



Aukaha

Aukaha (1997) Ltd Submission on

Te Kore, Te Po, Te Ao Marama Energy Hardship: The Challenges and a way forward

28 April 2023

Energy Hardship Expert Panel
c/- Energy Use Team
Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment
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Introduction

[Aukaha \(1997\) Ltd](#) is mana whenua-owned consultancy that delivers services across the takiwā of our Papatipu Rūnaka shareholders, based in Ōtepoti Dunedin. We in the [Mana Tākata team](#) at Aukaha are pleased to be able to offer our perspective on the Energy Hardship Expert Panel discussion paper. We appreciate the mahi that has gone into this document and the effort made to understand the complexity of the issues and we valued hosting members of the EHEP here in Ōtepoti, Dunedin on the 21st of April.

Aukaha is a member of the [Community Energy Network](#) and support's CEN's submission on the Energy Hardship Expert Panel discussion paper. In addition, we have added some of our own observations from our mahi with whānau in energy hardship and attach a PDF outlining our activities and some of the insights we have gained.

Feedback

1. The Welfare Expert Advisory Group's 2019 report on New Zealand's social security system - [Whakamana Tāngata – Restoring Dignity to Social Security in New Zealand](#) revealed that poverty is widespread in Aotearoa. Energy hardship is largely a symptom of poverty, therefore implementing the WEAG's recommendations in full will substantially reduce energy hardship. **RECOMMENDATION:** *That the EHEP's final recommendations to Government include a recommendation to fully implement WEAG's recommendations.*
2. Our experience of existing Government programmes to address energy hardship is that there is unnecessary complexity and repetition because many programmes exist in silos, and present a complex reporting burden on providers, reducing the reach and effectiveness of existing and potentially future programmes. **RECOMMENDATION:** *That Government requires coordination of Government Programmes to address energy hardship and a simplified reporting structure for providers to reduce the administrative burden and increase efficiency of programme delivery to whānau.*
3. Those of us working at the flax-roots manage a complex ecosystem of funding, policy and service delivery and had anticipated action on energy hardship after the Electricity Price Review recommendations published in 2019. Like CEN we recognize the challenges presented by Covid and that the EHEP has engaged in an engagement process, however we now confront greater deprivation which requires bold and urgent action. **RECOMMENDATION:** *To urgently expand or replace the Warmer Kiwi Homes scheme with a Deep Retrofit and Climate Safe Homes programme to reduce inflation, reduce emissions, adapt to our changing climate, and deliver energy wellbeing. This can begin with a target to provide Deep Retrofit to 600,000 under-insulated homes to reduce power bills and pilot a Climate Safe Homes programme¹.*
4. The skill set required to address the complexity of energy hardship, which can have added complexity in the form of client infirmity or poor health, mental health issues, rural isolation or elder isolation is a skill set that accrues through working at the flax-roots. It is not something that can be taught in universities, polytechnics, and colleges. The challenge many providers of energy hardship services face is the short contract timeframe to train and retain skilled staff and solidify and improve systems. **RECOMMENDATION:** *We recommend providing high trust multi-year contracts to allow providers to build an effective ecosystem of services, and train and maintain a skilled staff to deliver effective and comprehensive energy wellbeing for our community.*
5. As part of the Government's commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi we expect the EHEP's recommendations to give effect to the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi through meaningful partnerships in programme design. **RECOMMENDATION:** *Ensure all contracts for programmes resource a co-design phase to enable flax-roots experience to be incorporated in the programme design and allow the rapid improvement of services to address energy hardship.*
6. We face not only an energy hardship crisis but also face the climate crisis, which requires a holistic approach to ensure no-one falls through the cracks. Action-Research as a component of programme delivery can ensure we learn faster, evolve, and improve programmes as we deliver. **RECOMMENDATION:** *Ensure most contracts contain a research and evaluation component built in to gain a richer understanding and allow faster programme improvement and shaping to fit the need.*

¹ The Climate Safe Homes Pilot we propose is both a lease and new replacement build approach, which requires leasehold of private property to build high performance transportable small homes, to replace dangerous and dilapidated homes. These Climate Safe Homes can later be repurposed for kaumātua housing. The model has already been established: <https://shorturl.at/eghGK>.

7. Alignment with other strategies such as the National Energy Strategy will be required to avoid perverse outcomes and will ensure more efficient delivery of services. An equity focus means more than just energy efficiency with material upgrades and behaviour change programmes. It also implicates the connections between sectors (urban form, building form, social services..). A connected approach will help achieve multiple benefits. **RECOMMENDATION:** *We recommend that the EHEP recommendations are incorporated into the National Energy Strategy to maximise co-benefits and positive outcomes for whānau.*

Conclusion

We thank you for the opportunity to engage with your mahi and the Discussion Paper and submit our feedback. We are a Kaupapa Māori organisation working with whānau in vulnerable situations and as difficult as things are at times, at other times we experience the best of people. We are committed to a whānau and community centred approach and understand the need for new approaches to deliver energy wellbeing as we address the climate crisis challenge. Please do not hesitate to engage with us if you require any further clarification or whānau stories to illustrate your report to Government in June.

Nāku iti noa, nā



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