
WELLINGTON REGIONAL HEALTHY HOUSING GROUP

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Strategy and Action Plan

UPDATED February 2021

APPENDIX 1: EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT MAPPING

*Ensuring everyone in the Wellington region
lives in warm, dry and safe housing by 2025*

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Appendix 1: EXTERNAL OPERATING ENVIRONMENT December 2020

Legislation, Policy, Regulation

Current

- Zero Carbon Act and Climate Change Commission
- Healthy Homes Standards
- National Policy Statement on Urban Development 2020

Climate Change Response (Zero Carbon) Amendment Act 2019 and the Climate Change Commission

The Climate Change Response (Zero Carbon) Amendment Act (Zero Carbon Act) sets the framework for New Zealand's transition to a low emissions and climate resilient economy.

The Act does four key things:

1. Sets a new greenhouse gas emissions reduction target, to: – reduce all greenhouse gases (except biogenic methane) to net zero by 2050 – reduce emissions of biogenic methane within the range of 24–47 per cent below 2017 levels by 2050 including to 10 per cent below 2017 levels by 2030.
2. Sets a series of emissions budgets to act as stepping stones towards the long-term target.
3. Requires the Government to develop and implement policies for climate change adaptation and mitigation.
4. Establishes a new, independent **Climate Change Commission** to provide expert advice and monitoring, to help keep successive governments on track to meeting long-term goals.

The building and construction sector (not only residential) is responsible for 20% of NZ's carbon emissions. The requirements of the Zero Carbon Act add impetus to WRHHG and others' advocacy for energy efficient buildings including mandatory energy performance certification. MBIE's Building For Climate Change Programme (see below) is a vehicle for driving changes required to meet the Zero Carbon Act commitments.

The Climate Change Commission released its first package of advice to government on 01 Feb 2021, open for public consultation until 28 March. This package of advice covers:

- The proposed first three emissions budgets and guidance on the first emissions reduction plan, advising the Government on how the emissions budgets could be met
- Whether Aotearoa's first Nationally Determined Contribution is compatible with contributing to the global efforts to limit warming above 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels
- Advice on what potential reductions in biogenic methane might be needed in the future (this is not a review of current targets).

This first package of advice explicitly mentions ‘warm, dry, healthy homes’ as a goal of the government’s action, alongside reduction of carbon emissions. In regard to housing, the draft released on 01 Feb 2021 is focused primarily on government action to ensure high performance of new builds, but has limited advice for action to improve performance of existing housing stock. BRANZ research indicates that existing buildings will account for an estimated 65% of the total climate impact of New Zealand's detached house sector between 2018–2050, while new builds will make up the remaining 34%.¹ Given this significantly higher contribution of existing buildings, and that existing homes are likely also to be those lived in by the more disadvantaged sectors of society, prioritising measures to address the energy efficiency of existing housing stock makes sense in terms of achieving the biggest possible carbon reduction impact in a fair and equitable way. WRHHG made a submission on He Pou a Rangi Climate Change Commission’s 2021 Draft Advice on 26 March 2021.

Healthy Homes Standards

The Government’s Healthy Homes Standard (HHS) for rental housing came into force on 1 July 2019, following the Residential Tenancies Act 2016 (RTA) standards for insulation and smoke alarms. This comprises five standards or elements: heating, insulation, ventilation, moisture ingress and drainage, and draught stopping. Compliance with the RTA insulation standard for all rentals also became compulsory from this date. Compliance with the HHS standard is staggered:

- 1 Dec 2020: Landlords must include a statement outlining their current level of compliance with the HHS in any new or varied tenancy agreement [due to COVID19, the compliance date was shifted from original 1 July 2020 date]
- 1 July 2021: All private rentals must comply within 90 days of any new or renewed tenancy. All boarding houses must comply (except HNZ and Community Housing Provider tenancies).
- 1 July 2023: Housing provided by Housing NZ and Community Housing Providers must comply
- 1 July 2024: All rental homes must comply

There is some concern with the ‘exemptions’ allowed for Healthy Homes Standards, including of properties with uninsulated flat ceilings and/or low underfloors, which mean that some of the most unhealthy homes will be exempted – potentially at least 15% of rental homes. Unit Title type properties (Body Corporates), emergency and transitional housing are also not covered by the Healthy Homes Standards. Further, there are concerns that the requirement for efficient heating only in living areas will not be adequate to ensure homes affordably meet WHO minimum recommendations of a minimum temperature of 18°C especially in bedrooms. Alongside this, some groups have concerns that the standards are overly limited and prescriptive with regard to type of heating (ie. primarily heat pumps), and that this could be improved if a performance-based standard was used.

