

# Energy Hardship Expert Panel – Letter from the Chair

March 2023



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

It has been an absolute privilege to take up the role as Chair of the Energy Hardship Expert Panel. I'm excited to work alongside four knowledgeable and driven individuals on the Panel to provide advice and recommend policy priorities to government. They are: Dr Amanda-Lanuola Dunlop, a Pacific health and wellbeing expert; Helen Leahy, Ngā Waihua o Paerangi Trust Pou Ārahi / Chief Executive; Kay Brereton, long-time beneficiary advocate; and Kevin Angland, ex-Mercury and former ERANZ director.

## *Kia whakatōmuri te haere whakamua I walk backwards into the future with my eyes fixed on my past*

As I watched Cyclone Gabrielle tear through parts of the North Island last month, I was reminded of the many crises we have endured as a nation – the earthquakes, floods, fires and landslides. In all of them, we have seen how critical power is in our daily lives. The cyclone impacts have been massive: hundreds of thousands of homes were without power, some for several weeks, and key services relied on diesel generators. The clean-up efforts for many will continue for a long time. My heart goes out to all those who have been affected.

For some people in our communities, not having access to power is a daily reality or risk. Perhaps because they can't afford it, perhaps it's because they're in a remote community and the connection to the national grid is vulnerable. Perhaps it's an entirely different reason altogether. Energy hardship can be a result of several different and intertwining factors, and likewise affects people in different ways.

Energy hardship can have a significant impact on people's lives, and as members of the Energy Hardship Expert Panel, we have been working to identify the underlying factors, understand the challenges and opportunities, and develop an understanding of what energy hardship looks like in our communities. Our goal is to recommend possible solutions to the government by 30 June this year to address energy hardship.

To support our mahi, we're running an engagement period which opens today through until 28 April 2023 and invite you to share your views and insights on energy hardship issues with us. This is the final step in our [work programme](#).

We have identified [five kete](#) of challenges and responses, which have been informed by early engagement with key and diverse voices, collaborative workshops, and kōrero. However, we want to gather insights from all those who know, live or understand energy hardship, and refine our work to accurately portray the experiences in Aotearoa and what would make a difference.

It's critical that we capture a range of experiences and viewpoints to develop well-informed and effective recommendations to the government to address energy hardship. To share your feedback, we ask that you make a written submission, which can be accessed through the Expert Panel's page on the [MBIE website](#). On that page, you'll find our Discussion Paper, which outlines our current thinking and the key questions we're seeking feedback on.

The Panel will consider these submissions as we work towards developing final recommendations for the government.

We understand it's a busy time for many, and we appreciate your time and effort in sharing your thoughts with us. Our work is building on the fantastic mahi that is already being done by many others across community, industry and government. We see the Panel's role as drawing on the expertise and established work by others, and from there, identifying the next steps to address priority issues and support whānau in achieving energy wellbeing.

**Keri Anne Brown**

Chair of the Energy Hardship Expert Panel