

July 2022

Youth Homelessness in Tāmaki Makaurau, Aotearoa New Zealand

*A scoping report prepared for Manaaki
Rangatahi ki Tāmaki Makaurau Youth
Homelessness Collective*

Ngā Wai a Te Tūī
Māori & Indigenous Research
Te Whare Wānanga o Wairaka | Unitec





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Ngā Wai a te Tūi Māori and Indigenous Research Centre

Ngā Wai a Te Tūi is a kaupapa Māori and Indigenous Research Centre, based at Te Whare Wānanga o Wairaka, which provides kaupapa Māori research to support Indigenous innovation and Māori development. 'Ngā Wai a Te Tūi' literally means 'the waters of the tūi'; it emphasises the importance of water to all living things and connects us with the cultural waterways that our tūpuna have protected for hundreds of years. In the cultural landscape of Te Whare Wānanga o Wairaka, the spring Te Wai Unuroa o Wairaka reminds us of our past, and the ways our knowledge systems are embedded in the stories of the land, water and sky. The tūi is the iconic native bird with a repertoire of songs that can be seen and heard in the harakeke of Te Rangimarie, located close to Te Noho Kotahitanga Marae.

Metaphorically, the name of our centre also signals the 'streams' of expertise, disciplines and knowledge that are brought together to enable the tūi (our whānau and communities) to flourish. In this regard, we are a multi-disciplinary kaupapa Māori research group that recognises that real-world research questions are not easily solved by one specific or particular discipline. Rather, a kaupapa Māori transdisciplinary approach requires people from a range of areas to work together in a problem-solving research team.

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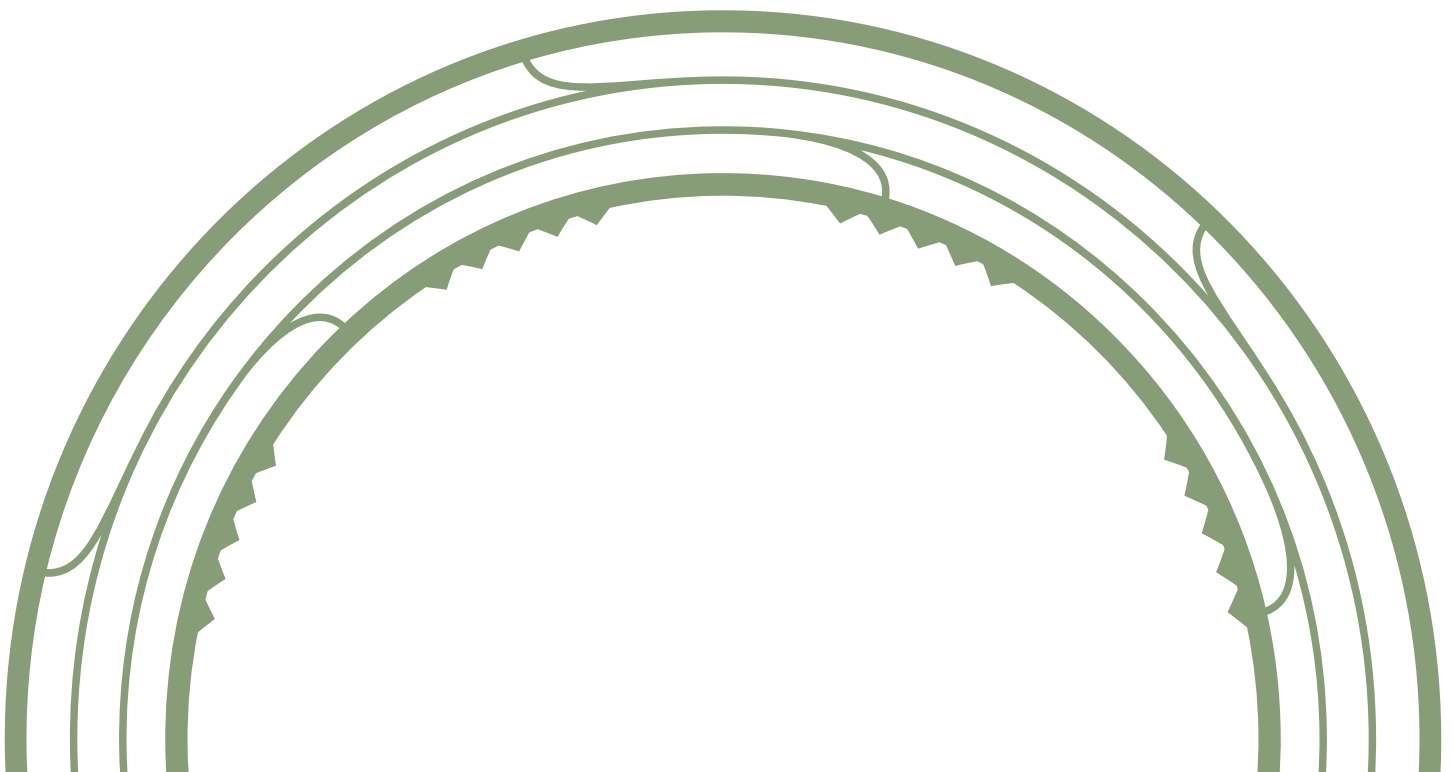


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Glossary

aroha	love
hapū	sub-tribe
hauora	health
iwi	tribe
kāinga	home, village or settlement
kaupapa Māori	a by, for and with Māori approach
manaakitanga	to care for or be hospitable
māra kai	vegetable garden
māra rongoa	medicinal garden
papakāinga	home base, village or settlement, communal land
rangatahi	youth or young people
taitemariki	children
Tāmaki Makaurau	Auckland
taumata	collective of leaders
tuakana–teina	Senior–junior, mentor–mentee
te ao Māori	Māori worldview
Te Tiriti o Waitangi	Te reo Māori version of Treaty of Waitangi
wairuatanga	spirituality
wānanga	to meet and discuss
whakatauki	proverb
whānau	extended family, family group
whanaungatanga	process of establishing relationships, interconnectedness
whakapapa	genealogy or ancestral connections
whenua	ancestral land



Foreword

Homelessness is catastrophic in any phase of life, but is especially difficult for our young people. Symptomatic of a range of complex challenges, homelessness signals real deprivation, when the basic need for shelter cannot be met. Homelessness for youth also represents the loss of stability at a time when having a home base is critical for the exploration of one's identity. Youth should be characterised as a time of growth and development. Exploration, experimentation, discovering your talents, identifying your weaknesses, making mistakes, building a sense of identity, and growing communities of belonging – this is the 'work' during your youth. To endure homelessness during this phase disadvantages the potential of young people to become the people they could, and should, be. Homelessness at this critical stage in one's development limits opportunities, hinders achievements, and can dim hopes, self-confidence and feelings of self-worth.

The situation is more layered and complex for rangatahi Māori (Māori youth). The intergenerational trauma experienced through the dispossession of our homelands remains mostly unresolved, and the disruptions to one's turangawaewae including access to our land and waterways, continue to affect us physically, economically, socially and spiritually. For Māori, the concept of home goes beyond conventional notions of a physical building. Instead, Māori perceive kāinga as places and spaces of significance, that are grounded in whānau and whakapapa. Māori homelessness is inherently associated with landlessness, not just houselessness, but includes the absence of connection to both people and place. The impact felt from a deep sense of land loss, subsequent fractures in whānau and economic impoverishment, and mostly living as tenants in your own country, is not to be underestimated.

If we are to believe that we can become a strong nation that supports thriving whānau and flourishing communities in Aotearoa, youth homelessness is unacceptable. I commend Manaaki Rangatahi on the work you all do and commissioning Jacqueline Paul and Maia Ratana to write this report that reveals a snapshot of the realities of 'youth homelessness', and recommends ways that we might begin to redress the severe situation confronting many of our young people today. Homelessness should not, and cannot, become a societal expectation, and youth homelessness must never be normalised.

Despite the myriad and enormous pressures on young people today and the seeming impossibility of securing a house or home for many young people, there are still whānau, hapū, iwi, marae, and communities, focused on meaningful ways to intervene, support and strengthen our youth – they recognise that this time is crucial in their young lives. This report is part of the positive momentum spurred by a commitment to our young people, lest we become complacent and complicit in enabling youth homelessness to become a societal norm.

Professor Jenny Lee-Morgan

(Waikato, Te Ahiwaru, Ngati Mahuta)

Executive Summary

This scoping report draws attention to youth homelessness in Tāmaki Makaurau, Aotearoa New Zealand, and has been prepared for Manaaki Rangatahi ki Tāmaki Makaurau Youth Homelessness Collective. The report adopts a kaupapa Māori approach that has been undertaken 'by rangatahi, for rangatahi' and is offered as a means to contribute to and support the advocacy work of Manaaki Rangatahi to end youth homelessness.

This scoping report is also part of a broader research programme, 'Urban Intergenerational Kāinga Innovations,' funded by the National Science Challenge: Building Better Homes, Towns and Cities. The research programme is based in the Tāmaki Makaurau region. It recognises the dire need for innovative solutions to deliver safe, secure and affordable housing through socially cohesive processes that support the development of more robust and resilient Māori communities. This scope of work aligns explicitly with the description 'He tātaiwhetu ki te rangi, he rangatahi ki te kāinga: Rangatahi pathways to safe, secure and affordable homes, a rangatahi Māori-led research project.'

Homelessness is on the rise in Aotearoa New Zealand, with half of those experiencing homelessness under the age of 25. Internationally, youth homelessness is well documented, but the local context lacks data and literature. In order to contribute to the growing body of knowledge about youth housing and youth homelessness in Aotearoa, this report analyses relevant academic and policy literature. The report examines key definitions of homelessness and raises some concerns about the current measures and definitions related to youth. It is also important to note the particular intersectional complexities of youth homelessness for Māori and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+) communities.

