Housing and Sustainable Communities Policy

Vision

Accessible, healthy, secure and sustainable housing for all in thriving communities.

Values and Principles

This housing policy must be consistent with the following values and principles:

- **Honour Te Tiriti o Waitangi**: Article 2 of Te Tiriti o Waitangi guarantees tangata whenua tino rangatiratanga over their taonga, which includes their whenua. Honouring this guarantee is fundamental to enabling housing developments, including papakāinga. Funding should be prioritised for Māori housing developments, with ownership and decision-making by Māori. Mātauranga Māori principles of design for housing and communities should be broadly applied across the whole housing sector to build adequate housing for all.

- **Ecological Wisdom**: Our communities must be life-sustaining. They should be designed, built or renovated using principles, materials and processes that are regenerative and minimise negative environmental impacts.

- **Social Responsibility**: People should have access to healthy, affordable and secure homes that support wellbeing and enable connected, inclusive communities. Housing needs to be designed as universally accessible so that all groups in the community have equitable access to appropriate and affordable housing.

- **Appropriate Decision-Making**: Communities should be actively involved in decisions that affect the places they live. Decision making should particularly consider the interests of those who have been marginalised, and actively ensure their inclusion in community engagement processes.

- **Non-Violence**: Vested private interests that seek to maintain control of housing should be mitigated by the government through legislation and engagement to neutralise the power imbalance. No one should be forced to move out of their home without a suitable alternative being provided.

- **Decommodification**: Housing should be seen as a fundamental human need and right, not something that is traded for capital gains and profits that serve to perpetuate inequality. Basically, houses should be homes.

- **Housing security**: People should be able to live in their home or community for as long as they wish, regardless of ownership. Having generations of family/whānau living together contributes to stable and healthy communities.
- **Housing for disabled people:** Disabled people have the right to live in accessible housing both wherever and with whomever they choose to live with.

**Summary**

The government must take action now to ensure people's right to healthy, secure housing. It should focus on: launching a massive public housing project that is funded, managed and run by the government; providing for a substantial increase in Māori housing and the removal of barriers to Māori housing; making housing accessibility and safety for disabled people a high priority; reducing building-related greenhouse gas emissions; and creating frameworks to ensure regenerative urban development that connects people within their communities.

**Strategic Priorities**

The Green Party's strategic goals include:

> "Healthy homes within thriving neighbourhoods will be available to everyone. People will be part of caring communities with a strong heritage fabric and easy access to the natural environment."

Actions in this policy that will help achieve this include:

- Implement large increases in funding and redeployment of Crown funds for Māori-led housing solutions and Māori community housing providers, ensuring funding is adaptable to the needs of Māori communities and reflects tino rangatiratanga. (1.8)
- Enshrine the right for all New Zealanders to housing in legislation that requires the State to ensure all New Zealanders are adequately housed in safe, healthy, accessible, affordable housing in line with the UNCRPD and NZ Disability Strategy. (2.1)
- Establish a Ministry for Green Works to ensure supply of suitable housing for all New Zealanders. (4.1)
- Ensure, through regulation and standards, that buildings and their surroundings are designed, constructed, renovated and repurposed to better provide for the wellbeing of people and mitigate climate change. (3.1)
- Establish representative housing committees in all local communities that reflect both home-owners and renters, ensuring diversity of representation for minority or underserved groups, with good communication with regional housing forums. (7.2)
- Ensure that tax, monetary and fiscal policy, and controls on banks incentivise productive investment, rather than speculation in property. (5.1)
- Ensure public spaces are designed consistent with the intended urban density. (6.3)
- Prioritise equity in applying universal urban design. (6.4)

**Connected Policies**

This policy is connected with our [Environmental Protection](#), [Climate Change](#), [Energy](#), [Transport](#) and [Economic](#) Policies and, through the actions below, also seeks to implement our [Education](#), [Disability](#), [Local Government](#) and [Workforce](#) policies.
Policy Positions

1. Honouring Te Tiriti o Waitangi

Issues

Māori are less likely to have secure housing, less likely to own a home, and less likely to have sufficient income to meet housing needs. The effects of land loss through confiscation, legislation and ongoing difficulties in building up infrastructure on existing Māori land continue to the present day. Mātauranga Māori offers many solutions around how to create healthy, connected and inclusive communities and Māori need to be at the governance and design table. There are still many barriers to tino rangatiratanga, which guarantees the right of Māori to build and house their people on their own land, along with breaches of Te Tiriti.

