

March 2022

Energy Hardship Expert Panel – Letter from the Chair

Ko Waikato te awa
Ko Maungatautiri te maunga
Ko Tainui te waka
Ko Ngāti Raukawa te iwi
Ko Ngāti Māhara te hapu
Ko Whakaaratamaiti te marae
Ko Keri Brown tōku ingoa

I'm a Councillor at Hutt City Council, Hutt Valley DHB board member, and last year I had the honour of being appointed Chair of the Energy Hardship Expert Panel.

I'm excited to be working alongside four very knowledgeable and driven individuals on the Panel to provide advice and recommend policy priorities to government.

The Panel's diverse experience and expertise stands us in good stead as we dive deep into the underlying issues of energy hardship and take a long hard look at how they can be resolved.

My fellow panel members are: Dr Amanda-Lanuola Dunlop, Vaka Tautua chief executive; Helen Leahy, Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu pouārahi (chief executive); Kay Brereton, long-time beneficiary advocate; and Kevin England, ex-Mercury and former ERANZ director. You can read more about their previous roles and experience here:

[Energy hardship expert panel and reference group](#)

I want to acknowledge the incredibly challenging times we're living in. The global pandemic has proven not just a threat to public health, but brought with it high inflation, job losses, mental and emotional strain, and much more. There's already a lot of work underway around the motu helping households experiencing energy hardship – especially at grassroots-level. And I'd like to thank those who have been working to help others, even when Covid makes it harder to do so.

The Panel's immediate focus has been developing a work plan for the next 18 months. This means getting a solid understanding of the mahi already underway by community groups, businesses and government agencies. We're fortunate in that we can also draw on earlier research, analysis and wider engagement in this space, as well as our own experiences working with disadvantaged households.

Over the coming weeks, we will meet with key stakeholders to test the critical focus areas of our work plan and understand any gaps before presenting it to relevant Ministers. From there, we intend running workshops to develop options for addressing priority issues in each focus area, which will then go out for public consultation in a discussion paper.

As you can see, we have a multi-stage approach to engagement, and as our work progresses, we'll provide details in this e-news for ways you can take part.

Throughout our work, we'll be connecting with the new Energy Hardship Reference Group. The Group has a much larger membership and is designed as a platform to share ideas and information – which will be vital for informing our work.

I welcome your views on ways on lifting people out of energy hardship. We would also love to hear from you if you're part of an energy hardship initiative you'd like to tell us about. Please feel free to contact the Panel by emailing energymarkets@mbie.govt.nz.

Ngā mihi

Keri Brown

Chair

Energy Hardship Expert Panel