Homelessness for Māori is attributed to colonisation and historical events that have destabilised Māori systems and kinship structures. The research finds that Māori young people and children are experiencing some of the worst housing deprivation in Aotearoa and there is no doubt that homelessness is a result of structural issues. Many factors influence why young people are experiencing homelessness, therefore we need to become more aware of these factors in order to understand the problem better. Such factors may include housing stress, insufficient government support, lack of public understanding and awareness, and discrimination and racism. Young people also find the social-support systems that are available quite challenging to navigate.

This scoping report gives a brief insight into the realities and needs of young people living in homelessness. The report also highlights three innovative housing initiatives from community-based programmes, followed by six key recommendations to respond to varying issues at the systems level. The report recommends:

Six Key Recommendations

- **01. Respond**
to the immediate needs of rangatahi by providing targeted funding and resources tailored to addressing youth homelessness
- **02. Review**
all research and data pertaining to youth homelessness
- **03. Review**
support services available to young people and children
- **04. Review**
definitions and measures of homelessness to include youth/rangatahi
- **05. Review**
housing and youth policies, plans and strategies
- **06. Reset**
policies and processes to enable kaupapa Māori and youth organisations to lead housing solutions

01.

Introduction

He kokonga whare e kitea, he kokonga ngākau e kore e kitea **A corner of a house may be seen but not the corners of the heart**

This well-known whakataukī reminds us that while the physical structure of a house is easily seen, understanding how people feel can be much more difficult to comprehend. It is an apt way to introduce and acknowledge the topic of youth homelessness, because that, too, has been unseen. While homelessness is visible across Aotearoa New Zealand, youth homelessness is more difficult to discern. It is often unrecognised and overlooked, and we describe it here as a 'hidden' problem.

Despite the invisible nature of youth homelessness, statistics show that more than half (51%) of those experiencing homelessness are under the age of 25,¹ with the largest numbers of young people experiencing housing deprivation in urban centres. This is especially the case in Tāmaki Makaurau, as it currently ranks as one of the world's most unaffordable housing markets.² Low incomes and high living costs means there is immense pressure on many whānau and individuals who are struggling to pay for decent housing, put food on the table and make ends meet. These compounding pressures are leading whānau and youth into homelessness, which is reflected in the growing number of whānau seeking emergency accommodation and the increasing demand for public housing.

This scoping report will draw attention to and make visible the extent of youth homelessness in Tāmaki Makaurau. As such, we will begin to reveal the specific issues surrounding youth homelessness, in the way that the whakataukī directs us to explore. We are also aware that the irony of selecting this whakataukī is that the 'whare' that is referred to is also absent, and is precisely at the core of the problem for many of our young people. The double meaning attributed to the whakataukī in relation to youth homelessness is pertinent. It tells us to look deeply at the issues in order to address not just the physical structure but how our young people feel, as well as the way we ensure their wellbeing and development. Therefore, the aim of this report is to provide an insight into the realities and needs of young people experiencing homelessness in Tāmaki Makaurau. This information is offered as a means of contributing to the ongoing advocacy of the Manaaki Rangatahi collective and others working in this sector.

About this Report

This scoping report has been prepared for the Manaaki Rangatahi ki Tāmaki Makaurau Youth Homelessness Collective (Manaaki Rangatahi). Manaaki Rangatahi consists of people from organisations that provide diverse services to young people across the Tāmaki Makaurau region. This project was initiated and developed through whanaungatanga between Manaaki Rangatahi and Ngā Wai a Te Tūi Māori and Indigenous Research Centre (NWaTT). This report is the result of 12 months of ongoing meetings between Lifewise, a Tāmaki Makaurau-based community organisation, and Ngā Wai a Te Tūi researchers who have been proactively involved in Manaaki Rangatahi.

Ngā Wai a Te Tūi researchers conduct kaupapa Māori research that is most simply described as research by, for and with Māori.³ This approach ensures that mātauranga Māori and Te Ao Māori perspectives are central to our research processes, including our analysis. Therefore, this scoping report is underpinned by kaupapa Māori values and principles, in its aim to investigate youth homelessness in Tāmaki Makaurau. Furthermore, the research hopes to contribute to the limited body of knowledge on youth homelessness, and improve housing and wellbeing outcomes for young people.

Research Team

This scoping report adopts a ‘by rangatahi, for rangatahi’ approach and was undertaken by NWaTT rangatahi Māori researchers Jacqueline Paul (Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Tūwharetoa, Ngāti Kahungunu ki Heretaunga) and Maia Ratana (Ngā Rauru kii Tahi, Ngāti Raukawa, Te Arawa). This is an integral aspect of the project that ensures rangatahi are at the forefront of research that pertains to rangatahi. However, the tuakana-teina method is instrumental to kaupapa Māori research⁴ and, therefore, it is important to acknowledge that this project would not have been possible without

the guidance of Professor Jenny Lee-Morgan (Te Ahiwaru, Ngāti Mahuta), the Director of Ngā Wai a Te Tūi; Bianca Johanson (Te Rarawa), the co-ordinator of Manaaki Rangatahi; and Dr Catherine Mitchell (Taranaki), who assisted in bringing the final report together.

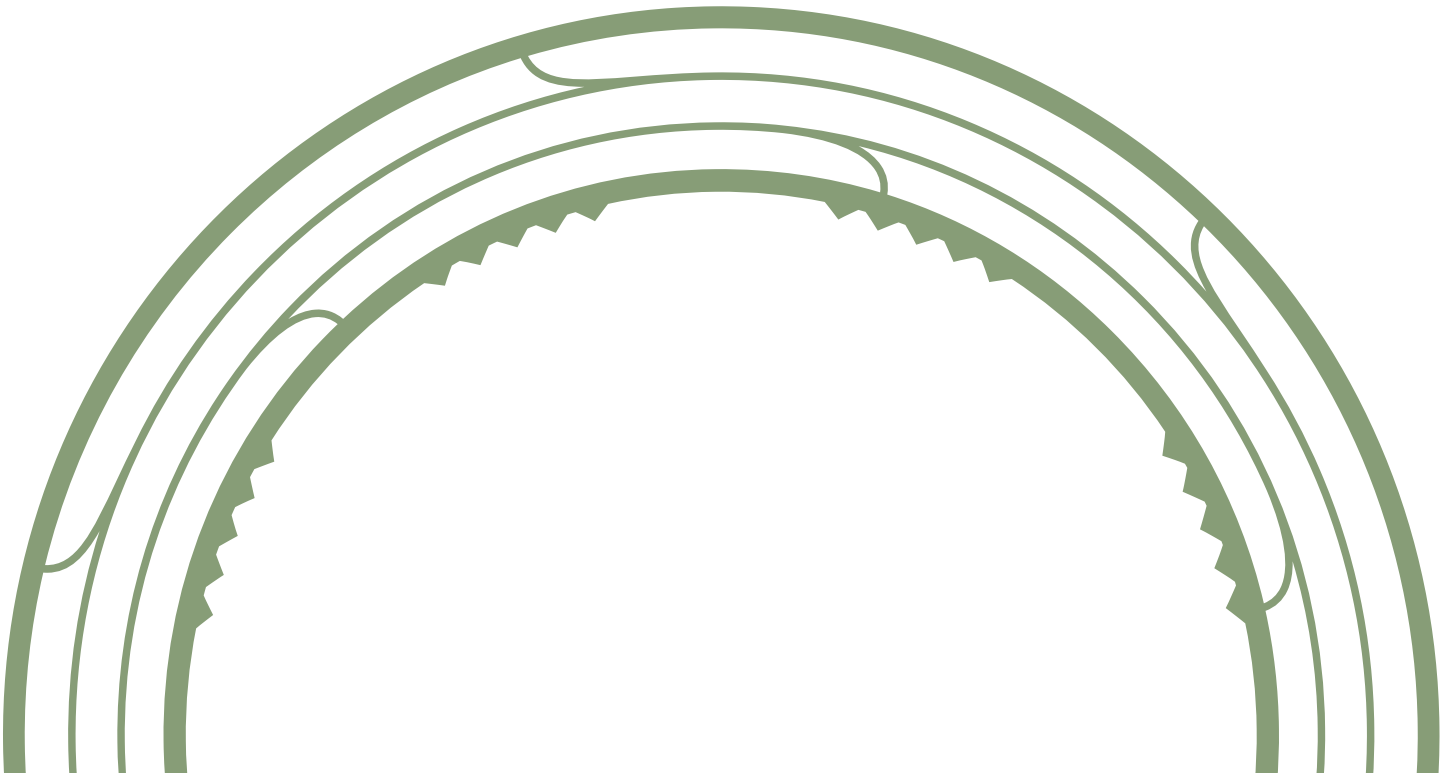
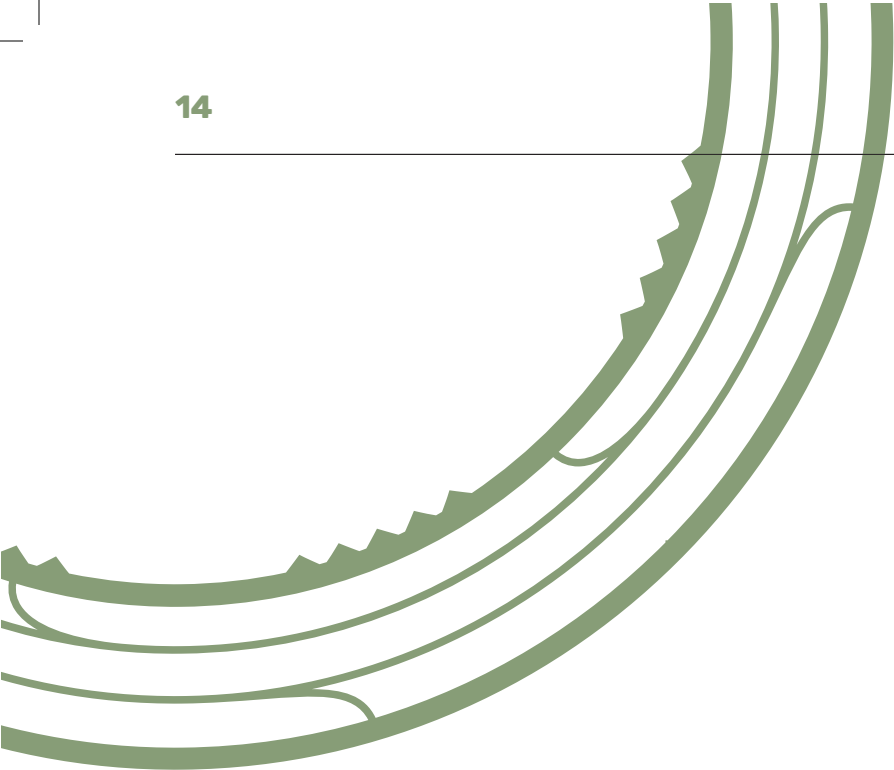
Research question

