'Api Lelei-Financial Wellbeing services provides a culturally appropriate financial service that educates and journeys with Tongan families supporting them to budget, save, and invest so they can eventually buy their own home. By walking alongside these families for six to twelve months, they are supported to save, budget and when ready, supported through the process of buying their own home.

We believe that this service is scalable and with available funding would be successful throughout Aotearoa to a wide range of Pasifika aiga.

29. What actions do you think Government, yourself or others could take to reduce speculative investment in existing housing stock, making home ownership more accessible for first-home buyers, and supporting a more productive, resilient and inclusive economy?

To support a more productive, resilient and inclusive economy Government needs to increase benefit and abatement rates to allow people to live with dignity and enable people to fully participate in their communities. We again advocate for Government to implement all the recommendations in the WEAG report.

We support Government to take regulatory and fiscal steps to support better housing outcomes for more people in Aotearoa New Zealand.

It may be useful for Government to consider an option of rent to buy when investing in social housing projects. A mixed model of social housing with some homes being specifically set aside for tenants to rent to buy would be beneficial for the whole community.

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Implementing the GPS

See Section 3 of the discussion document

30. Do you have any feedback on the proposed approach to implementing the GPS-HUD?

It would be useful to Government to strengthen their partnerships with registered community housing providers and other non-profit organisations that work in the area of housing. These organisations have the knowledge and skill to support people in their tenancies with a holistic suite of wrap around support services.

Often a barrier that our members who are registered community housing providers face is capital investment to build social housing. If there were more funds available from government for capital investment, these organisations would be able to build more houses to meet the need in our community, as well as provide the wrap around support services and community development to make these successful tenancies and communities.

We strongly believe that it is not just the houses that are needed, but support to whānau and communities. Our members are well placed and experienced to undertake this work and tailor services to the communities we work with. We strongly recommend that Government partners with us and other non-profit organisations to support whānau and communities to become strong and resilient.

We stress the importance of intentional community development work to ensure that people new to existing communities are welcomed, accepted, and are able to grow a sense of belonging. Wrap around support services for tenants are also important to support them to sustain their tenancies and ensure their specific needs are met.

In conclusion

31. Is there anything else you'd like to tell us about what we are proposing to shape a better housing and urban future for Aotearoa New Zealand?

There are significant differences in security of housing between those that own their homes and those that rent. The barriers created by the current housing market mean that some young people will have to increase their levels of debt if they want to enter the housing market.

Now is the time to consider alternative structures and tenures than outright home ownership and create structures that build equity for those that rent. This includes shared equity ownership, shared equity loans, cooperatives, community land trusts, co-ownership, rent to buy, deed-restrictive housing etc.

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Privacy Statement

Providing this information is optional, you can choose not to enter age, location, ethnicity, and type of place you live in. We collect this information from you to ensure we hear from all types of New Zealanders during our consultation.

You have the right to ask for a copy of any personal information we hold about you, and to ask for it to be corrected if you think it is wrong.

If you'd like to ask for a copy of your information, or to have it corrected, please contact us at hud_gps@hud.govt.nz, 0800 646 483 or post addressed to Level 7, 7 Waterloo Quay, Pipitea, Wellington 6011.

32. Please select your age bracket
33. Which region do you live in?
34. What is your Ethnicity?
35. What type of area do you live in?

This submission is from the Methodist Alliance and therefore the above information is not relevant.

The Methodist Alliance is a formal alliance of Methodist Missions, parishes and community based social services and trusts, including cooperating ventures. This grouping constitutes a major provider of a range of services for tamariki/children, rangatahi/young people, and their families/whānau. It also has three registered community housing providers.

The Methodist Alliance brings together a number of large and medium social service providers such as Lifewise in Auckland, Methodist City Acton in Hamilton, Palmerston North Methodist Social Services, Wesley Community Action in Wellington, Christchurch Methodist Mission, Methodist Mission Southern in Dunedin, as well as local community services provided by individual parishes. It includes new social service organisations, for example: Siaola Vahefonua Tongan Methodist Mission; Puna'Oa - the Samoan Methodist Mission that operates within the Samoan Synod of the Methodist Church; and Te Taha Māori.

The Methodist Alliance is grounded in a commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi and the bi-cultural journey of the Methodist Church of New Zealand - Te Hāhi Weteriana o Aotearoa, where Te Taha Māori and Tauwiwi work in partnership.