

30 July 2021

Te Tūāpapa Kura Kāinga – Ministry of Housing and Urban Development
PO Box 82
Wellington 6140
hud_gps@hud.govt.nz

Tēnā koe

Re: Government Policy Statement on Housing and Urban Development

Regional Public Health would like to **formally register our support** for the Government Policy Statement on Housing and Urban Development (GPS-HUD).

Regional Public Health (RPH) delivers population and personal health services in the greater Wellington region. Our geographical area of service delivery spans Hutt Valley, Capital & Coast and Wairarapa District Health Boards. We aim to improve the health of communities. In particular we focus on achieving equitable health outcomes for high needs groups such as Māori, Pacific peoples, child and youth, low income families and other vulnerable groups.

The contact point for this submission is:

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Nāku noa, nā

Dr Craig Thornley
Clinical Head of Department

Peter Gush
General Manager

General comments:

Healthy, secure and affordable housing and quality urban development are fundamental in determining the wellbeing of our communities. Well- integrated housing and urban development can enable connections within communities, promote and support mental wellbeing, foster access to education, and employment opportunities, and improve physical health.

The GPS-HUD is an important strategic approach to addressing Aotearoa’s systemic housing and development issues. It provides a foundation of a shared long-term vision and plan to guide the wide range of housing stakeholders in tackling the complex challenges across our housing system.

RPH **supports** and **commends** the GPS-HUD vision:

“E noho ana ngā tāngata katoa i Aotearoa ki tētahi kāinga ora, kāinga whakamarumarū, utu-pai anō hoki e hāngai nei ki ō rātau hiahia i roto i tētahi hapori tōnui, whakaaro nui, toitū hoki.

Everyone in Aotearoa New Zealand lives in a healthy, secure and affordable home that meets their needs, within a thriving, inclusive and sustainable community.”

The vision places people at the centre and recognises the importance of housing security and housing for everyone. It acknowledges the significance of people’s health, wellbeing, safety and the connectedness of communities.

RPH **commends** the GPS-HUD intention to re-establish housing’s primary role as a home rather than a financial asset.

RPH **commends** GPS-HUD acknowledgement and consideration of the history of colonisation of Aotearoa in the context of housing and development. This is often not well considered or acknowledged. The GPS-HUD discussion document articulates the intention to work in partnership and uphold the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, and is a significant step toward addressing housing as a Te Tiriti issue. RPH **suggests** that HUD provide clear mechanisms to ensure this high level intent filters down to organisations who will be implementing the GPS. RPH **commends** HUD for their approach to working with iwi and Māori.

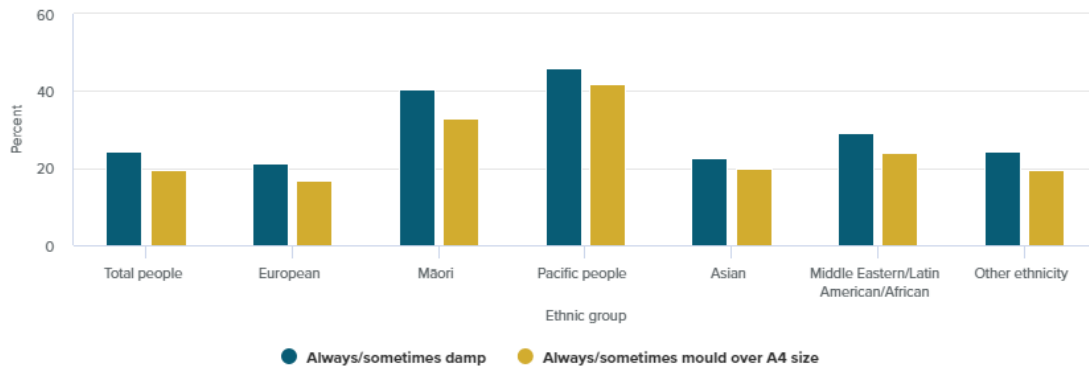
Additional Comments:

Partnership Areas:

RPH **encourages** building similar collaborative partnerships with Pasifika, communities with disability and other vulnerable groups. Although the GPS-HUD commits to continue implementing the Pacific Housing Strategy, further action is needed as the statistics highlighted from the ‘Housing in Aotearoa 2020’ report demonstrate persisting adverse housing outcomes for Pacific peoples.