National Policy Statement on Urban Development 2020

The NPS-UD 2020 requires councils to plan well for growth and ensure a well-functioning urban environment for all people, communities and future generations

¹ <https://www.buildmagazine.org.nz/articles/show/refurbishing-for-net-zero-carbon>

This includes:

- ensuring urban development occurs in a way that takes into account the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi (te Tiriti o Waitangi)
- ensuring that plans make room for growth both 'up' and 'out', and that rules are not unnecessarily constraining growth
- developing, monitoring and maintaining an evidence base about demand, supply and prices for housing and land to inform planning decisions
- aligning and coordinating planning across urban areas.

The NPS-UD 2020 contains objectives and policies that councils must give effect to in their resource management decisions.

Not all NPS-UD 2020 objectives and policies apply to all councils

The objectives and high-level policies of the NPS-UD 2020 apply to all councils that have all or part of an urban environment within their district or region. However, some policies apply only to tier 1 or tier 2 councils.

The [Introductory Guide to the National Policy Statement on Urban Development](#) outlines what objectives and policies apply to which councils and the timeframes for implementation.

[taken from: <https://www.mfe.govt.nz/about-national-policy-statement-urban-development>]

Planned/ Underway

- [Electricity Price Review recommendations](#)
- [Consumer Care Guidelines \(Electricity Retailers\)](#)
- [Building for Climate Change programme \(MBIE\)](#)
- [NZBC review](#)
- [RMA Reform](#)
- [Government Policy Statement on Housing and Urban Development](#)
- [NZHRC Guidelines on the Right to a Decent Home](#)
- [Housing Policy and Services Kaupapa Inquiry \(Wai 2750\) - Waitangi Tribunal](#)

Electricity Price Review recommendations

The Electricity Price Review (EPR) was completed in May 2019. The Report offered several recommendations relating to Energy Hardship, including that government establish a cross-sector energy hardship group, and clearly define Energy Hardship. MBIE is responsible for carrying out these recommendations. WRRHG Steering Group members Sustainability Trust, and ERANZ are part of the cross-sector energy hardship group which was established in late 2020.

Government has also committed \$17m for coordination and programmes in response to the EPR.

Consumer Care Guidelines (Electricity Retailers)

The Consumer Care Guidelines are being developed by the Electricity Authority to replace the Vulnerable Consumer and Medically Dependent Consumer Guidelines. WRHHG provided a submission

on the Consumer Care Guidelines in November 2020 that highlighted that the guidelines should require early identification by electricity retailers in identifying consumers who may be at risk of energy hardship and a proactive approach to connect them to existing support to help ensure they did not get into debt. WRHHG submission also highlighted the importance of effective monitoring to ensure the Guidelines are followed.

Building for Climate Change programme (MBIE)

The Building for Climate Change programme is a vehicle MBIE is using to drive changes consistent with meeting the commitments of Zero Carbon Act (see above).

The programme focuses on three key outcomes, the first of which is of most interest to WRHHG, given its role in reducing housing-related ill-health outcomes and energy hardship:

- a) improving the operational efficiency of buildings which will reduce energy and water use, and improve ventilation and building temperatures;
- b) Reducing the whole of life embodied carbon footprint of buildings, and
- c) improving the ability of buildings to withstand future climate change events.

Action areas include:

- Creating a roadmap for incremental improvement of the NZ Building Code
- Developing two frameworks. One on 'Transforming operational efficiency' will set upper limits for new buildings to obtain a consent under the Building Act 2004. This will address energy use, and water use and set defined comfort levels including temperature ranges and air quality that will need to be achieved for consent. The second framework, focused on 'Reducing whole of life embodied carbon' though also important, is peripheral to the focus of WRHHG work.