In collaboration with Manaaki Rangatahi, the overarching research question that guides this report is:

What is the state of youth homelessness in Tāmaki Makaurau, and what are the current policy provisions to address youth homelessness in Aotearoa New Zealand?

Research Aim

The main objective of this scoping report is to investigate youth homelessness within Tāmaki Makaurau to support Manaaki Rangatahi in their collective advocacy for youth-focused housing. For the purposes of this report, youth refers to 16–24 year olds.



Research Methods

Given the funding and time constraints, this scoping report provides a high-level overview of youth homelessness in Tāmaki Makaurau. The scoping report provides a desktop-based review and analysis of relevant academic and policy literature. It also includes three community-based examples of innovative initiatives to address youth homelessness in Tāmaki Makaurau, one of which speaks directly to the establishment of Manaaki Rangatahi. Finally, this report makes six key recommendations for future development in housing and homelessness.

The research features the following:



a) Review of statistical data and information

A review of key statistical data and information is offered to identify the scale of youth homelessness in Tāmaki Makaurau. This section includes key definitions, causes of youth homelessness, and provides an overview of the current support available to young people experiencing homelessness.



b) Review of existing policy and plans

A review is undertaken of central and local government (Auckland Council) plans and policies that seek to respond to and address homelessness. Policy documents from central government have been specifically selected based on key housing policies relevant to homelessness, and local-government policies based on context that is applicable to Tāmaki Makaurau. We also draw on the evidence presented in the Wai 2750 Housing Policy and Services kaupapa inquiry (2021) undertaken by the Waitangi Tribunal.



c) Three community-based examples of innovative initiatives

A brief overview is presented of three case-study examples relevant to addressing youth homelessness in Tāmaki Makaurau. This takes a strengths-based approach and focuses on practice and innovations that are led by local community organisations. These include Manaaki Rangatahi ki Tāmaki Makaurau Youth Homelessness Collective; He Pā Piringa, led by Mā Te Huruhuru Charitable Trust; and My Whare, led by Visionwest Community Trust. We highlight these innovative solutions as they have the potential to significantly impact the housing and wellbeing outcomes for young people experiencing homelessness. This aims to demonstrate the innovative solutions that are kaupapa-driven and focused on improving housing and well-being outcomes for young people experiencing homelessness.

02.

Current State of Youth Homelessness

Homelessness is rapidly increasing in Aotearoa. The 2018 Census indicated that 1% of the population was estimated to be severely housing deprived (homeless)⁵ and, as aforementioned, more than half of those in Aotearoa who are homeless are under 25 years old.⁶ Given young people under the age of 25 only make up 25%⁷ of the overall population, it is deeply concerning that young people and children are some of the most disadvantaged groups who are finding it difficult to access a decent home.⁸ This section briefly reviews existing data and literature pertaining to youth homelessness. It also takes into consideration discussions held with the Manaaki Rangatahi Collective to better understand the state of youth homelessness in Tāmaki Makaurau.

Homelessness is the outcome of structural issues such as unequal wealth distribution, poverty, colonisation, racism and discrimination that have defined a person's life experiences.⁹ These structural determinants have resulted in the overrepresentation of homeless Indigenous peoples across the world, including here in Aotearoa.¹⁰ Such inequalities continue to have dire impacts and have left Māori homeless in their own land. In fact, Māori are four times more likely to be homeless than Pākehā.¹¹ Stats NZ have identified that of the 41,644 people who were considered severely housing deprived in 2018,¹² 18,157 (43.8%), were located in Tāmaki Makaurau.¹³ Furthermore, in 2019, an estimated 43% of homeless in Tāmaki Makaurau were Māori,¹⁴ despite Māori making up only 11.5% of the population in this region.¹⁵

A range of research studies (albeit limited in number) confirms that there is a large and growing population of young people that experience homelessness.^{16, 17, 18} For example, a 2009 study by the Centre for Housing Research found that there were approximately 12,000 at-risk and vulnerable young people aged 17–24 who were in unsafe and/or insecure housing in our country.¹⁹ Similarly, the 2013 census reported nationally that more than 11,076 severely housing-deprived people were aged 15–24, with 5,885 of these young people located in Tāmaki Makaurau.²⁰ In 2018, the Auckland homeless count also found that nearly half of those living in temporary accommodation were children (under 18)²¹ and that Māori were also overrepresented among those living without shelter and in temporary accommodation.²² Taken together, the research on Māori homelessness and youth homelessness clearly indicates that Māori young people and children are experiencing some of the worst housing deprivation in Aotearoa.

Defining Homelessness

Homelessness in Aotearoa is defined by the New Zealand Government as “living situations where people with no other options to acquire safe and secure housing are without shelter, in temporary accommodation, sharing accommodation with a household or living in uninhabitable housing.”²³ Statistics New Zealand (2014) categorises homelessness into four groups:

01. Living situations that provide no shelter, or makeshift shelter including situations such as living on the street, and inhabiting improvised dwellings (e.g., living in a shack or a car).
02. Living in temporary accommodation such as an overnight shelter, or when 24-hour accommodation is provided in a non-private dwelling that is not intended to be lived in long term. This includes hostels for the homeless, transitional supported accommodation for the homeless, and women's refuges. Also included are people staying long term in motor camps and boarding houses.
03. Living situations that provide temporary accommodation for people through sharing someone else's private dwelling. ‘Sharing accommodation’ means that the usual residents of the dwelling are not considered homeless.
04. Living in uninhabitable housing where people reside in a dilapidated dwelling that is considered ‘uninhabitable housing.’²⁴

One of the most common forms of homelessness can involve staying with others,²⁵ which comes under category three. This is particularly true for Māori and other ethnic minorities whose cultural values include the practice of manaakitanga: the extension of hospitality and support to others.²⁶ In some cases, manaakitanga can lead to overcrowding, whereby some members of a household might stay for an extended period even though it is not their primary place of residence. At the time of the 2018 Census, approximately one in five Māori (21%) reported living in overcrowded housing (where there is a need for at least one more bedroom to accommodate occupants), compared with approximately one in nine people (10%) across the total population of Aotearoa.²⁷ However, it is important to note that this data only refers to those who are permanent residents of a dwelling. This is because it is difficult to gather data pertaining to those who are not permanent residents of a house and are instead staying short or long-term and would therefore be considered homeless. This means that the issue of overcrowding could be much worse if those who are not permanent residents were counted.

Little statistical data and qualitative research pertaining to youth homelessness exists in the local context. There is also no collective agreement among government agencies and social services as to who counts as a young person experiencing homelessness. This could in part be because the youth age bracket differs across government departments in Aotearoa, making it difficult to create provisions that specifically impact youth. Moreover, while youth homelessness relates to whānau homelessness, it is important that the specific causes and effects of youth homelessness are better understood in order to end it. Therefore, a clearer definition of youth and, more specifically, youth homelessness is needed to better understand the scope of the issue.



▲ The taumata of Manaaki Rangatahi in wānanga at Te Paea Memorial Marae (2022)

Colonisation and Homelessness

The colonisation of Aotearoa brought urbanisation, displacement, disease, war and death, resulting in the degradation of Māori kinship systems, economic capacity, culture and spiritual connectedness.²⁸ Various colonial interventions, including private land purchases, government land purchases, land confiscation and discriminatory legal mechanisms, caused immense land loss for Māori, preventing them from owning and occupying their own land.²⁹ As a result, many Māori were dislocated and disconnected from their lands and forced to shift away from their extended whānau. These events and tools of assimilation led to the breakdown of Māori systems and the implementation of colonial practices and policies in the health, education, justice and social-service sectors.

