



## Special Collection of Housing Research in Aotearoa

Report: What exists, what are the gaps, what's the opportunity?  
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### Executive Summary

Community Research set out to create a Special Collection of individual research on housing in Aotearoa. It was clear that there was considerable research already collected on housing and that we did not see the value in duplication. Instead, we have gathered links to these existing external collections and used our resources to identify and advocate for gaps and opportunities for research in housing in Aotearoa.

Therefore, this report gathers evidence on what currently exists in literature in the housing space in Aotearoa and comments on what these existing collections hold. This report also presents the justification on the importance of filling identified gaps, and what the call to action for the housing sector is in filling these gaps.

Data in this report was collected via desktop search and includes collections that have research or documents that are from 2017 to mid-2022.

There are numerous existing resource collections based on housing in Aotearoa, most of which are Government funded. These include: Ageing Well National Science Challenge, Building Better Homes Towns and Cities, Community Housing Aotearoa, Controller and Auditor General – Tumuaki o te Mana Arotake, Good Homes for Good Lives, He Kāinga Oranga - Housing and Health Research Programme, Kainga Ora Homes and communities, Motu, Stats NZ Store House - Tatauranga Aotearoa, Te Puni Kōkiri - Ministry of Māori Development, Te Tūāpapa Kura Kāinga – Ministry of Housing and Urban Development.

The identified gaps: None of the research collections included in this report focus on the following four themes:

- a) Renting/tenancy (aside from older people)
- b) Lived experience and knowledge
- c) Homelessness / houselessness
- d) Rangatahi housing

Community Research recognises the significant need for a collection of research that reflects the need for not only academic research in the identified gaps of research - renting/tenancy, lived experience and knowledge of housing, homelessness/ houselessness, and rangatahi housing research, that is more reflective of community needs.

**If this collecting and advocating was done, it would create a community/whānau-centred resource for the housing and academic sectors in Aotearoa.**

Community Research advocates for more research to be done to address the needs of those who are not currently well represented in housing research.

Housing, or a lack of adequate housing, is a component affecting every aspect of New Zealanders' lives. Research that examines the existing gaps and addresses the diverse housing needs within our communities could impact policy making.

Community Research now seeks partnerships that can help us collect and promote this much needed research where it already exists outside of these collections. Together we can support a collective approach to advancing housing research advocacy in Aotearoa.

Lastly, we would like to acknowledge that we may have not captured all the existing collections of housing research in Aotearoa. We invite those who would like to be included to contact us.

## **Introduction**

The Tangata Whenua, Community and Voluntary Sector Research Centre (Community Research) gathers, collects and advocates for research that benefits communities. Community Research does not conduct research itself but supports communities and community researchers to reach their own aspirations in research.

We also curate and promote special collections of research which privilege community voices and aspirations. In 2021, we identified that housing was of core concern to Aotearoa. We suspected that not all voices and perspectives were represented in the current housing research landscapes.

The impact of a housing crisis continues to be widely felt in New Zealand. This enquiry report identifies existing collections of research on housing, and gaps in existing research on housing in Aotearoa. We recommend a Call to Action for Community Research to further develop and advocate for a Special Collection on Housing for Aotearoa.

Community Research set out with an enquiry into a potential special collection on housing in Aotearoa. We commissioned Lydia Carson to begin this investigation. Lydia has a background in Social Anthropology. Anthropology as a discipline offers insights into many of the social concerns facing Aotearoa and the wider world. Lydia values an insightful understanding of cultural diversity, ethnicity, and society - all essential attributes, especially when researching issues that affect diverse communities.

Community Research had a starting point of gathering evidence on what currently exists in literature in the housing space in Aotearoa. We found that extensive literature on housing already existed, in various spaces, that were not necessarily intuitive to find and use.

Community Research then chose to pivot and to gather and present these existing collections on housing. We believe it will be valuable to the community to have one place where they can access the various collections in a digestible manner. It is unlikely that community organisations that work to solve housing crisis issues have the resources or time to gather all this documentation into one place themselves.

We then thought it important to identify the gaps we found in research in housing overall.

In this report we intended to provide the reader with an overview of the most significant resource collections on housing in Aotearoa, with information on their background, focus, distinctive features, and relevance to housing in Aotearoa. Community Research then hopes to use this collection and its identified gaps to gather the housing sector and allies together to better resource and activate future research that is needed to fill these gaps.