Another goal of the Building for Climate Change programme which the frameworks will support is to improve the public's understanding of why operational efficiency and the embodied carbon of buildings matter. MBIE recognises that it "need[s] to change the attitudes and beliefs of those who are making the day to day decisions, as well as those of the consumers who drive the (Building and Construction) sector's response."

NZBC review

Incremental NZBC review is part of the Building for Climate Change programme. A first step will be review in 2021.

Sustainability Trust and NZGBC are already actively engaged in these discussions with MBIE.

RMA Reform

A comprehensive review of the resource management system including the Resource Management Act (RMA) was launched in July 2019. The report of the review findings (also known as the 'Randerson Report') was released in July 2020. It recommended that the RMA be repealed and replaced by three new pieces of legislation:

- Natural and Built Environments Act (NBEA)
- Strategic Planning Act (SPA)
- Managed Retreat and Climate Change Adaptation Act (CCAA)

Work is now underway to carry out this reform. An objective of RMA reform is to remove some current barriers to increase of housing supply including through simplifying the regulatory framework and streamlining planning processes.

If the recommendations are followed – and most commentators seem to believe they will be to a significant degree – one implication is expected to be a significant change in the role and responsibilities of local councils in planning and regulation – and therefore their influence on the building of healthy and affordable new homes. WRHHG will need to follow the process as it develops and take anticipated changes into consideration in our strategy and action plan.

Refs:

https://www.solgm.org.nz/Story?Action=View&Story_id=239

<https://www.stuff.co.nz/business/122288103/rma-reform-addresses-environmental-needs-of-our-urbanised-society>

Government Policy Statement on Housing and Urban Development

draft due Feb 2021, final by Oct 2021

<https://www.hud.govt.nz/assets/News-and-Resources/Proactive-Releases/Cabinet-Paper-The-Government-Policy-Statement-of-HUD.pdf>

NZHRC Guidelines on the Right to a Decent Home

These are targeted to be finalised by February 2021. For our work they help define what is covered by the ‘right to a decent home’ to which the NZ Government has committed, and the roles and responsibilities of various actors (government, non-government, private sector) in ensuring this right is realised. WRHHG has provided a submission in December 2020 on the consultation draft. Key points in our submission:

- ✓ Guidelines are **strongly rooted in Te Tiriti o Waitangi**, and reference other key human rights legislation including UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- ✓ This ‘Guidelines’ document will be paired with a document that shares quotes, case studies etc to illustrate lived experience and consultation input.

- ✓ Envisaged **function of the Guidelines** includes helping to “improve the Government Policy Statement on Housing and Urban Development, New Zealand Building Code, Residential Tenancies Act, resource management legislation, and local government regulatory frameworks” (art. 25(d)).
 - ✓ **‘Warm, dry, healthy’ codes** have been referred to Section B, discussion of seven principles that define ‘decency’ – under the principle ‘Habitable’:

“The *Healthy Homes Standards*, defined in the Residential Tenancies Act, and *HomeFit* and *Homestar*, developed by the New Zealand Green Building Council, elaborate what the habitable ‘decency’ principle means, subject to two qualifications. First, these codes should be revisited by Te Tiriti partners to ensure they conform to Te Tiriti. Second, the codes are a *non-exhaustive* elaboration of the right to a decent home in Aotearoa New Zealand.” (art. 51)
 - ✓ Guidelines emphasise that **‘constructive accountability’** is a crucial feature – monitoring, review and redress (art. 61,62)
 - ✓ The Guidelines recognise that **prioritisation and trade-offs are necessary** in realising the right. However a human rights approach requires among other conditions that “equity, equality and non-discrimination rule out any trade-offs which would result in, or deepen, unequal and discriminatory outcomes” (art. 80(e)).
 - ✓ The NZ Government has the **obligation to respect, protect and fulfil** the right to a decent home (art. 81). Violation of the obligation to *respect* includes: “damp state housing causing ill health of tenants” (art. 84). Violation of the obligation to *protect* includes “ineffective regulation to stop private landlords renting accommodation which is likely to cause the ill-health of tenants.” (art. 86)
 - ✓ Section 5 briefly addresses the **role of private sector**, noting that “the private sector itself has human rights and Te Tiriti responsibilities” (art. 92). A Tiriti and human rights-based housing strategy requires the private sector to...