The effects of harmful interactions between the crown and Māori do not lie in the distant past, but continue to be felt in relations between contemporary government institutions and Māori. For example, the Youth19 – A Youth 2000 survey found that Māori participants who had been involved with Oranga Tamariki at some point in their lives were more likely to experience poverty, including material and housing deprivation, than those who had no involvement with Oranga Tamariki.³⁰ Further research suggests that Māori adults who have experienced homelessness, have “attributed their earliest entrance into homelessness to their removal from whānau by social services in childhood, and the abuse, neglect and discrimination endured while in State care.”³¹ Evidently, being forcibly removed through State intervention can have profoundly negative consequences on the lives of young Māori and can contribute to later, ongoing experiences of homelessness.³²

Groot and Mace argue that homelessness is endemic to experiences of colonialism, not only for the individual, but also for hapū, iwi and Māori as a population. Many have experienced generations of colonial oppression and, as a result, have been forced to live further from their ancestral homelands.³³ Groot describes the loss of

whanaungatanga and wairuatanga as a form of spiritual homelessness³⁴ and that a narrow focus on homelessness, as simply an absence of physical shelter, denies Māori understandings and experiences of homelessness.³⁵ To be able to understand and define the causes and impacts of homelessness more comprehensively, it is integral that we recognise the significant role that colonisation has played in the displacement and disempowerment of Māori. Research shows that belonging and connection to culture and identity are essential to Māori responses to adversity, and that these concepts should underpin how government agencies and social services respond to the issue of homelessness.^{36, 37, 38} Groot suggests that Māori cultural practices can strengthen one's ability to engage in home making and contribute to a positive sense of self and place even when living on the streets.³⁹



Youth Homelessness

As identified earlier, there is no agreed-upon definition of youth homelessness in Aotearoa. The youth age cohort is defined differently by a range of institutions and organisations, legislation and policy documents, and services. For example, by law, anyone under the age of 18 is recognised as a child or young person; however, the Ministry of Youth Development describes youth as between the ages of 12 and 24 and Te Puni Kōkiri refer to Māori youth as aged between 15 and 24,⁴⁰ illustrating the notable inconsistencies across agencies. Institutional and governmental approaches to defining youth also do not align with Māori notions of rangatahi. In a Māori context, the definition of rangatahi is not necessarily determined by age, but is instead contextual, based on how they associate, and with whom. Well-known Māori scholar Josie Keelan describes rangatahi as “a stage of development that can be associated with age but is not bound by it,”⁴¹ demonstrating the ability for rangatahi to represent a much broader demographic than simply youth in terms of age.

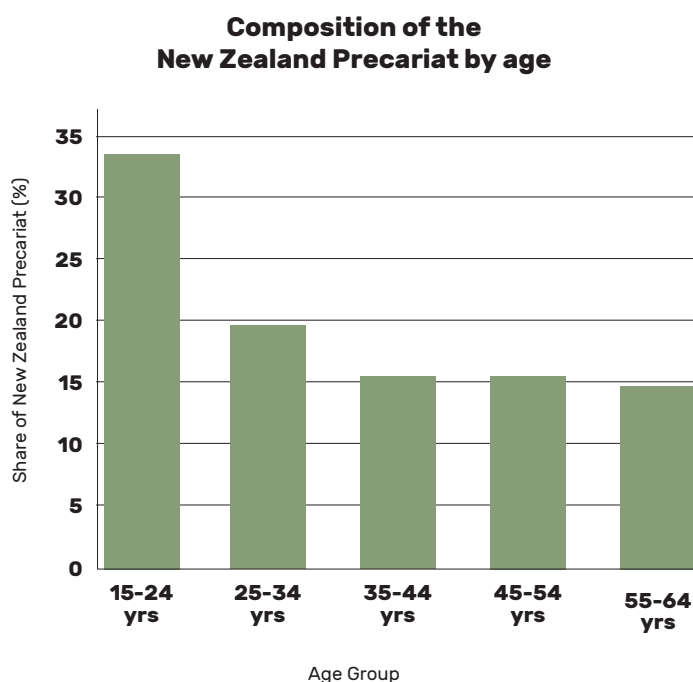
The inconsistent measures and definitions of youth across government agencies and services presents multiple challenges. If a child in Aotearoa is considered at risk of harm, they will become the responsibility of Oranga Tamariki until they turn 18 and are considered an adult.⁴² If a person younger than 18 finds themselves homeless, it is incredibly difficult for them to access emergency housing, as many of the housing providers only cater to families and single adults. As in Canada,⁴³ homeless youth in our country often struggle to access the limited social support necessary to have an income as well as secure and appropriate accommodation. To access emergency housing or the youth payment (maximum \$274.37 per week after tax), a person younger than 18 must be enrolled with Oranga Tamariki or youth services.⁴⁴ If they are not enrolled, they might be able to obtain a place in a transitional house, or money to pay for emergency housing;⁴⁵ however, access to housing and funds requires information such as proof of identification, living and housing costs, and bank account evidence.⁴⁶ For young people who are already

feeling vulnerable and overwhelmed, providing such documentation may prove to be too complicated and stressful and thus they can end up homeless. As Aaron Hendry, a member of Manaaki Rangatahi, has said, “if young homeless approach Work and Income or Oranga Tamariki there is no guarantee of assistance.”⁴⁷ The fact that there is currently more support for single adults than for young people is unacceptable, and highlights the need for immediate intervention to ensure young people have somewhere to go if they need it.

The challenges also suggest that the number of young people experiencing homelessness is possibly under-reported.⁴⁸ There are several reasons that young people experiencing homelessness may not be accounted for. As mentioned, young people struggle to access housing services, which makes it extremely difficult to measure the severity of the issue and identify those who need support.⁴⁹ Secondly, it is common for young people to be referred to as the ‘hidden homeless,’^{50,51} particularly because they tend to move frequently from place to place, usually between friends and extended whānau, making it difficult to quantify them as homeless.⁵² ‘Hidden homeless’ can also include those who are living in cars, garages, tents or overcrowded conditions, meaning that those living on the streets make up only a fraction of those who are experiencing homelessness. Regardless of their current living situation, a young person experiencing homelessness will be classified according to their most recent living situation.⁵³

Young people are disproportionately represented in the precariat, as illustrated in Figure 2. According to Guy Standing, the precariat can be described as a class in the making, characterised by three key measures.⁵⁴ Firstly, those people who are a part of the precariat experience insecure employment, resulting in fluctuating income. Secondly, they are reliant on flexible income and not wealth or enterprise-based income. Thirdly, the precariat has fewer civil, cultural, social, political and economic rights,

and therefore have limited access to state-based benefits.⁵⁵ People between 15 and 25 make up 34% of the precariat across Aotearoa, and with most homeless people originating from precariat households⁵⁶ it is clear that more preventative measures are needed to ensure young people do not continue to experience such serious insecurity as they move into adulthood.



▲ Figure 2. Composition of the New Zealand precariat by age.
Source: Cochrane et al. (2017).⁵⁷

The limited data and literature pertaining to young people and homelessness makes it challenging to precisely ascertain the extent to which homelessness affects youth, particularly in Tāmaki Makaurau. While the data and literature available give a glimpse into the issue, it is feared that youth homelessness is far more severe

than indicated by current studies. International literature recognises the right to housing,⁵⁸ and yet accessing a safe and affordable place to live in Aotearoa can prove extremely difficult for young people. Because of their age, youth are less likely to have secured a steady income to afford a rental property, and are more likely to experience racial, gender and age discrimination.⁵⁹ This can lead to young people becoming more heavily reliant on the government to provide housing and social support. In addition Manaaki Rangatahi have anecdotally identified that youth also experience complex issues such as trauma, addiction and abuse, endure backlash from a lack of public understanding of their situations, and have often encountered a breakdown in connection to whānau, whenua and whakapapa, impacting their mental health (Manaaki Rangatahi Collective, personal communication, February 11, 2021). These contributing factors highlight the need to accurately measure the scale of youth homelessness with a view to providing appropriate and sufficient resourcing and support.

Causes of Youth Homelessness

Young people become homeless for a variety of reasons. In some cases, young people might only need to get away from home for a short period of time for respite, but more concerning, youth homelessness can be far more permanent and an after-effect of trauma, abuse, poverty, racism and stigma.^{60,61} Research also highlights that most homeless young people come from families or households that experience discrimination and social exclusion.⁶² Young people who are most impacted by trauma, violence and poverty are more likely to experience homelessness because they have fewer options and resources.⁶³

The research report *Youth homes: Building the village, understanding the experiences of youth homelessness in Kirikiriroa*, from a study led by Anna Casey-Cox (2018), identifies a number of factors that lead young people to become homeless. They include relationship breakdowns at home, unsafe and dysfunctional home lives and trauma, lack of acceptance of a queer identity, struggles in the education system, lack of a positive identity, state-care failure, barriers to accommodation and support, and a lack of support in the community.⁶⁴ Relationship breakdowns can occur for many reasons, including abuse, neglect or domestic violence.⁶⁵ They may also occur if a young person has committed an offence or disagrees with boundaries, if the young person or their caregiver has drug and/or alcohol addictions, or if the home is not suitable and they leave in search of a better living situation.⁶⁶ While this study was based in Kirikiriroa Hamilton, it is relevant to other urban areas, such as Tāmaki Makaurau, that are facing similar concerns. Again, more research is needed to better understand the causes of youth homelessness and to identify key preventative solutions.

Casey-Cox also points out that those who have experienced housing stress, both with their families and once they leave home, are more likely to depend on the government for their housing needs.⁶⁷ Government-provided housing is also desperately insufficient, with

the current wait-list at almost 25,000 applicants, an increase of 14.6% from the year before,⁶⁸ making it an unreliable source of housing security for young people. A lack of affordable and secure housing has adverse effects on whānau and, by implication, many young people are having to move house frequently, which impacts their education, relationships and employment prospects. Of further concern, if a young person has had a poor experience with government agencies in the past, they are less likely to approach social services for support. This means the young person can be left in a desperate and unsafe situation, and is ultimately more likely to become homeless.