## Existing collections of research

### Non-Government Funded Collections

It is a great benefit to the literature within the housing space in Aotearoa to have two collections that are non-government funded. Community Research values having a platform where diverse types of knowledges can be seen and heard. Having these two collections brings a starting place to that diversity of knowledges.



“Community Housing Aotearoa (CHA) is a peak body for New Zealand’s community housing sector. Our provider members house approximately 35,000 people nationally across 18,520 homes. Our partner members include developers, consultants and local councils. Our Vision is to make sure every New Zealander is well-housed in a warm, safe, dry and affordable home”.

Community Housing Aotearoa, (2022, June). *Resources*  
<https://communityhousing.org.nz/resources/>

Community Housing Aotearoa’s resource collection includes submissions, reports, research, and legislation concerning a range of housing services. This collection is uniquely relevant to the body of knowledge on housing in Aotearoa, because CHA represents community housing providers. CHA members are housing people in more than 18,000 homes. Their members are providing a critical element of the solution to the housing crisis. There is a sense that readers can learn from what is already working.



“Motu Research is an independent, public-good focused economics and policy research institute. We help Kiwi decision makers grapple with complex social and environmental issues. Motu's work on housing focuses on the interactions between housing and policy, in particular around the demand for housing, housing supply, housing regulation and housing affordability”.

Motu, (2022, August) *Urban & Regional* » *Housing* <https://www.motu.nz/our-research/urban-and-regional/housing/>

Motu is much broader than housing; they have six key research areas. One of those is ‘Urban and regional’ which looks at infrastructure, location, and housing. In their collection Motu has working papers, presentations, notes, datasets, and articles. One of their current housing research focuses is the “Warmer Kiwis Study”.

## Government Funded Collections

Though each of the following collections are all funded from the government purse, they are many and varied. Within this government-funded section there are four government research collections. There are two government ministries and three agencies that are not solely concerned with housing, each of these agencies also houses significant resources that speak to housing in Aotearoa.

## Government Research Collections



“Ageing Well National Science Challenge aims to be a voice for ageing issues in New Zealand. Ageing Well responds to opportunities to share information with decision makers and co-funders... We work towards constantly improving our science communication and dissemination to ensure our work and its resulting impact is easily accessible to our various audiences”.

Ageing Well National Science Challenge, (2022, March) *Our Impact* <https://www.ageingwellchallenge.co.nz/our-impact/>

This is the first collection in this report that focuses on older people, containing publications and proceedings. Ageing well has one project on housing titled ‘Independence and Housing Tenure investigating how housing affects wellbeing, independence, social engagement, and dignity in older people’. It is one of two National Science Challenges, which are funded by MBIE listed in this report



“This site is dedicated to people empowering older people's housing decisions. We all want a positive experience of ageing, to be valued and to live in the places we can feel connected to. The Good Homes research focuses on helping older people to have safe, healthy and affordable homes which protect them in good and bad times, so they can stay in their own homes and communities for longer”.

Good Homes for Good Lives, (2022, March). *Research Programmes*  
<https://goodhomes.co.nz/>

This site is a hub for access to various resource collections including “Resilient Communities - doing better in bad times” and “Finding the Best Fit - Housing, downsizing and older people in a changing society”. This site is one of the two collections in this report that are specifically about housing and older people. The research programmes listed on this site have been funded mainly by Public Good Science Funding.



“This Challenge, hosted by BRANZ, is researching how innovation and technology can be better adopted by and embedded into the New Zealand building industry. Multi-disciplinary researchers are collaborating to create practical solutions that bring long-term transformational benefits for New Zealanders in how our homes, towns and cities function”.

Building Better Homes, Towns and Cities. (2022, July). *Publications*  
<https://www.buildingbetter.nz/resources/publications>

Building Better has four research focuses: Homes and Spaces for generations, Kāinga Tahi, Kāinga Rua, Thriving Regions - He Pā Harakeke and Urban Wellbeing - Ngā Kāinga Ora. This extensive collection has publications, presentations, videos, and podcasts.



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“Our interdisciplinary team researches a wide range of housing and health topics including housing quality, insulation, heating, energy poverty, sustainable energy and efficiency, indoor air quality, regulation and standards, tenants' advocacy, sustainable

tenancy, injury prevention, homelessness, public housing, community housing, Māori housing, LGBTQI+ housing, Pacific housing, housing data, health and housing and housing wellbeing”.

He Kāinga Oranga - Housing and Health Research Programme, (2022, May).