Actions

A. Hoki Whenua Mai

1.1. Recognise the underlying and ongoing harm of dispossession of land for Māori communities and seek to return whenua Māori to Māori ownership (see our Tiriti o Waitangi Policy).
1.2. Restore the powers of the Waitangi Tribunal to make recommendations in relation to privately owned land.
1.3. Establish a fund to enable whānau/hapū/iwi to reacquire dispossessed Māori land when it becomes available, proportional to accumulated land value loss.
1.4. Ensure the Right of First Refusal of purchase for Māori ancestral land so Māori can build on Māori land when released by the Crown.

B. Partnership and empowering Māori solutions

1.5. Establish a co-governance model at the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development and Kāinga Ora.
1.6. Ensure all government agencies with responsibility for housing are fully responsive to Māori housing priorities, and promote co-governance structures for all new housing developments through Kāinga Ora.
1.7. Partner with Māori community organisations, hapū and iwi to establish and implement funding mechanisms for papakāinga, ring-fenced and provided directly to Māori.
1.8. Implement large increases in funding and redeployment of Crown funds for Māori-led housing solutions and Māori community housing providers, ensuring funding is adaptable to the needs of Māori communities and reflects tino rangatiratanga.
1.9. Provide easy to access pathways to housing ownership for all Māori, informed and decided by Māori.
1.10. Immediately provide housing to the homeless, with targeted programmes that provide culturally appropriate housing for Māori youth (especially hapū wāhine and whānau).
1.11. Partner with Māori to identify and remove barriers to housing development by Māori for Māori, especially those that impact on building on Māori land.
1.12. Ensuring that funding and focus is provided to all areas of the country, with outreach to all Māori experiencing housing stress.
1.13. Partner with Māori to determine the need for a Māori Housing Authority, and if agreed, implement this authority.

1.14. Partner with Māori organisations and provide funding to ensure that the rental market provides secure, affordable housing for Māori, with pathways to ownership.

2. Housing as a Public Good and Basic Right

Issues

- There is no legal right to adequate housing, despite Aotearoa New Zealand being a signatory to international conventions that recognise it, such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (esp. Articles 5 and 19).
- Since the mid-1980s, housing has increasingly been seen as a commodity to be traded for profit. As a result, house buying and renting is unaffordable for many.
- A lack of public housing has left thousands of mainly low-income and other housing-marginalised New Zealanders without adequate housing, leading to substantial growth of the public housing waiting list and bad housing conditions. This includes people living in motels, camping grounds and overcrowded, substandard housing.
- Current public housing has typically not recognised the need for larger inter-generational homes, with connection to the community, or changes in circumstances.
- Gender inequality in housing limits options for women and families with different circumstances.
- Much of the existing stock of public housing has been privatised, construction and maintenance has declined and new stock is now often sold on the open market. As a result, public housing is stigmatised and seen as a last resort.
- The state of our housing (both public and private) leads to adverse health outcomes that can only be solved by adequate housing.

Actions

A. Housing as a Human Right

2.1. Enshrine the right for all New Zealanders to housing in legislation that requires the State to ensure all New Zealanders are adequately housed in safe, healthy, accessible, affordable housing in line with the UNCRPD and NZ Disability Strategy.

2.2. Ensure those at high risk of facing housing disadvantage are fully housed in the communities of their choice, including: Māori, Pacific peoples, women, disabled people, older people, tamariki/youth, migrants/refugees; and Rainbow communities.

2.3. Provide security of tenure for all living in rental housing by requiring all rental tenancies to be offered as long-term or permanent tenancies.

