



TOI TE ORA PUBLIC HEALTH

Bay of Plenty + Lakes Districts



BAY OF PLENTY
DISTRICT HEALTH BOARD
HAUORA A TOI



LAKES DISTRICT HEALTH BOARD

Toi Te Ora Public Health
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Secretariat
Select Committee Services
Parliament Buildings
WELLINGTON 6160

Submission to Kāinga Ora - Homes and Communities Bill

Introduction

The Bay of Plenty District Health Board (Bay of Plenty DHB) and the Lakes District Health Board (Lakes DHB) are required by the Public Health and Disability Act 2000 to improve, promote, and protect the health of people and communities, to promote the inclusion and participation in society and independence of people with disabilities and to reduce health disparities by improving health outcomes for Māori and other population groups.

We appreciate this opportunity to submit on the proposed bill to establish Kāinga Ora - Homes and Communities as a Crown entity.

This submission has been prepared by Toi Te Ora Public Health (Toi Te Ora) which is the Public Health Unit for both Bay of Plenty DHB and Lakes DHB. The key role of Toi Te Ora is to promote, protect and improve population health, prevent ill health and minimise the risk of disease and injury through population based interventions, with a focus on reducing inequalities in health.

Toi Te Ora provides public health services to approximately 304,000 people across seven territorial authorities (Tauranga City and the district councils of Western Bay of Plenty, Whakatāne, Ōpōtiki, Kawerau, Rotorua and Taupō).

The public health approach to wellbeing and health considers social, economic, cultural, environmental and social contexts, and has a 'determinants of health' perspective. Many of the crucial underlying factors that contribute to population health and wellbeing are directly influenced by the decisions and activities of government.

In this context, Toi Te Ora supports the proposed Kāinga Ora Bill, which will focus on contributing to sustainable, inclusive and thriving communities. We intend that this submission assist the Committee in its deliberations.

Toi Te Ora do not wish to appear before the Committee to speak to this submission.

Toi Te Ora may be contacted at the address provided at the top of this submission, by phoning 0800 221 555 or email enquiries@toiteora.govt.nz

Submission

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines housing as a broad concept involving four interrelated elements: the home, the dwelling, the community, and the neighbourhood. Housing is a significant determinant of health and a significant influencing factor in health inequalities and poverty.

Good quality housing and secure tenure is essential for physical and mental wellbeing. The lack of affordable housing options and the poor condition of some housing has an inequitable effect on the health of many people in Aotearoa.

A house needs to be uncrowded, warm, dry and affordable for its occupants, including any associated cost such as heating. Cold, damp, and mouldy homes are associated with illnesses such as asthma and respiratory infections. Cold indoor temperatures also increase the risk of acute cardiovascular events, and household crowding increases the risk of infectious disease transmission.

Homelessness and living in unhealthy homes and insecure tenancy arrangements is largely beyond the control of individuals, especially children, and requires action by public authorities at all levels.

The Bay of Plenty DHB supports the direction of Kāinga Ora - Homes and Communities as outlined in the Bill. The Bill provides Kāinga Ora - Homes and Communities with greater flexibility to contribute to sustainable, inclusive, and thriving communities than the Housing Corporation Act 1974. The Bay of Plenty and Lakes DHBs recommend the following inclusions to strengthen the wellbeing focus.

Part 1 subpart 2 Section 10 – Membership of the Board of Kāinga Ora - Homes and Communities

Housing and urban environments have a strong influence on the health of individuals and communities. A healthy population is necessary to achieve a thriving sustainable community. There is no requirement for the collective members of the Board to have experience of or capability in public health or healthy housing.

The Bay of Plenty and Lakes DHBs recommends the phrase, 'perspectives of public health' and 'perspectives of healthy housing' are added to Part 1, subpart 2, Section 10(2).

Part 1 subpart 2 Section 12 – Objectives of Kāinga Ora - Homes and Communities

The Bay of Plenty and Lakes DHBs support the objectives of Kāinga Ora - Homes and Communities. Thriving communities are communities which enable people living in those communities to achieve and maintain health and wellbeing.

The Bay of Plenty and Lakes DHBs recommend 'enables wellbeing and health' are added to Part 1, subpart 2, Section 12(1).

Part 1 subpart 2 Section 13 – Functions of Kāinga Ora - Homes and Communities

Section 13(1)(c) provides the provision for Kāinga Ora - Homes and Communities to provide financial assistance for home ownership, and to give other financial assistance related to housing. Home ownership contributes to thriving communities; however, good quality housing in communities is also necessary to contribute to the stated objectives of Kāinga Ora - Homes and Communities.