Current literature, albeit limited, indicates that lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+) youth are disproportionately more likely to experience homelessness compared to heterosexual youth.⁶⁹ Internationally, it is estimated that 20–40% of those experiencing homelessness are LGBTIQ+ despite this group only making up 5–10% of the population.⁷⁰ There are no official statistics in Aotearoa to identify how many LGBTIQ+ individuals are experiencing homelessness, let alone any measures of the numbers of Māori queer youth who are experiencing homelessness. However, local research suggests that being kicked out of home because of parental disapproval of their sexuality is one of the most common significant causes leading to young people becoming homeless.⁷¹ When comparing homeless queer youth and heterosexual youth, queer youth reported that they are more likely to suffer from mental-health issues, such as depressive symptoms, post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety, sexual abuse and withdrawn behaviour.^{72,73} These studies clearly indicate the deep harm that queer youth can experience and the need for solutions that consider the distinct needs of our LGBTIQ+ youth.



▲ Manaaki Rangatahi hui hosted at Kāhui Tū Kaha

Youth Homelessness Services and Pathways

Unless you work in the system, [you] have no idea how unfair and discriminatory it is, especially if you're a young Māori person.

– Bianca Johanson, co-ordinator of Manaaki Rangatahi

The social-support system in Aotearoa is poorly resourced and hard to navigate, leaving young people with very few options if they find themselves without a home. Despite community workers, the NGO sector and the government acknowledging that motels are an unsuitable and unsustainable option for young people experiencing homelessness,⁷⁴ it was estimated in 2020 that approximately 2,000 teenagers in Aotearoa were housed in emergency motel accommodation.⁷⁵ Emergency housing is defined as temporary accommodation provided for people who are unable to access housing that is adequate for their needs.⁷⁶ However, in motels, which are often used for emergency housing, vulnerable young people can be put at risk of violence and abuse, because they are housed alongside adults without appropriate supervision or security.⁷⁷

Bianca Johanson, co-ordinator of Manaaki Rangatahi, says, “rangatahi have been incredibly mismanaged and let down across the spectrum.”⁷⁸ If a 16- or 17-year-old finds themselves homeless today, they will be referred to a youth-payment provider for financial and housing support. In Tāmaki Makaurau, the youth-payment provider varies across the city. For example, in Central Auckland they would be referred to Youthline, but in West Auckland they would be sent to Strive. As mentioned previously, to access this service, a young

person must be enrolled in the system or otherwise go through the process of enrolling. This requires personal information such as identification and evidence of a bank accounts,⁷⁹ which some young people do not have. From there, a young person may or may not be sent to an emergency-housing provider, which may or may not be appropriate for youth. Alternatively, young people might contact a provider such as Lifewise directly to ask for support, but because there are limited beds for youth across Tāmaki Makaurau, they are at risk of being turned away or referred to emergency housing that is inappropriate and unsafe and may cause further mental and physical trauma.⁸⁰

The Manaaki Rangatahi collective have discussed several issues that they think are critical to better understand youth homelessness (Manaaki Rangatahi Collective, personal communication, February 11, 2021). One thing they find particularly concerning is not knowing what happens to youth who get turned away from support services or youth who do not access these services at all. They also question whether the services that are in place are effective, as there is no consistent data across the different services and providers that clearly shows how many young people are successfully finding safe and secure housing. There also seems to be a lack of preventative measures, programmes and policies directed at young people experiencing homelessness, and a need for a defined age bracket for young people. This information could help youth-housing and social-support providers co-ordinate a more appropriate system for young people experiencing homelessness. In the meantime, our most vulnerable young people continue to be turned away from government agencies, social and housing services remain under-resourced and under-funded, and young people are left with no choice but to try and navigate a system that has repeatedly failed them.

03.

Policy Documents

This section intends to provide an overview of policies that are most relevant for those supporting young people experiencing homelessness across the housing sector. We discuss seven key policy documents that are particularly relevant to youth homelessness in the contemporary context. Policies from the central government have been specifically selected based on housing policy, and local-government policies have been selected that are relevant to the Tāmaki Makaurau context. Three of the policy documents are located at central-government level and four at local-government level. They are:

-
01. The Government Policy Statement – Housing and Urban Development
 02. Aotearoa New Zealand Homelessness Action Plan (2020–2023)
 03. MAIHI Ka Ora – Māori Housing Strategy
 04. Auckland Plan 2050
 05. Kia Whai Kāinga Tātou Katoa Regional Cross-Sectoral Homelessness Plan Strategic Framework 2020–2030
 06. Kāinga Strategic Action Plan
 07. I Am Auckland – The Children and Young People's Plan
-

The review highlights whether a plan or policy identifies or recognises youth homelessness, and whether it directly funds initiatives that support youth homelessness. The analysis includes reference to advocacy groups working in the housing sector and draws on the evidence presented in the Wai 2750 Housing Policy and Services Kaupapa Inquiry, which features youth homelessness.

Central Government

Government Policy Statement - Housing and Urban Development

The Government Policy Statement – Housing and Urban Development (GPS – HUD) is a system strategy for housing and urban development that is led by the central government in partnership with other agencies and parties from across the sector.⁸¹ The GPS – HUD articulates a vision in which “everyone in Aotearoa New Zealand lives in a home, and within a community, that meets their needs and aspirations.”⁸²

There are four key outcomes that this plan aims to achieve

Four Key Outcomes

- **01.**
Thriving and resilient communities,
- **02.**
Wellbeing through housing,
- **03.**
Thriving and resilient communities,
- **04.**
An adaptive and responsive system.⁸³

The GPS – HUD is high level and requires further detail as to how its objectives will be achieved. For instance, the partnership that this plan seeks to achieve through working with Māori communities and organisations will be essential in addressing youth homelessness nationwide. There is also a need for a more targeted approach to addressing youth homelessness and improving the lives of youth living in precarity. The GPS – HUD should take into consideration the concerns that have been raised by the Child Poverty Action Group – that some rangatahi feel safer on the street than in transitional housing; therefore, there is an urgent need to provide appropriate, accessible housing services for rangatahi who do not have secure housing.⁸⁴

Aotearoa New Zealand Homelessness Action Plan (2020–2023)

The Aotearoa New Zealand Homelessness Action Plan (HAP) is this country's primary planning document aimed at preventing and reducing homelessness.⁸⁵ The plan is led by the central government and sets out a framework to facilitate and co-ordinate responses to homelessness across the sector. The plan, encompassing \$300 million in funding, provides a broader approach to the issues of homelessness, giving effect to the government's vision that "homelessness is prevented where possible, or is rare, brief and non-recurring."⁸⁶ The plan focuses on four key areas: prevention, supply, support and system enablers. Notably, there is one action within the plan that focuses on expanding housing support for young people, but only youth leaving Oranga Tamariki care.⁸⁷ This single action focuses only on young people involved with the system and does not address those who fall outside of State care.

The HAP makes specific references to supporting and promoting kaupapa Māori approaches to addressing homelessness; however, it does not identify key aspects relevant to youth homelessness. While youth homelessness is connected to whānau homelessness, there is still a need for a specific provision for youth. Young people face distinct challenges in accessing housing and are disproportionately represented in the population of people experiencing homelessness.⁸⁸ This perspective aligns with the views of Te Matapihi He Tirohanga Mō Te Iwi Trust, the national Māori housing advocates, who state in their Briefing to Incoming Ministers of Housing and Māori Development 2021,⁸⁹ regarding the Homelessness Action Plan, that "more emphasis is needed within the HAP to address chronic youth homelessness impacting many tamariki and rangatahi. In Auckland, children make up almost a third of those who are homeless."⁹⁰

This is also a concern for Manaaki Rangatahi as the HAP does not make specific reference to youth

homelessness, which is especially disappointing. Many advocates working in the youth homelessness space participated in the engagement process to develop this plan and identified the need to include youth. Several key points were raised from the South Auckland workshop in the earlier development of the HAP. Critical issues that participants highlighted include:

01. A need to support a variety of people in a variety of ways ... youth-specific and targeted support, supply, policies, funding.
02. Tailor support to people's needs ... look at what groups might contribute, e.g., youth, kaumatua (summary received via email to participants from Jeremy Steel, Manager of Housing Needs and Responses at the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, October 29, 2019).

Yet when the plan was published, there was no recognition of youth homelessness or youth-specific provisions (beyond Oranga Tamariki) until the first progress report of the HAP, which was released in September 2020. The progress report places a strong emphasis on the gaps in the plan, and focuses on building and improving existing responses including "responses for cohorts at risk of homelessness with an initial focus on rangatahi/young people."⁹¹

Given the impact of Covid-19 and changing circumstances, the progress report also recognises that the long-term actions need to be brought forward to respond to the increasing pressures on whānau. This acknowledgement is a step in the right direction and a key point that Manaaki Rangatahi have advocated for, even before the pandemic hit. We are slowly

seeing these changes and contributions to the youth homelessness space and, as a result of the HAP, in February 2021, a single rangatahi homelessness initiative was funded in Whangārei under the Local Innovation and Partnership Fund.⁹² However, other than this key initiative, the Homelessness Action Plan fails to specifically address the needs of young people experiencing homelessness.



▲ Manaaki Rangatahi hui at the south Auckland homelessness action plan engagement hui

MAIHI Ka Ora – National Māori Housing Strategy 2021–2051

The MAIHI Ka Ora – National Māori Housing Strategy is a government strategy for Māori housing led by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (MHUD).⁹³ The strategy builds on the MAIHI Framework for Action, developed in partnership with Te Puni Kōkiri and co-designed with several Māori organisations working across the housing sector. The strategy focuses on six key priorities:

Six Key Priorities

- 01. Māori–Crown partnerships;
- 02. Māori-led local solutions;
- 03. Māori housing supply;
- 04. Māori housing support;
- 05. Māori housing systems; and
- 04. Māori housing sustainability.