GRAPH TABLE

Proportion of people living in occupied private dwellings with damp and mould, by ethnic group, 2018 Census



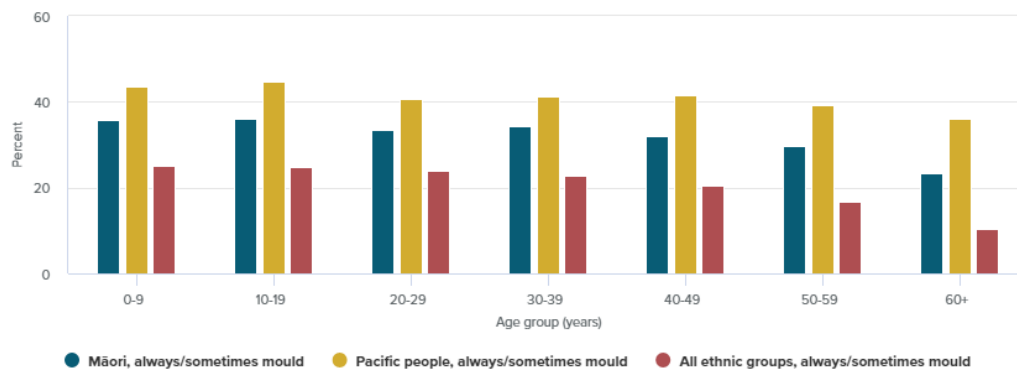
Calculated from rounded and confidentialised data.

Stats NZ

Stat NZ, 2020. *Housing in Aotearoa: 2020*. Available at: <https://www.stats.govt.nz/reports/housing-in-aotearoa-2020>

GRAPH TABLE

People living in occupied private dwellings with mould, Māori and Pacific people by age group, 2018 Census



Calculated from rounded and confidentialised data. Some age groups have been combined.

Stats NZ

Stat NZ, 2020. *Housing in Aotearoa: 2020*. Available at: <https://www.stats.govt.nz/reports/housing-in-aotearoa-2020>

Nationally, the proportion of people with access to all seven amenities (cooking facilities, tap water that is safe to drink, kitchen sink, refrigerator, bath or shower, toilet, and electricity supply) was lowest for Pacific peoples at 86.0 percent.¹ Additionally, 2 in 5 Pacific peoples lived in a home that was always or often too cold in winter.¹

Data shows persisting adverse housing conditions experienced by people with disabilities. A study conducted by Community Housing Collective in 2021 found one in five disabled peoples were

¹ Stat NZ, 2020. *Housing in Aotearoa: 2020*. Available at: <https://www.stats.govt.nz/reports/housing-in-aotearoa-2020>

unhappy with their housing.² RPH **supports** a greater proportion of Kāinga Ora homes to be built according to universal design principles.

“If 100% of new public housing doesn’t use universal building principles like in other jurisdictions, New Zealand will not have homes and communities suitable for all disabled people, let alone an aging population with physical disabilities.”²

These statistics highlight the importance of working in partnership with Pacific communities, people with disabilities and other vulnerable groups to ensure an inclusive and empowering pathway for housing, achieving the vision where everyone in Aotearoa New Zealand lives in a healthy, secure and affordable home that meets their needs, within a thriving, inclusive and sustainable community.

Housing Quality:

RPH **recommend** the GPS-HUD document strengthens its emphasis on housing quality. A warm dry home is the foundation of health and wellbeing throughout life.³ The GPS and its implementation framework could include action to fast-track and incentivise improvements to housing quality. Lower income homeowners are unlikely to be able to afford expensive retro-fitting improvements that would have a significant impact on their health and contribute to a reduction in emissions.

Housing Security:

RPH recognises there is a significant need for support services to be strengthened in the emergency housing end of the continuum (see Fig 1). RPH **recommends** that the GPS-HUD document and its implementation framework focuses on the importance of earlier support services to prevent housing insecurity. The majority of support services provide assistance to those who are already homeless, and there are limited services that can support those who are at risk of losing their homes ie. Social housing and assisted rentals.⁴ Support services need to be easily accessible across the housing continuum to ensure earlier intervention.