“provide warm, dry, healthy, decent homes, in accordance with the UN ‘decency’ housing principles, including *Healthy Homes Standards*, *HomeFit* and *Homestar* (see section 3 and ‘Habitable’)” (art. 94).
- ? The Guidelines don’t currently clearly mention importance of addressing **energy hardship**

Housing Policy and Services Kaupapa Inquiry (Wai 2750) - Waitangi Tribunal

The focus of current phase of inquiry (2021) is on Māori homelessness. The four themes for the process as a whole, identified in May 2021, likely to begin to be included in the inquiry from early 2022 are:

- Housing Policy, practice and regulation of the housing market;
- Social Housing: the provision of public housing by central and local government;
- Use and development of Māori land for housing;
- Relationship between poor physical and mental health and other socio-economic factors and housing

Projected/Promised

- Energy Performance Certification at PoS
- Greater regulation of Property Managers

Energy Performance Certification at PoS

The Labour Party in the 2020 election promised to introduce mandatory Energy Performance Certification (EPC) at point of sale. The commitments of the Zero Carbon Act (see above) provide additional impetus for this to be implemented.

In 28 countries of the EU and in some US and Australian states, EPC is mandatory for all residential dwellings irrespective of tenure. Such an approach in New Zealand could a) provide a means to certify compliance with (parts of?) the Healthy Homes Standard, b) significantly improve the information available on the current status of housing performance and where effort needs to be focused to improve housing quality, and c) help remove the perceived status difference of ownership vs rental tenure, noting that BRANZ research² has indicated that rental property condition is typically significantly poorer than owner-occupied properties.

Greater regulation of Property Managers

*The Labour party during the 2020 election promised to introduce “a mandatory Code of Conduct and licensing regime for property managers”.*³

Discussion **to be added**

Resources – including Standards, Guidelines, Funding, Education Programmes

Standards and Guidelines

- HomeFit and Homestar [New Zealand Green Building Council]
- Passive House Standard [Passive House Institute NZ]
- Healthy Homes Design Guide [Superhome Movement]

HomeFit and Homestar [New Zealand Green Building Council]

Homefit is an independent assessment and certification that a homes is warm, dry and healthy. Certification to Homefit standard also confirms compliance with the Healthy Homes Standard (HHS) as Homefit standards in relevant areas are the same or higher than the HHS requirement.

Find out more about Homefit at: <https://www.homefit.org.nz/>

Homestar is an independent rating tool for assessing the health, efficiency and sustainability of homes in Aotearoa. It considers performance and environmental impact and looks at both construction inputs and performance once built. A 6 Homestar rating would be considered a minimum for a warm, dry, safe (and carbon-friendly) home but Homestar ratings go as high as 10 Homestar.

² House Condition Survey 2015

³ Labour Housing Fact Sheet (Election 2020)

Find out more about Homestar at: <https://www.nzgbc.org.nz/homestar>

Passive House Standard [Passive Housing Institute NZ]

<http://www.level.org.nz/passive-design/passive-house/>

<https://passivehouse.nz/about/about-passive-house/>

Healthy Homes Design Guide [Superhome Movement]

<https://www.superhome.co.nz/guide/>

www.healthyhomedesignguide.co.nz

Funding Programmes

- [Warmer Kiwi Homes \[EECA\]](#)
- [Support for Energy Education in Communities \(SEEC\) fund \[MBIE\]](#)

Warmer Kiwi Homes [EECA]

The Warmer Kiwi Homes Programme is a Government programme offering insulation and heater grants to low-income home owners. During the first part of 2021, insulation and heating subsidies for 90% of the cost were offered. In May 2021 the programme was extended for a further two years to end of June 2023, however subsidy was reduced to 80%. Owner-occupiers living in areas rated Deprivation Index 8,9, and 10, or holding Community Services Cards are eligible for the subsidies.