The strategy is strengths-based and focuses specifically on whānau. For example, as part of the MAIHI framework action plan, it aims to accelerate help for whānau who are experiencing homelessness and housing stress. Though the strategy recognises homelessness generally and does not attend to youth homelessness specifically, it does include references

to the Youth19 Survey.⁹⁴ This study focuses attention on housing deprivation for young people and uses five key indicators: severe housing deprivation; inadequate housing; families splitting up because of inadequate housing; housing financial stress; and frequently moving houses. Amidst the study's many findings, it was notable that housing deprivation was found to be unevenly spread among Māori and Pacific young people.

The study found that “more than 2 in 5 Māori and Pacific youth experience housing deprivation compared to 1 in 5 for Pākehā and other European youth.”⁹⁵

Yet, there are no substantial actions in this plan to address youth homelessness, even though this issue is also highlighted in stage one of the Wai 2750 kaupapa inquiry claim.⁹⁶ Furthermore, due to the limited capacity of Māori housing providers and services working with youth experiencing homelessness, it is proving challenging to implement a kaupapa Māori approach within the Māori housing space (to date, Kāhui Tū Kaha are the only kaupapa Māori housing providers working directly with rangatahi experiencing homelessness), despite the obvious need for Māori-specific approaches to addressing these issues. This requires a broader discussion across the sector on how to accommodate youth experiencing homelessness and to reiterate that this needs to be included as a priority in the MAIHI Ka Ora strategy and implementation plan.

Local Government – Auckland Council

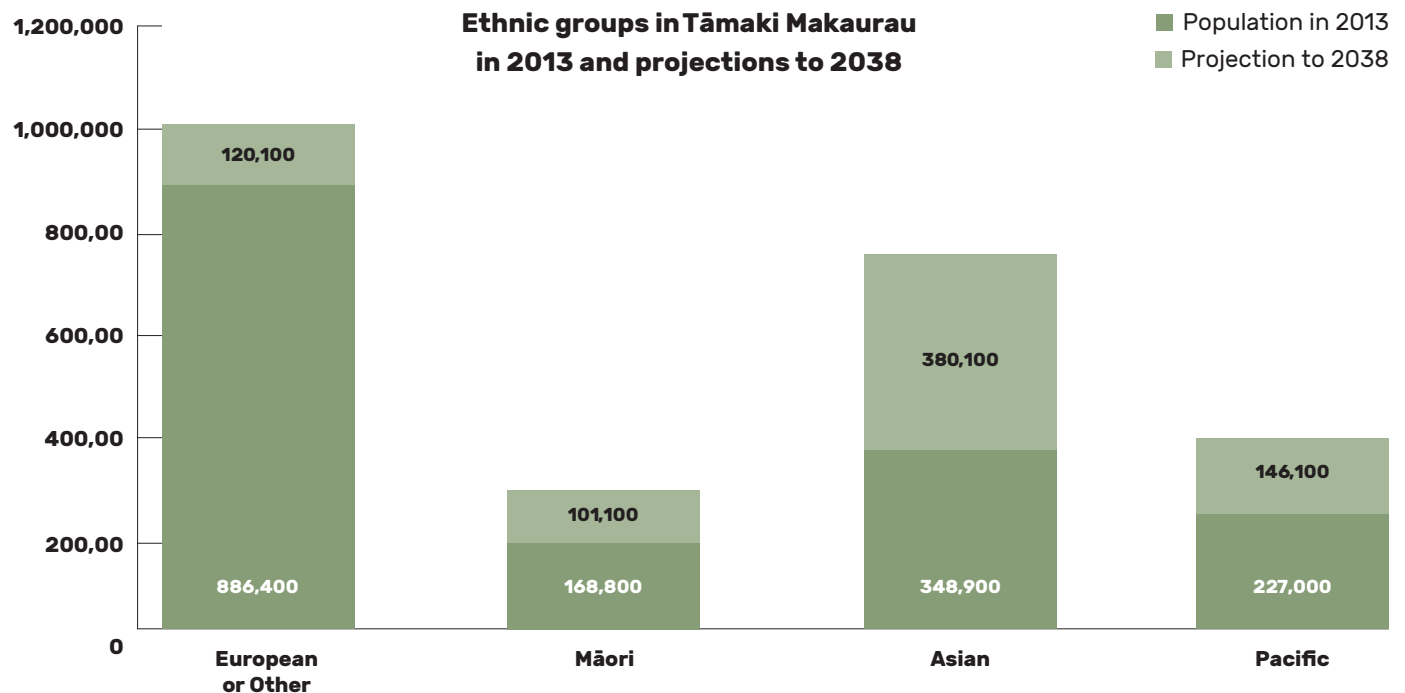
Auckland Plan 2050

The Auckland Plan 2050, developed by Auckland Council, provides a long-term spatial plan for Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland.⁹⁷ This plan is pivotal in ensuring that we are future focused when addressing the complex challenges Tāmaki Makaurau faces and will continue to face, including homelessness.

Six Key Outcomes

- **01.**
Belonging and Participation;
- **02.**
Māori Identity and Wellbeing;
- **03.**
Homes and Places;
- **04.**
Transport and Access;
- **05.**
Environment and Cultural Heritage; and
- **06.**
Opportunity and Prosperity.⁹⁸

The plan also provides an extensive overview of Māori demographics in Tāmaki Makaurau and includes forecasted population growth over the next three decades. For example, it forecasts that the Māori population will make up 11.6% of the Tāmaki Makaurau population by 2038 and while the Māori population will age, it will also continue to maintain a youthful population structure (Figure 3).⁹⁹



▲ Figure 3. Ethnic groups in Tāmaki Makaurau. Source: Auckland Council (2018).¹⁰⁰

Under the outcome 'Māori Identity and Wellbeing,' Focus Area 1 is to "meet the needs and support the aspirations of tamariki and their whānau."¹⁰¹ Under this Focus Area, a provision identifies "improving the specific needs of vulnerable tamariki and whānau, particularly whānau who are experiencing substandard housing and homelessness."¹⁰² Focus Areas 3 and 4 are also highly relevant, and speak to the potential to grow intergenerational wealth, rangatahi leadership, education and employment outcomes. Further, under the outcome 'Homes and Places,' homelessness is used as a measure to track progress. This is helpful, as it could provide data more specifically about youth homelessness.

The Auckland Plan 2050 also recognises that homelessness is affecting groups such as "low-income households (both working and beneficiaries), sole parent households, and young people (in particular gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and intersex – GLBTI)." It acknowledges that there are diverse groups of young people and that they experience a range of distinctive challenges, highlighting the need for tailored support services. According to Arwen Sommer in an interview with RainbowYOUTH,

one in five trans people in Aotearoa have experienced homelessness,¹⁰³ and GLBTI may feel safer with services that specialise in working with young GLBTI people rather than mainstream homelessness services. As a targeted response under the Auckland Plan 2050, Auckland Council directly funds a RainbowYOUTH homelessness advisor to support this particular group. This is a positive step forward and the Auckland Plan provides critical levers for Manaaki Rangatahi to advocate for a co-ordinated approach to youth homelessness as well as a tool to monitor local government's progress and response to youth homelessness.



▲ Bianca Johanson presenting to the Auckland youth advisory panel on youth homelessness at the Auckland Town Hall

Kia Whai Kāinga Tātou Katoa Regional Cross-Sectoral Homelessness Plan Strategic Framework 2020–2030

Kia Whai Kāinga Tātou Katoa is a new framework led by Auckland Council that aims to progress the cross-sectoral homelessness plan for Auckland.¹⁰⁴ The plan also seeks to interact and align with the Aotearoa Homelessness Action Plan (discussed previously), giving effect to the government's vision to prevent and reduce homelessness. The Kia Whai Kāinga Tātou Katoa 2020–2030 Strategic Framework envisions a city where “all Aucklanders have a place to call home” and makes explicit references to young people and children. The framework is underpinned by nine principles, two of which recognise kāinga and Te Tiriti o Waitangi, both of which are critical elements in addressing youth homelessness. One of the nine principles specifically refers to “prioritising rapid access to stable housing for everyone facing homelessness particularly children and young people.”¹⁰⁵ This is a strategic action identified by local government as an important intervention, and can be achieved by developing pathways for youth to gain housing stability and security while ensuring they have the appropriate support. This reflects what local leadership recognises as a step forward in tackling youth homelessness and will help guide the council in how they invest in initiatives that strive to end youth homelessness, especially in the Tāmaki Makaurau context where the issue is particularly severe. The framework requires further analysis and evaluation as it is yet to be fully operationalised.

Kāinga Strategic Action Plan

The Kāinga Strategic Action Plan is led by the Independent Māori Statutory Board. It sets out several key priorities to improve housing outcomes for Māori in Tāmaki Makaurau.¹⁰⁶ The Kāinga Strategic Action Plan consists of six targeted directions, one of which has a focus on homelessness. Direction 3 identifies the need to end homelessness as a critical kāinga outcome. One of the critical headline outcomes also references the need to “identify and grow funding and programme delivery options and opportunities to better serve Māori and whānau in need.”¹⁰⁷ This is important for addressing youth homelessness, which, as has already been mentioned, is inherently connected to whānau homelessness. In addition, the plan also identifies the need to review the definition of homelessness to ensure that it is fit for purpose for service providers. This is important given the lack of settled definitions of youth homelessness; this inadequacy could be reviewed centrally by MHUD and Statistics NZ, which might prompt the need to record data relevant to this specific cohort. The lack of definitions for youth homelessness could be discussed and explored in the programme of work regarding Māori housing data, which is also identified in the MAIHI Ka Ora National Māori Housing Strategy.