² The Community Housing Collective, 2021. *Research into the Unmet Housing Needs of People with Disabilities, their Families and Whānau*. Available at: <https://disabilityconnect.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/where-will-we-live-in-the-future.pdf>

³ New Zealand College of Public Health Medicine (2013). "Housing Policy Statement." Available from: https://www.nzcpmh.org.nz/media/120350/nzcphm_healthy_homes_standard_submission_2018.pdf

⁴ Pritchard, J. and Miller, O., 2018. *Homelessness in Lower Hutt*. Hutt City Council. Available at: <http://iportal.huttcity.govt.nz/Record/ReadOnly?Tab=3&Uri=5122007>

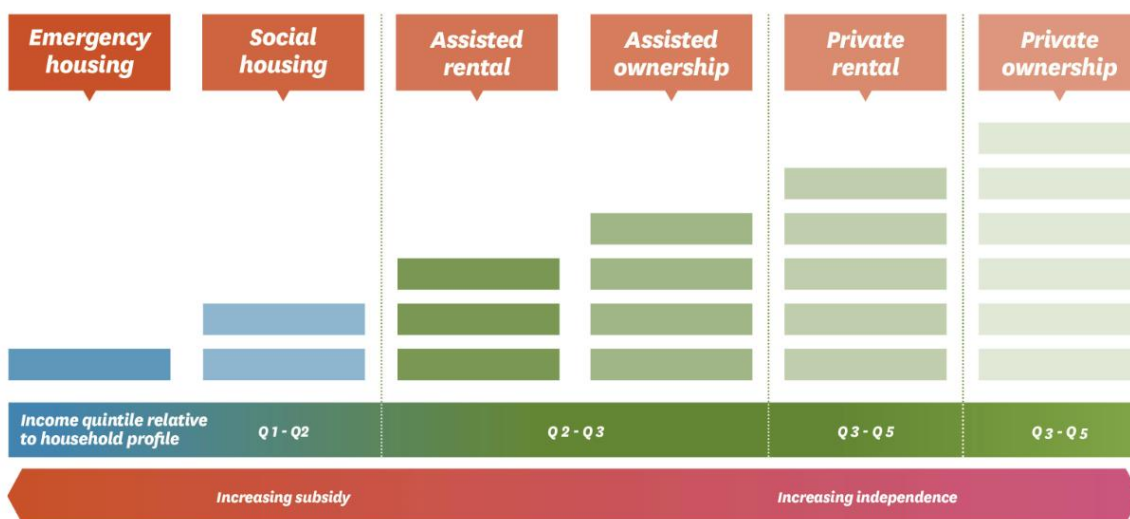


Figure 1: Community Housing, 2021. Housing Continuum. Available at: <https://www.communityhousing.org.nz/housing-continuum/>

Access to Housing:

RPH **strongly supports** the removal of barriers for alternative tenures and new developments such as, increasing the support available for development on whenua Māori, kāinga whenua reform, rent to buy schemes, and shared ownership. Removing barriers to alternative tenures and new developments will give people the opportunity to gain financial equity, and will result in more freedom, security and stable living. Home ownership and equity in housing enables people to provide for their current and future aspirations, as well as generational prosperity and wellbeing. Having healthy, stable, safe housing is critical for wellbeing. Housing impacts on the ability of people to access the support they need to ensure they can actively participate in their communities, engage in employment and education opportunities and have healthy family relationships.^{5,6}

RPH **recommends** more detailed consideration of definitions of affordability both within GPS-HUD and in the implementation framework. Currently many homes and housing developments that are deemed affordable are still out of reach of a large proportion of our population.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input to the Government Policy Statement on Housing and Urban Development via this submission. RPH **strongly supports** the approach taken in the discussion paper.

⁵ Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment, 2014. *He Whare Āhuru He Oranga Tāngata – The Māori Housing Strategy*. Available at: <https://www.hud.govt.nz/assets/Residential-Housing/Maori-Housing/d492576716/He-Whare-Ahuru-He-Oranga-Tangata-The-Maori-Housing-Strategy.pdf>

⁶ Te Matapihi, 2021. *The Māori Housing Crisis - Can COVID Bring Solutions?*. Available at: <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/57176f9f20c6478937696378/t/607385c40017b667b0dff101/1618183695002/THE+MA%CC%84ORI+HOUSING+CRISIS+--+Can+COVID-19+bring+solutions.pdf>