For more information on the programme and eligibility: <https://www.eeca.govt.nz/our-work/programmes-and-funding/efficient-homes/funding-for-heaters-and-insulation/>

Support for Energy Education in Communities (SEEC) fund [MBIE]

The Support for Energy Education in Communities (SEEC) Programme is part of a suite of new government initiatives to lift people out of energy hardship.

For more information: <https://www.mbie.govt.nz/building-and-energy/energy-and-natural-resources/energy-hardship/support-for-energy-education-in-communities-programme/>

Education/Advice Programmes not already mentioned

- [Home Energy Saver](#)
- [EnergyMate](#)

Home Energy Saver

The Home Energy Saver programme is a partnership between Wellington City Council and Sustainability Trust and is free to all Wellington City Council ratepayers. Home Energy Saver offers an

independent assessment on the health and energy efficiency of a home, followed by advice on ways to improve it and quotes for relevant services.

Find out more: <https://sustaintrust.org.nz/home-energy-assessments>

EnergyMate

EnergyMate is a free in-home energy coaching service for households at risk of energy hardship. The programme is delivered by the Energy Retailers Association (ERANZ).

Find out more: <https://www.energymate.nz/about>

Research

Recently released

- [Housing Stats update \(released 9 Dec 2020\) – incorporating 2018 Census, 2018 GSS and 2018 House Condition Survey](#)
- [BRANZ S439: Models of behaviour change relating to energy and the built environment: An analytical review](#)

Stats NZ - Housing Stats update (released 9 Dec 2020)

The Stats NZ report 'Housing in Aotearoa: 2020' was released at the end of 2020. It brings together a range of housing information from official and government administrative statistics to address some of the key questions identified in the Review of housing statistics report 2009 (Stats NZ, 2009). It includes analysis of data from the 2018 Census, the General Social Survey and Household Economic Survey, and the Pilot Housing Survey.

Some key findings include:

- Dampness and mould are common in NZ houses (1 in 5 houses are damp at least sometimes and 1 in 6 houses have mould over A4 size)
- Insulation in owner-occupied and rental houses shows no significant difference but rental houses tend to be smaller, older, more likely to be in need of major repair and less likely to be double-glazed
- People who live in lower quality housing, have lower wellbeing assessments – including physical and mental health
- NZ's poor quality housing stock contributes to greater energy inputs for heating and cooling
- Māori, Pacific, unemployed and sole parents tended to have proportionally worse housing experiences
- House ownership rates have been falling since 1991.

The complete report can be downloaded from Stats NZ website at:
<https://www.stats.govt.nz/reports/housing-in-aotearoa-2020>

BRANZ SR439: Models of behaviour change

The review, by Martha Bell and Casimir MacGregor at BRANZ, examines contemporary behaviour change models and their geneological roots. In addition to the comprehensive 123-page report, a 3-page summary 'Strategies for Changing Behaviour' is available.

Full Report downloadable at: <https://www.branz.co.nz/pubs/research-reports/sr439/>

3-page summary 'Strategies for Changing Behaviour' downloadable at:

<https://www.branz.co.nz/pubs/research-now/changing-behaviour/1-strategies/>

In progress

- He Kāiing Oranga (University of Otago) – Research to maximise the health and wellbeing gains from housing (2020-2025)
- NSC 11 'Affordable Housing for Generations' Research Programme (2019 to 2024)
- BRANZ 'High Performance Assemblies' research – understanding consenting barriers to high performance building
- High Performance Construction Details – catalogue (Jason Quinn)
- Wairarapa student research project on comfortable houses (Millie Robinson)
- Te Matapihi and CHA – research into Māori experience of housing, particular focus on homelessness (? Correct)

He Kāiing Oranga (University of Otago) – Research to maximise the health and wellbeing gains from housing (2020-2025)

University of Otago Housing and Health Research Programme He Kāiing Oranga in 2020 received a \$5m grant from the Health Research Council (HRC) to fund a 5-year project to test a suite of new interventions designed to increase equitable health outcomes and enhance New Zealanders' wellbeing. They will also evaluate and scale up existing housing interventions that are proven to be effective. The multidisciplinary research team includes researchers from the universities of Otago, Victoria and Massey, BRANZ and Motu Economic and Public Policy Research.