Further, the principle of kāinga, as reflected in this plan, is critical in the context of understanding Te Tiriti o Waitangi in the housing context, especially for rangatahi Māori. Targeted recognition of youth homelessness across plans and policies is fundamental to addressing inequities in housing,¹⁰⁸ especially under Articles 2 and 3 of Te Tiriti o Waitangi.¹⁰⁹ The concept of kāinga shifts mainstream thinking of housing as a commodity and repositions a Māori-centric worldview and approach in the housing discourse that recognises connection to whenua. Further detailed research and analysis is required regarding critical Te Tiriti policy development to improve policy quality, strengthen relationships between Māori and the Crown, and advance housing outcomes for rangatahi Māori.¹¹⁰

I Am Auckland – The Children and Young People's Plan

I Am Auckland outlines Auckland Council's commitment to children and young people in Tāmaki Makaurau.¹¹¹ The development of the plan was led by the Youth Advisory Panel and consists of seven key goals:

Seven Key Goals

- **01.**
Voice;
- **02.**
Belonging;
- **03.**
Health and Wellbeing;
- **04.**
Fair Go;
- **05.**
Connected;
- **06.**
Opportunity; and
- **07.**
Whakapuawai.

Notably, the plan does not necessarily recognise youth homelessness, but instead focuses on healthy housing and the lack of access to affordable housing.

The plan encourages Auckland Council to work in partnership with young people and children through numerous opportunities. Auckland Council engages with the Auckland Youth Advisory Panel, which is set up to co-design and co-develop strategies, plans and policies that affect under-25s. A similar approach could be adopted

in relation to the Aotearoa New Zealand Homelessness Action Plan engaging with a diverse range of young people with lived experiences (such as homelessness) to ensure they are heard, valued, and directly inform national plans and policies.

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on young people and children.¹¹² Nationally, the Office of the Auditor-General recognised that

“between 633 and 911 children are living in private rental properties paid for by the emergency housing grant as of 29 May 2020.”¹¹³

Locally, the I Am Auckland – The Children and Young People's Plan September 2020 progress report also highlighted the challenges that young people face when it comes to housing and experiencing homelessness. The report noted that tamariki and rangatahi Māori have experienced more significant impacts than other ethnic groups, and acknowledges that there has been “limited safe and secure emergency housing available for rangatahi Māori to access.”¹¹⁴ These issues are not new. Without significant intervention and an increase in housing, we will continue to see a rise in young people and children living in emergency housing and experiencing homelessness.

Gaps and Opportunities

The policies and strategies that come from policy frameworks are critical to addressing youth homelessness, as they guide the decision-making process and inform the allocation of funding and resources. Because the design and implementation of housing policy is centralised, it can be challenging for many communities working locally and in the regions to engage and take part in policy cycle processes.

Access to policy design and development is one of the many barriers Manaaki Rangatahi and young people encounter when trying to contribute to ending homelessness. Engaging with youth voices can provide a powerful impetus for system change but it is unclear in the design of the plans and policies presented if and how young people have been involved in shaping strategies and programmes.

As part of this discussion, a table has been formulated to better understand if and how the examined policy provisions address youth homelessness in Aotearoa. The table highlights whether the plan or policy identifies or recognises youth homelessness and whether it directly funds initiatives that support ending youth homelessness. It is also important to note that recognising youth homelessness in national and local plans and policies is not a 'silver bullet,' as there is significant work required to implement such plans into our communities. It is merely one step towards ensuring youth prioritisation, but still requires a broader, collective and co-ordinated approach from everyone working across the sector.

The table also reveals the sparsity of youth homelessness in national plans and youth policies compared to local plans. For example, there is no provision for youth homelessness in the national Aotearoa New Zealand Homelessness Action Plan (2020–2023) compared to the plans and policies designed and delivered by Auckland Council, which mentions youth several times. This is concerning, as a significant amount of resourcing is held and allocated by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, which is not redistributed to local organisations and councils. This creates further difficulty for those hoping to access resources such as services and local

providers, who are expected to compete nationally for funding to address youth homelessness. This analysis also illustrates the significant gaps in policies and plans, and identifies areas of concern that require more research, advocacy and engagement with services to improve current provisions.

Date	Policy Document	Does this plan/ policy identify or recognise rangatahi homelessness?	Has this policy directly funded initiatives that support rangatahi homelessness?
Central Government			
2020	Aotearoa New Zealand Homelessness Action Plan (2020-2023)	✗	✓
2021	Government Policy Statement - Housing and Urban Development ⁹⁹	✗	✗
2021	MAIHI Ka Ora - National Māori Housing Strategy 2021-2051 ¹⁰⁰	✗	✗
Local Government			
2021	Kia Whai Kāinga Tatou Katoa Regional Cross-sectoral Homelessness Plan Strategic Framework 2020-2030	✓	✓
2018	Auckland Plan 2050 ¹⁰¹	✓	✓
2018	Kāinga Strategic Action Plan	✗	✗
2014	I am Auckland The Children and Young People's Plan	✗	✗

Based on the findings and brief analysis of this review, we provide an overview of the Wai 2750 Housing Policy and Services Inquiry led by the Waitangi Tribunal, which features rangatahi homelessness. It is of particular importance that the Wai 2750 Kaupapa Inquiry into housing policy and services be mentioned here, as this report will hopefully contribute to and support the inquiry, particularly when discussing youth homelessness. The inquiry raises issues in regards to housing that have been brought to the tribunal from across Aotearoa. As described by the tribunal, “many of the related claims allege Crown failure to ensure an adequate standard of housing for Māori, both rural and urban, or to deliver State services, programmes and support enabling Māori access to adequate housing.”¹¹⁵ There are four key themes that guide the inquiry:

Four Key Themes

- **01.** Housing policy, practice and regulation of the housing market;
- **02.** Social housing: the provision of ‘public housing’ by the government (central and/or local);
- **03.** Use and development of Māori land for housing;
- **04.** Relationship between poor physical and mental health (and other socioeconomic factors) and housing.¹¹⁶

Stage one of the inquiry looks into homelessness, and youth homelessness was identified as a critical issue that is explored in the following key questions:¹¹⁷

- 01.** Does the government provide enough support for youth who find themselves homeless?
- 02.** What services are there currently in place for at-risk youth?
- 03.** Is there a connection between homelessness and domestic violence?
- 04.** Are there statistics available for the number of youth that are considered homeless? What about Māori youth?
- 05.** What type of issues are faced by students struggling for accommodation?

Unlike the policies and plans outlined in the previous section, claimants and representatives of groups such as Manaaki Rangatahi were given the opportunity to present evidence at the Wai 2750 hearing, and a range of issues was discussed concerning housing quality: overcrowding in current housing circumstances; the lack of personal safety for youth being homeless, including stories of rape, violence, criminal activity, substance abuse and prostitution.¹¹⁸

The Crown also formally acknowledged the need for increased support for young people experiencing homelessness. On 8 November 2021, in the closing submission by the Crown, counsel presented their response to stage one of the inquiry into homelessness. Regarding youth homelessness, the Crown acknowledged that more needs to be done to increase housing support and services for youth experiencing homelessness. The Crown referred specifically to the Homelessness Action Plan and mentioned that while “work is currently being progressed to develop initiatives that focus on specific support to rangatahi/young people,”¹¹⁹ the Homelessness Action Plan still needs more work when responding to

youth homelessness. The Crown also acknowledged that there is a significant gap in data specific to rangatahi Māori housing needs, which expert witnesses also identified.¹²⁰ More data and evidence-based initiatives will enable Aotearoa to determine the true scale of the youth homelessness issue and enable opportunities for cross-sectoral responses to take a more co-ordinated and targeted approach.



▲ Jacqueline Paul and Bianca Johanson presenting evidence on youth homelessness for stage one of the WAI2750 Housing Inquiry led by the Waitangi Tribunal – Hui held at Te Puea Memorial Marae (2021) Photo by Brook Turner

04.

Innovative Case-Study Examples

Case studies were undertaken for this report, highlighting some of the positive initiatives led by Manaaki Rangatahi and its members, which have been developed to tackle youth homelessness. It is important to include these case studies to show the innovative and inspiring work Manaaki Rangatahi members are doing on the ground.

These are people who know intimately the needs of young people experiencing homelessness and have accordingly taken it into their own hands to find solutions. These initiatives not only support young people but demonstrate that solutions are possible with the right support, resourcing and leadership. These case studies also display the impact Manaaki Rangatahi is having as a collective who, despite having little resourcing, work collaboratively to develop strategies that will change the circumstances of youth affected by homelessness.

The following case studies have been produced by three key organisations:

Three Key Organisations

- **01. Manaaki Rangatahi**
the establishment of Manaaki Rangatahi ki Tāmaki Makaurau, the Auckland-based youth homelessness collective led by Bianca Johanson;
- **02. He Pā Piringa**
He Pā Piringa by Mā Te Huruheru Charitable Trust, a rangatahi-led housing solution founded by Māhera Maihi; and
- **03. My Whare**
My Whare by Visionwest, a rangatahi housing programme facilitated by Brook Turner.



▲ Manaaki Rangatahi hui hosted at Rainbow Youth



▲ Manaaki Rangatahi visit Visionwest tiny where



Case Study 1

Manaaki Rangatahi ki Tāmaki Makaurau - Youth Homelessness Collective

“Manaaki” to protect and care for
“Rangatahi” refers to young person or people

Mehemea ka moemoeā ahau, ko ahau anake.
Mehemea ka moemoeā tātou, ka taea e tātou,
If I dream alone, only I benefit. If we all dream together
we can all succeed together. – Te Puea.

Manaaki Rangatahi is a collective based in Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland. The name of the collective was inspired by Te Manaaki Tangata, a programme that was initiated in 2016 by Te Puea Memorial Marae in Māngere. In the legacy of Waikato leader Te Puea Herangi, the marae led a kaupapa Māori response to homelessness to support whānau by exercising the traditional cultural values and practices of manaakitanga. Te Puea Memorial Marae inspired the Manaaki Rangatahi collective to exercise manaakitanga.