*Publications & resources* <https://www.healthyhousing.org.nz/publications-resources>

This collection includes journal articles, reports, book chapters, books, submissions, and conference proceedings. This collection is significant as it is the only collection that focuses on the relationship between housing and health.

## Government Housing Agencies that hold collections



“Kāinga Ora provides tenancy services to nearly 200,000 customers and their whānau and owns and maintains nearly 69,000 public houses while also providing home ownership products and other services. We are focusing on prioritising our tenants’ wellbeing, and provide tenants with good quality, warm, dry and healthy homes”.

Kainga Ora Homes and communities, (2022, June). Publications

<https://kaingaora.govt.nz/publications/>

Kainga Ora is the government housing agency that works in parallel with the Ministry of Social Development and the Ministry of Urban Development. Their website has a collection of government documents, including but not limited to, annual reports, housing statistics, development and construction bulletin, CE expense reports, weekly reports to the minister of housing and cabinet papers.



“Te Tūāpapa Kura Kāinga – Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) shapes the strategies and work programmes for housing and urban development in Aotearoa New Zealand”.

Te Tūāpapa Kura Kāinga – Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, (2019, December). Documents <https://www.hud.govt.nz/documents/>

This document collection houses government documents concerning housing and urban development such as: Aide memoires, Briefings, Cabinet minutes, Cabinet papers, Consultation documents, Correspondence, Factsheets, FAQs, Guidance, Media releases, Presentations, Proactive Releases, Publications, Quarterly Reports, Regulatory impact

assessments, Research reports, Statistics & research, Strategies, Submissions analysis, Terms of reference, Tools, Weekly reports

Government agencies with broader purpose, that also house significant documentation on housing



“Alongside the Auditor-General's primary function of carrying out annual audits, we have the power to inquire in detail into issues of concern. This inquiry's function is discretionary. We receive many requests for inquiries each year and choose carefully which ones to investigate”.

Controller and Auditor General – Tumuaki o te Mana Arotake, (2021, December).  
Housing

<https://oag.parliament.nz/reports/housing>

Housing is one of the many subject categories of publications on this website. As well as publications and reports this website has enquiries and new articles.



“This site contains the Statistics New Zealand's electronic and digitised publications which are not on our website. It also contains questionnaires, research and images”.

Stats NZ Store House - Tauranga Aotearoa (2022, August).

<https://statsnz.contentdm.oclc.org/>

Stats NZ is a government department and Aotearoa's official data agency. They collect information and publish data. [stats.govt.nz/topics/housing/](https://stats.govt.nz/topics/housing/) housing collection includes statistics on the number, size, affordability, and quality of homes in New Zealand. This library potentially acts as a digital archive to [stats.govt.nz](https://stats.govt.nz).



“Te Puni Kōkiri is government's principal policy advisor on Māori wellbeing and development... Over many years our research work has helped inform us and others on the best ways to support Māori development”.

Te Puni Kōkiri - Ministry of Māori Development (2021, December). Housing  
<https://www.tpk.govt.nz/en/o-matou-mohiotanga/housing>

Dedicated to Māori wellbeing and development, this site holds a modest collection of publications specifically on Māori housing including evaluation reports, research, reports, strategy, guides, factsheets.

## What are the gaps?

Pulling together these various collections into one place illuminates the gaps in the existing literature. The following themes are not the focus of any of the existing collections: a) renting/tenancy (aside from older people) b) lived experience and knowledge c) homelessness/ houselessness d) Rangatahi housing.

### Including renting/tenancy

One of the research collections within Good Homes for Good Lives is the “Life When Renting research programme.” It looks at “what is effectively a housing tenure revolution – NZ’s previously very high rate of owner occupation is falling rapidly and is accompanied by a rising dependence on the (mainly private) rental market”. This collection looks specifically at the effect of this on older people. There is a gap here, when it comes to the effect of this ‘housing tenure revolution’ on the rest of the population. One particularly interesting aspect of this would be the effect on families with children.

### Including Lived Experience & Knowledge

Curating a collection on housing in Aotearoa that includes lived experience would be a beneficial way of elevating non-academic knowledge onto a platform where it has the potential to be heard by policy makers. People with lived experience of being affected by the housing crisis or providing solutions to the housing crisis hold important knowledge that could contribute to more robust solutions. If we are trying to understand the solution to the housing crisis, those that have been providing housing for people who need it are experts in these solutions They know what works and what does not. They know what the barriers are, where resources are lacking, what could be genuinely impactful in their context. These community organisations hold a wealth of knowledge within their own organisations. It could also be very impactful to collate these knowledges.