BRANZ has identified significant need for immediate repairs in the homes of low income households. Immediate repairs refer to repairs to components of a home in serious or poor condition.

Components in serious or poor condition need to be prioritized because they pose a hazard to health and/or safety. BRANZ estimated in 2013¹ the average cost of immediate repairs to be \$5,139. For the lowest household income bracket this represents more than 25% of the annual household income. 79% of homes assessed by BRANZ required immediate repairs rising to 88% in the lowest household income bracket. If only the envelope of the home is considered 33% of homes require immediate repairs at an average cost of \$5,481. For low income households the cost of immediate home repairs is beyond what they can afford.

Financial assistance through the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority (EECA) is provided for insulation and heating improvements. In many cases the effectiveness of the heating improvements and insulation is limited by the condition of a home's envelope. Cladding gaps, broken windows and other defects prevent the insulation and heating improvements from being effective. Some homes have multiple defects which can prevent the upgrade of heating and insulation. There is no provision, from EECA, for financial assistance to make immediate home repairs, which would enable the benefits of insulation and heating improvements to be realised. The Bill, as written, could allow for financial assistance for critical home repairs however, it is not clearly stated. There is a significant need in the community for immediate home repairs which could be addressed by Kāinga Ora - Homes and Communities through combination of grant schemes, no interest loan, and low interest loan based on the household's ability to pay. This would assist in achieving the stated objective of contributing to sustainable, inclusive and thriving communities. The Bill should be amended to specifically address immediate home repairs in the same way the Bill addresses home ownership.

The Bay of Plenty and Lakes DHBs recommend that the statement, 'financial assistance for immediate home repairs', is added to Part 1, subpart 2, Section 13(1)(c).

Seventeen district council's areas across New Zealand are projected to have a population reduction over the next 25 years². If the impact of population reduction is not managed it is likely to have a detrimental effect on housing quality and therefore community wellbeing. There will be no incentive for private developers to assist local councils and communities. This is an issue that councils and communities will need support with. Kāinga Ora - Homes and Communities is likely to own housing stock in these communities and is ideally placed to develop expertise in this area.

The Bay of Plenty and Lakes DHBs recommend that an additional function under the urban development functions be added relating to assisting communities and local authorities plan for population decline and negative growth, and the subsequent impact on housing.

Part 1 subpart 2 Section 14 – Operating principles

The Bay of Plenty and Lakes DHBs support the inclusion of the stewardship and sustainability principles in subsection 1 (i) and (j).

¹ Page, IC., & Curtis, MD. (2013). *House Repair priorities* (Rep. No. SR 285). BRANZ.. Retrieved from https://www.branz.co.nz/cms_show_download.php?id=4158d0bdfcc81dacb0caf37e9423259fabec292d 20/06/2019

² Stats NZ. (2017). Subnational population projections: 2013(base)–2043 update. Retrieved from <https://www.stats.govt.nz/information-releases/subnational-population-projections-2013base2043-update> on 18/06/2019

General Considerations

The term urban is used throughout the Bill. Urban is defined as “of, relating to, or designating a city or town”³. The Bay of Plenty and Lakes region has many rural settlements⁴ that face significant housing challenges which could benefit from support with regeneration projects. A high proportion of those living in rural settlements are Māori. Applying a strict definition of the term urban could disadvantage rural settlements and Māori with the level of assistance they receive.

The Bay of Plenty and Lakes DHBs recommend that the definition of urban includes all settlements regardless of size.


The Bay of Plenty and Lakes DHBs recommend:

- The phrases, ‘perspectives of public health’ and ‘perspectives of healthy housing’, are added to Part 1, subpart 2, Section 10(2).
- The phrase, ‘enables wellbeing and health’, is added to Part 1, subpart 2, Section 12(1).
- The statement, ‘financial assistance for immediate home repairs’, is added to Part 1, subpart 2, Section 13 (1)(c).
- The Bay of Plenty and Lakes DHBs recommend that the definition of urban includes all settlements regardless of size.

Yours sincerely



Sally Webb
Chairperson
Bay of Plenty District Health Board



Nick Saville-Wood
Chief Executive
Lakes District Health Board

³ [Dictionary.com](https://www.dictionary.com/browse/urban), retrieved from <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/urban> on 18/06/2019

⁴ A rural settlement is a cluster of residential dwellings about a place that usually contains at least one community or public building. Contain an estimated resident population of 200–1,000, or at least 40 residential dwellings. Stat NZ. 2019. Urban Rural 2019V1.0.0 retrieved from <http://aria.stats.govt.nz/aria/#ClassificationView:uri=http://stats.govt.nz/cms/ClassificationVersion/xMj67emuNROLDg0d> on 19/06/2019