Rebuilding public housing in Aotearoa/New Zealand

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www.healthyhousing.org.nz
www.sustainablecities.org.nz
www.resilienturbancities.org.nz
Outline

• 2018  *Stocktake of Housing* for incoming Labour Coalition Government
• Evidence base from He Kāinga Oranga
• 2019  Housing NZ progress
• Conclusion
2018

- Homeownership 60 year low
- Half of adults owned houses
- 1 in 3 households renting
- Growth in housing < migration
- Private sector withdrew from building affordable housing
- 5-year house price inflation 30%, 2x income rise
- Rents rose 2x incomes
- Auckland housing shortfall 45,000
- New state housing tenants all high priority category
- Growing waiting lists
- Emergency housing grants
- 1 in 100 homelessness in 2016
Increasing inequalities

- Māori (28%) and Pacific (19%) home-ownership declined relatively rapidly compared to European (57%)
- Private rentals older, poorer quality & less stable than owner-occupied
- Growing number of older people who do not own houses
• HRC funded programme on social, economic and environmental determinants of health since 2000

• Primary Prevention
  • Housing, Insulation & Health Study
  • Housing Heating and Health Study
  • Housing, Injury Prevention Intervention Study HIPI/MIPI
  • Housing Outcome and Mould Evaluation HOME
  • NEST study

• Secondary prevention
  • Warm Houses for Elderly New Zealanders WHEZ
  • Well Homes study SHELTER

• Policy quasi-experiment
  • Rental Housing (WOF)
Warm Up NZ: Heat Smart Programme

- 46,555 houses
- Benefit/cost ratio for adults, 3.9:1; for children, 6:1
- Benefit/cost ratio for people over 65, 6:1

Retrofitting insulation creates healthier homes
Updated data linkage study

Intervention & delayed intervention (control)
204,405 houses retrofitted through EECA Warm-up New Zealand (2009-2014)
994,317 residents followed for 3 years baseline, 3 years post intervention

- Reduction in intervention group vs control group hospitalisations
- Reductions greater for cold-related hospitalisations
- Pacific peoples’ & elderly gained most benefit

Next steps:
To look at the impact of insulating houses on:
- Pharmaceutical use
- Excess winter mortality
- Healthcare costs

Caro Fyfe, PhD candidate
Indoor mould exacerbates asthma symptoms & associated with the onset of wheezing?

- Case control study 450 children (12 – 84 mths)

- 150 cases :1st treatment prescribed for wheezing in previous 12 months, 300 matched (gender, age, area) controls.

- Homes assessed for mould by parents, researcher & building assessor

YES! ORs:

Visible mould in child’s bedroom
- Researcher  1.73 (1.14 – 2.63)
- Parent  1.80 (1.44 – 2.25)

Visible mould present house
- Parent  4.89 (2.15 – 11.09)
- Building assessor 1.57 (1.03 – 2.38)

Dr Caroline Shorter
NEST study

Can we reduce wheezing and allergy in infants by improving housing and bedding?

- 461 pregnant women enrolled in the wider Wellington region.
- Provided with a heater for the child’s bedroom (if needed)
- $200 power voucher to help heat baby’s bedroom in their first winter.
- Warm dry new bedding - a baby sleepsack (wool, feather or cotton composite) until they are 2 years old.
- Insulation floor and ceiling of the home where possible

- Allergy test, GP record outcome search and parental reports of wheezing at 2 years of age.
Preventing fall injuries by home modification

3 RCTs: HIPI study (850 households), MHIPI study (250 Māori households), SOS study (1,500 houses).

Modifications HIPI & MHIPI
general modifications to prevent falls (handrails; step edging; grab rails; carpets; outside surfaces)
SOS just repairs to access steps

Warm Homes for Elder New Zealanders

$500 electricity voucher given one study winter to 600 households with older person with COPD

• Households with the voucher used more electricity than those not getting it, but not to the full value of the voucher.

• A bigger difference in low prior-use households
WELL HOMES
MY HOME IS MY MARAE
Is your whare warm & dry?
Kōrero mai

0800 675 675
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Well Homes Wellington

MOULD CLEANING KITS
INSULATION
HEATING
BEDS & BEDDING
VENTILATION
OTHER - I.E. HEALTH OR SOCIAL REFERRALS
CARPET
MINOR REPAIRS
CURTAINS

A/P Nevil Pierse
• Study used IDI address and Before School Check data for a cohort of >300,000 children.

• At 4 years two-thirds (69%) of children had moved one or more times and 12% had moved four or more times.

• Mobility was related to increased socioemotional and behavioural difficulties at age four, $B = 0.58$, $p < .001$ ($B = 0.16$ adjusted).
Residential Tenancies (Healthy Homes Standards) Regulations 2019

- Insulation
- Ventilation
- Heating
- Draught-stopping
- Drainage
- Basic amenities
- Safety hazards
Healthy Housing Standards

**Heating**
A large proportion of rental homes have no heating in living rooms and bedrooms, or the heating is inadequate, inefficient, or unhealthy, and below recommended indoor temperatures.

**Insulation**
Rental homes may not have a sufficient level of insulation in the ceiling and under the floor, and the insulation may not be in a reasonable condition.

**Ventilation**
Many rental homes do not have enough ventilation, particularly in moisture-prone areas such as the kitchen or bathroom, so mould may form.

**Moisture entry and drainage**
Many rental homes are not sufficiently protected from moisture rising from under the floor or through leaks in drains.

**Draught stopping**
Many rental homes, particularly older ones, are draughty, making them cold, and more difficult and costly to heat.
WHO Housing & Health

Setting Housing Standards to Improve Global Health

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Wellbeing and SDGs

- National govt view - social housing = slum housing & should be sold
- Labour-led govt reaffirmed right to housing & role of state in supply
- Increasing new public housing - sets standards for private sector & remediating existing homes
- Adopted world-first well-being budget framework
- Robust system approach to co-benefits
- Climate change addressed as part of well-being
Housing NZ

- Crown Agency with $28.6 billion assets
- Houses 4% of NZ’s 4.8 m population 187,000 people, 65,300 properties
- Major building projects as part of long-term investment planning
- Raised $1.3 billion in sustainability bonds
- 2018-2019 1,472 new state homes (41% increase since 2017/183)
- Broad outcomes and social procurement
- Working closely with local councils
Housing NZ strategies

• New building standard (Homestar 6) above Code & Healthy Housing Guarantee Act; recognises WHO guidelines
• Emphasis on warm, dry, safe & stable housing
• Innovate, Partner, Build: relational contracts with preferred builders - emphasis on safety, apprenticeships & living wage
• Alliance contracts with civil engineers
• Commitment to urban regeneration, social inclusion
• Increased accessibility & customer focussed
Conclusion

• Current government puts high priority on increasing number, proportion & quality of public housing
• Importance of bipartisan support for government role in maintaining & building public housing
• Research evidence base for increasing quality standards & importance of stability strengthens public support
• Emphasis under new Kāinga Ora Homes & Communities organisation for developing increasing capacity to work with and for Māori