

Feedback to the NZ Ministry of Business Innovation & Employment (MBIE) Energy Hardship Panel - 27 April 2023

ENERGY HARDSHIP PANEL and ENERGY POVERTY IN AOTEAROA/NZ

Our purpose in writing is to communicate **our agreement with all strategies proposed by the Energy Hardship Panel**. Many Aotearoa/NZ households are facing situations where their household income is inadequate for keeping warm in winter.

Health:

Energy poverty causes serious health problems which unnecessarily become the concern of, and cost to, the health system; along with the emotional cost and suffering of individuals.

Inequality:

Inadequate income distribution is the primary reason for energy poverty. Those on sickness, unemployment benefits, minimum wages and superannuitants are the most affected. Those on low incomes who pay market rents are also vulnerable to energy poverty. The panel's strategies do address education and protection needed by some households. Each strategy requires a reallocation of resources by government to overcome this unfairness. Adequate energy to provide a warm home is a basic human need and right.

Future Energy Availability and Costs:

Energy is required to produce all goods and services and available cheap energy will not continue as currently or as in the past. This topic probably also requires consideration by the panel. The world has passed the time of easy availability of fossil fuels. The EROEI (Energy Return On Energy Invested) is decreasing each decade and the increasing cost of extraction of fossil fuels is a seriously important factor in making decisions and planning future strategies. With conservation education - a decrease in luxury useage - Aotearoa/NZ has the means to gear up to 100% clean energy. However, we will need to learn to live with less energy and yet live well with less, as current lifestyles will not be possible, even considering major infrastructure developments in renewable energy. If planning is not adequate, energy poverty will increase as goods and services become more expensive. These matters will affect access to all the essentials of life that every citizen is entitled to.

Equality builds a stronger and safer society for all its members.

Joy, M. (2023) *Peak everything and what does that mean for food & energy*. YouTube webcast <https://youtu.be/rXyyO0O26Fw?t=11>