2.4. Provide support for those who have been evicted, ensuring a well-resourced transition back to housing security.

2.5. Provide wrap-around support to those who have to leave their home due to family and domestic violence, and ensure they find a safe, sufficient home to live in.

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1 ‘Healthy housing’ means a healthy indoor temperature in all weather, and promoting mental/physical wellbeing.

2 ‘Affordable’ rental housing is that which costs no more than 25% of income.
2.6. Ensure permanent housing is available to all unhoused people in New Zealand that is healthy, safe and accessible in a way which preserves the autonomy and dignity of each person and their family/whānau.

2.7. Provide holistic and wrap-around support to Rainbow whānau who are homeless including by developing emergency housing options and support services that are safe and inclusive for Rainbow people (see our Rainbow Policy).

2.8. In cases where permanent housing is not appropriate, provide adequate shelters and facilities.

2.9. Provide a housing-first approach with wrap-around support for people who have both housing needs and other complex needs.

2.10. Ensure processes for housing modifications are timely, straightforward and transparent with eligibility and funding should be revised based on need, not arbitrary criteria.

2.11. Provide disabled people with choices equal to others about where they live and the support they receive. This should include:
   2.11.1. the need for support to transition from residential services to living in the community.
   2.11.2. modification funding for people living on Papakāinga

2.12. Ensure the safety of disabled people in all new and existing housing, including processes so that those who cannot use stairs can evacuate in case of an emergency and visual fire alarms in all housing.

2.13. Ensure that all New Zealanders have access to all basic services within their own homes or in close proximity within their communities3, regardless of where they live.


B. Universal public housing for all

2.15. Protect, enhance and expand public housing stock so that everyone who does not own their own home has universal access to adequate public housing.

2.16. Urgently phase out means-testing and background-testing for public housing, as more public housing stock is built.

2.17. Re-orient Kāinga Ora’s activities to ensure a significant increase of public housing and oppose any privatisation of public housing, including public housing land. Privatisation here does not include the return of state land to Māori, Te Tiriti settlements or the execution of the first right of refusal by Māori.

2.18. Adopt a public housing framework which ensures all new public housing meets universal design and accessibility standards which will particularly benefit disabled people, and existing public housing will be retrofitted to meet universal design standards over an agreed timeframe.

2.19. Require new public housing to use high-quality urban design and built environments, centering new housing developments around pre-existing communities and enabling social connections in public housing areas.

2.20. Increase the availability of government, council, community and iwi-provided housing, while ensuring that public and Māori housing dominates housing supply.

3 ‘Basic services’ are those that are essential for wellbeing and participation in society, and include food, clothing, healthcare, education, training, phone/internet, community spaces, public transport
2.21. Ensure sufficient housing in rural towns and villages to meet the needs of all generations over all life stages.

2.22. Ensure the approach to public housing fully honours Te Tiriti, including co-governance requirements with iwi or hapū in all public housing developments within their rohe.

3. **Sustainable Buildings**

**Issues**

- Since the early 1990s there has been a trend towards building larger, high-value houses and a significant decline in smaller, lower cost houses.
- Many of the 1.8 million existing houses are substandard or in need of refurbishment - rentals particularly.
- Housing is generally not resilient against climate change, natural hazards and network utility outages, particularly loss of potable water, wastewater and energy services.
- Building materials can be high in embedded carbon. Waste from construction is high.
- Housing needs to differ between city centres, urban suburbs, provincial towns, villages and rural areas.
- Large building-material supply firms have excessive market power and monopolistic markets lead to supply issues.