The collective was founded in 2018 to consolidate the frontline work being undertaken by a number of organisations trying to tackle youth homelessness. Since its establishment, the collective continues to grow and includes organisations such as VOYCE Whakarongo Mai, Auckland City Mission, Quality Education Services, E Tipu E Rea Whānau Services, Lifewise, Strive Community Trust, RainbowYOUTH and Visionwest. Manaaki Rangatahi has been included as a case study because it was initiated not by the organisations themselves, but by the people who work for them.

These are people who have observed firsthand the impact homelessness has on young people and as a result took it upon themselves to collaborate and share their experiences, resources and ideas for ending youth homelessness. The sector is under-resourced and Manaaki Rangatahi members have realised that if they hope to create real change, they need to work collectively.

Manaaki Rangatahi work tirelessly to ensure young people have a safe place to live, through advocacy and collaboration, and through combining resources. The collective's purpose is to end youth homelessness and support new initiatives and, in some cases, proven responses to youth homelessness. Working with young people during their first experience of housing

instability aims to prevent long-term (adult) homelessness. In turn, proactive, evidence-based responses to youth homelessness will significantly mitigate the chances of repeated experiences of homelessness, thus reducing Aotearoa New Zealand's long-term homeless numbers as youth move into adulthood.



Case Study 2

He Pā Piringa by Ma Te Huruhuru Charitable Trust - Rangatahi-Led Housing Solutions

Review by Mahera Maihi

Photos provided by: Mahera Maihi (2021)

Mā Te Huruheru Charitable Trust (MTH) is a ‘by Māori, for Māori’ organisation that provides services and programmes for taitamariki in South Auckland. MTH have a strong focus on whānau, whare, whenua and wairua, and there are five key principles by which they operate.

These are: (1) nurturing whakapapa and links between whānau; (2) enhancing opportunities for success and encouraging positive outcomes for taitamariki Māori and their whānau; (3) improving, maintaining and restoring the health of te reo Māori me ōnā tikanga; (4) maintaining the role of kaitiaki; and (5) promoting and facilitating the education and dissemination of education, employment, enterprise and health-information opportunities for whānau.¹²²

MTH provides 24/7 Māori-centred support services for youth, with a strong focus on identity and tino rangatiratanga. The programme includes, but is not limited to, culture, whānau, wairua, hinengaro, tinana, health, mental health, social or financial needs and, in the near future, long-term sustainable housing. MTH is a relatively new charitable trust, having been established in 2018, but already has a strong track record in delivering programmes such as work readiness, suicide prevention and health programmes with te ao Māori at the forefront.

MTH is set to open He Pā Piringa in 2022, a kaupapa Māori housing project designed to provide up to 12 months of housing for young people facing homelessness and housing insecurity. Made up of ten two-bedroom units in a gated community in South Auckland, this housing complex for young people aged 17–21 sits within an urban papakāinga setting and can cater for up to 16 taitamariki at one time. It includes communal spaces, a basketball court, shared green space, outdoor seating area for wānanga, hui and recreation/sports, māra kai and māra rongoa. As part of He Pā Piringa, MTH will also offer youth onsite connections to educational, employment and life-skills assistance.

He Pā Piringa is embedded in tikanga Māori and will showcase how youth housing can be developed to meet the distinctive and diverse needs of young people. This kaupapa Māori-based approach focuses on the holistic wellbeing of youth by providing wraparound services and appropriate support. He Pā Piringa is an alternative model that challenges the current system’s response and looks at housing as not only shelter, but as a means to develop strong and independent young people.



Case Study 3

‘My Whare’ by Vision West - Rangatahi Housing Programme

Photos by Ross Keane (2021) ¹²³

Due to the excessive cost of conventional purpose-built designs, youth housing programmes in Aotearoa typically occupy repurposed buildings rather than purpose-built facilities.

However, Visionwest Community Trust, a community-based social-service provider, recognised the need for fit-for-purpose, accessible and innovative housing solutions for young people. They recently launched their trans-permanent youth housing programme My Whare, an innovative housing initiative that aims to prevent young people from becoming homeless long-term.

Designed by Strachan Group Architects, the prefabricated housing units are designed utilising tiny-home technology. The initiative places sleepouts with bathroom facilities on properties with engaged host families, providing homeless young adults aged between 18 and 20 with a safe, private and stable place to live, in the security of community and connection, while they are supported to develop the skills to achieve and maintain stable housing. The aim is for the young adult to exit My Whare to self-determined housing, with strengthened hauora, tangible life skills and the ability to be economically independent.

The My Whare initiative will be piloted over a two-year period from October 2021 to September 2023, with the goal of having five sleepouts built and installed on host-family sites. Eligible homeless young adults will engage in the My Whare programme for an approximate duration of 12 months plus follow-up mentoring. In addition, all costs associated with building, transporting, installing and consenting the whare are covered by Visionwest, using a combination of philanthropic and government funding. The My Whare programme represents a positive and unique approach to youth housing. It recently won the Small Project Award at the 2021 New Zealand Architecture Awards - the Judges said:

"In response to the crisis of youth homelessness, these well-executed, transportable buildings provide rangatahi with the opportunity for a brighter future. Designed to be transported onto the property of a host family, the My Whare builds help facilitate care and connection alongside independence, as their inhabitants transition out of state care or homelessness. By approaching this

project with care and thoughtfulness, the architect has created aspirational and exquisite spaces that demonstrate the role the profession should play in creating a built environment for our most vulnerable people."¹²⁴

The My Whare initiative is an innovative and transformational approach to addressing homelessness in Aotearoa. It is a radical and novel case-study example provided for the community directly by those working on the front line. In this instance, Brook Turner and the team at Visionwest have demonstrated what is possible when you think outside the box and commit to supporting young people into independent living.

05.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This report shines a light on youth homelessness and recognises the desperate need for support, resourcing and information to end youth homelessness in Aotearoa. Young people, along with adults and children, have the right to a standard of living adequate for their health and wellbeing. ¹²⁵

This report, with its focus on Tāmaki Makaurau, demonstrates that support services, and the funding available to young people experiencing homelessness in this region, are severely insufficient. There are no clear pathways into safe and secure housing for young people experiencing homelessness. The report also finds that current policy provisions to address youth homelessness in Aotearoa New Zealand are inadequate and there are significant data and research gaps in relation to youth homelessness, which has implications as to how these issues are addressed. We need to take an equity-centred approach to assist our LGBTIQ+ communities as well as other groups, such as people with disabilities, who have not been captured within the scope of this report. There is an urgent need to develop a robust evidence base that informs the national design and delivery of housing programmes to end youth homelessness. This issue is recognised in the Wai 2750 Housing Policy and Services Inquiry (stage one), which has been highlighted in this report. Moreover, there is a need to more fully understand the scale of youth homelessness in Tāmaki Makaurau, considering the major structural and systemic challenges young people face.

In alignment with the MAIHI Whare Māori Framework and MAIHI Ka Ora Māori Housing Strategy, we have adopted the respond, review and reset approach to provide recommendations for tackling youth homelessness. We propose six key recommendations:

- 01. Respond:** to the immediate needs of rangatahi by providing targeted funding and resources tailored to addressing youth homelessness

We recommend the establishment of a national fund that explicitly targets initiatives and programmes that respond to and address youth homelessness. This could include ring-fencing the Homelessness Innovation Fund to include a Youth Homelessness or Rangatahi Housing Innovation Fund. Although it is outside the scope of this report to provide an economic forecast, the existing research on youth homelessness suggests that government investment in ending homelessness needs to be significantly increased.

- 02. Review:** all research and data pertaining to youth homelessness

We recommend a comprehensive review of research and data pertaining to youth homelessness to identify relevant sources from across the system. This should be undertaken by a cross-agency government group, compiling both historical and contemporary information to analyse key gaps and opportunities that recognises the need for further research investment. This investigation should include a particular focus on young Māori and LGBTIQ+ communities. For accountability purposes, all research and data should be fully accessible and made available to the public.

- 03. Review:** support services available to young people and children

We recommend a review of the current support services available to young people and children, as the current system is complicated to navigate and inaccessible to many. This requires further research to be undertaken to better understand the sector, the role of non-government organisations, interventions and programmes, to ultimately understand what resourcing is required to end youth homelessness.

- 04. Review:** definitions and measures of homelessness to include youth/rangatahi

We recommend a systematic review of all housing policies and strategies to ensure that they include youth, are culturally responsive to Māori and provide equitable solutions specifically for rangatahi Māori. Additionally, the Aotearoa New Zealand Homelessness Action Plan 2020–2023 needs to be amended in the next review to explicitly include youth homelessness. This approach aligns with the youth homelessness discussion in the Wai 2750 Housing Policy and Services Inquiry.

- 05. Review:** housing and youth policies, plans and strategies

We recommend a systematic review of all housing policies and strategies to ensure that they include youth, are culturally responsive to Māori and provide equitable solutions specifically for rangatahi Māori. Additionally, the Aotearoa New Zealand Homelessness Action Plan 2020–2023 needs to be amended in the next review to explicitly include youth homelessness. This approach aligns with the youth homelessness discussion in the Wai 2750 Housing Policy and Services Inquiry.

- 06. Reset:** policies and processes to enable kaupapa Māori and youth organisations to lead housing solutions

We recommend policies and processes are reset to better enable the delivery of kaupapa Māori and youth-led housing solutions. It is fundamental that the housing system is responsive and removes the barriers that inhibit young people's ability to access adequate housing. Kaupapa Māori and youth-based organisations can provide alternative, innovative and culturally appropriate pathways for young people with suitable wraparound support.

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