As part of the five-year Programme, the He Kāiing Oranga research team will work closely with the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment to measure the impact that new mandatory Healthy Homes Standards for rental properties (due to be in place from July 2021), are having on housing quality, including indoor temperatures, air quality, physical and mental health, and mortality.

They will also analyse why some of the interventions included in these guidelines were left out of New Zealand's Healthy Homes Standards, such as interventions for eradicating mould, reducing injuries in the home, and mitigating increased temperatures due to climate change.

Distinguished Professor Philippa Howden-Chapman and Associate Professor Nevil Pierse co-lead the programme.

Text paraphrased/excerpted from: <https://www.hrc.govt.nz/news-and-events/healthy-homes-all-kiwis-heart-major-new-research-programme>

NSC 11 ‘Affordable Housing for Generations’ Research Programme (2019-2024)

This programme, under the Building Better Homes, Towns and Cities National Science Challenge, aims to: “develop effective and practical approaches to alleviating the crisis of affordable housing and housing affordable to key workers through targeted research-based solutions which will sustain people in their homes and communities over generations and contribute to thriving regions”.

The programme includes 5 components – summarised in the table below, with their anticipated outputs (table taken from ‘AHFG Research Programme Information Overview 1.2, March 2020’):

| Component | Outputs |
|--|--|
| A Markets, Housing Distribution and Wellbeing | Nudge Narratives, Infographics, International Conferences and Journals: Housing systems, markets, determinants of homelessness and pathways to better housing futures. |
| B Price Points for Affordable Housing and Housing Affordable for Key Workers | Price pointing tool Price point data releases and infographics: Selected regional, local housing markets (rental and owner occupied) disaggregated by ethnicity and age for low income households and for key workers respectively; Rohe house price points. Supply Gap data releases and infographics (see above for scope) International Conferences and Journals |
| C Meaning of Home & Dimensions of Affordability | Nudge narratives and International Conferences and Journals around what really matters for people, affordable homes by engaged populations. |
| D Affordable Housing and the Impact of Dwellings | REAL-Value Tool Repair, Renovate or Replace Decision Tool Accessible Dwellings Value Case Warm Gran, Cool Gran Tool |
| E Realising Housing’s Public Good - Funding & Developing Fit for People Housing Futures | Co-operatives, Community Land Trusts, Mixed Initiative Investments, Multiply owned land: Innovation Potential Infographics; International Reviews of Innovations; Nudge Narratives, Best Practice Guidelines |

BRANZ – High Performance Assemblies research (understanding consenting barriers for high performance building) – 2020-2022

Stephen McNeil is leading this research at BRANZ. Looking for case-studies to include (high performance building projects). Aim is to identify barriers in order to inform proposed solutions.

Note potential for this to be brought together with other existing and underway research looking at solutions that already exist.

High Performance Construction Details – catalogue (Jason Quinn)

This is a catalogue of high performance construction details that have been consented and built in nz – drawn from projects that the author’s company Sustainable Engineering Ltd have worked on. The intention of the catalogue is to provide examples of consented construction details to take the risk out of proposing/consenting unfamiliar elements for builders and consenting authorities.

‘Performance’ here means heat loss/thermal performance, the catalogue will also have cost and carbon performance (element losses, thermal bridge losses). It doesn’t really deal with thermal bypass.

Draft book can be downloaded from: <https://passivehouse.nz/Draft-HPCD>

Comment/feedback is invited, send to: HPCD@sustainableengineering.co.nz

Wairarapa student research project on home comfort (Millie Robinson, 2020-21)

Millie Robinson is a final year Mechanical Engineering student who is carrying out research on home comfort and wellbeing in Wairarapa between Nov 2020 – March 2021, working alongside the Wairarapa Healthy Homes Programme. Millie’s research is considering indoor temperature, humidity and technologies that provide this comfort.

Te Matapihi and CHA – research into Māori experience of housing, particular focus on homelessness

... to be added