Other conceptions of lived experience should include diverse ways of seeing housing as a Collective Investment. Such as community-led housing, housing cooperatives, papakāinga or whānau-based kāinga, Community Land Trusts, alternative tenure models, shared equity ownership and other Collaborative Housing Models.

### Including homelessness/ houselessness

In mainstream discourse ‘homeless’ has been the conventional term for years. Over the years some scholarly effort has been put into trying to define homelessness. Amore et al from the Department of Public Health, University of Otago refer to the four-fold definition developed by FEANTSA: “roofless, houseless, insecure, and inadequate accommodation”. This allows for a more granular approach that can describe different realities. As well as this, in recent times ‘houseless’ has been used by advocates in an effort to navigate away from the narrative and imagery that is conjured up when the term homeless is used.



In a New Zealand context, one important perspective is the distinction made between homelessness and houselessness by Māori. This is covered at length in a master's thesis centred on being homeless in Whangārei by Kim Finkler (2021). One category of her research participants were previously homeless men of Ngāti Whātua descent. Māori Jesus [pseudonym], is in his fifties and spoke extensively on the unsatisfactory label of homelessness.

Among others, the following direct quote from Māori Jesus speaks directly to the issue. "I have never been "homeless". I have grown up knowing who I am, and where I come from. I was never homeless; I just did not have a home" (Finkler, 2001, pp.52-53). Finkler goes on to describe his words as "defining "home" through the closely related Māori cultural concepts of whakapapa and tūrangawaewae (a place of strength and belonging, a home)" (Finkler, 2001, p.53). She goes on to recount how Māori Jesus construes a houseless identity, distancing himself from being homeless (Finkler, 2001, p.102).

This discussion is vastly important in a New Zealand context and should be included in the collection on housing in Aotearoa.

There are growing numbers of people across Aotearoa who are becoming houseless, or living in insecure, and inadequate accommodation. This situation has been worsened by the long-term impact of the pandemic and natural disasters.

Research that focusses on those who are houseless, or living in insecure or inadequate accommodation could also inform how we can better respond to sheltering people in times of crisis.

### Including rangatahi housing

Similar to the recognised need for collections that specifically focus on the effect of housing crisis on older people, there is also a need for a collection to include the effect of the difficulties in the housing landscape on rangatahi. Young people who are highly impacted by poverty, trauma, and violence are more prone to experience houselessness because they have fewer resources and options (Paul, 2022 p.23).

All youth want to be valued and to live in the places they feel connected to. Better outcomes for rangatahi are enabled when they have safe, healthy and affordable housing which protects them in good and bad times. The rising cost of living and the unaffordability of housing are issues that impact the future of our rangatahi more than any other group. This is particularly important with the wellbeing challenges experienced by youth of New Zealand, and even more so for rangatahi Māori.

Research that captures the voice of rangatahi and their experience of housing issues in New Zealand and could led to the development of different housing models that enable all New Zealand youth to experience positive, healthy housing.

## **Call to Action**

There is an opportunity to fill the identified gaps in both continuing to gather existing research and supporting community researchers and the sector to broaden the way it researches housing.

As Community Research aims to amplify the voices of tangata whenua, communities, collective knowledge and lived experience alongside research contained in the beginnings of its Special Collection of Research: Housing, it is in a strong position to do this.

Collating and advocating for research that is done by the community and for the community would be more reflective of community needs. This type of research has the opportunity to validate other knowledges and lived experience alongside academic research and can be used as a tool for advocacy. We want this assemblage of collections to be more representative, more diverse, more relevant.

Each identified research gap represents a group of people in our nation who are not always being considered in housing research collections. These groups are not mutually exclusive. Without action there is a risk of further marginalising members of our communities.

We seek partnership for the development of our newly launched Special Collection of Research: Housing to be a living collection that can continue to be contributed to and be of influence into the future. We want this collection to be representative and equitable.

We invite anyone that wants to alert us of other evidence of collections, or something we have missed to connect with us and contribute to the discussion.

## **What is the opportunity?**

To seek partner/s (advocacy and funding) to grow our Special Collection of Research-Housing to:

1. Identify the gaps and the value of housing research that represents all people within our communities.
2. Provoke engagement and advocate for the research gaps to be filled.
3. Support community researchers who have an interest in housing and support their engagement with research funders.
4. Promote this report and its associated webinar launch as an advocacy tool.

[Special Collection of Research: Housing](#)

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## References:

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