**Actions**

3.1. Ensure, through regulation and standards, that buildings and their surroundings are designed, constructed, renovated and repurposed to provide:

3.1.1. efficient and effective heating and cooling of buildings
3.1.2. water conservation
3.1.3. resilience against natural hazards and outages of network utilities
3.1.4. universal access and universal design
3.1.5. net zero in the levels of embedded and operational greenhouse gases of buildings and construction materials, based on life-cycle analysis
3.1.6. for the physical and mental wellbeing of users and residents of buildings
3.1.7. minimised construction waste and increased reuse of construction materials
3.1.8. long life expectancy for buildings

3.2. Encourage residential development that:

3.2.1. meets diverse housing needs in each neighbourhood
3.2.2. is adaptable to changing life stages and multi-generational living needs
3.2.3. reverses the trend of the increasing size and complexity of residential buildings
3.2.4. contributes to the vibrancy of the community
3.2.5. ensures that all new builds meet comprehensive universal design standards for accessibility
3.2.6. provides for food gardens and trees
3.2.7. is oriented to the sun

3.3. Expand research into effective ways to improve the sustainability and design of buildings, including construction methods designed for deconstruction and reuse of building components.

3.4. Actively undertake education and advocacy programmes on why and how to improve our housing via renovations, repurposing and new builds.
3.5. Ensure that all government buildings (including offices and public housing) model sustainable building principles and high quality design.

3.6. Provide a low-cost public design and advice service for sustainable buildings.

3.7. Ensure that the market supplying building materials is working effectively in providing affordable, locally-produced materials for sustainable buildings, including (where necessary) breaking up of building material supply monopolies and setting up publicly-run alternatives.

3.8. Promote the use of wood and other construction materials low in embedded carbon for housing and for mid-rise buildings, and avoid the use of materials high in it.

3.9. Make it easier to reuse demolition materials in construction, including timber for structural purposes.

3.10. Encourage the relocation and renovation of existing timber houses where sites are being re-developed and/or intensified or where the existing house is at risk from natural hazards.

3.11. Review construction contract law and investigate mandatory insurance cover for poor construction, work not being completed, and to provide financial protection for subcontractors.

3.12. Ensure the Unit Titles Act remains up to date and promotes the sustainability of new apartment and multi-unit builds and provides fair ownership and decision making processes.

4. Supply of Homes and Housing

Issues

● Since deregulation and the reduction in provision of public housing, the private market and its regulatory settings has provided far from adequate affordable housing.

● Many of us are living on stolen land. Our use of land is inefficient, and the creation of wealth is prioritised over the creation of homes and communities.

● There is a severe lack of accessible, modified housing for disabled people across the housing sector.⁴

● There is a lack of oversight and coordination in the housing market, which hinders the provision of secure and sustainable housing for all.

● Construction is historically a boom and bust industry, which has led to a shortage of construction workers. There is inadequate long-term investment in a construction workforce.

● Laws around private land ownership favour single-lease ownership rather than co-operative models of land usage that can provide better housing.

● Rent costs are far beyond what can be considered affordable, leading to crowded homes and increasing poverty.

⁴ ‘Accessible, modified housing’ has basic accessibility features such as level entry, wide doors, wet floor showers, spaces for guide and service dogs to be accommodated, and space for mobility equipment.
**Actions**

4.1. Establish a Ministry for Green Works to ensure supply of suitable housing for all New Zealanders (along with broader goals to address the infrastructure deficit and the climate crisis) that, when building housing:

4.1.1. Acts with three arms: construction, design and oversight

4.1.2. Sets a bold target for public housing that will achieve the urgent aim of accessible, healthy, secure and sustainable homes for all, including in rural towns and villages.

4.1.3. Works in conjunction with other areas of government to greatly increase government capacity to respond to interconnected challenges such as the housing and climate crises.

4.1.4. Has a board that ensures co-governance with Māori, prioritises the involvement of disabled people and includes workers and local government.

4.1.5. Partners with Māori organisations to provide Māori housing.

4.1.6. Is set up so it cannot acquire new land itself but can recommend the return of land to Māori.

4.1.7. Must take a long-term active role in solving the housing crisis, and not look to continue the current market-based approach.

4.1.8. Will pass management to Kāinga Ora, or if requested, to local councils with oversight from Kāinga Ora to ensure maintenance standards are met.

4.2. Make Kāinga Ora a government department rather than a Crown entity to ensure a focus on service to the public.

4.3. Ensure access to direct government funding for public and community housing projects, avoiding the use of private funding such as leveraging.

4.4. Give priority for public housing to people who are living in poor accommodation and those at high risk of extremely poor outcomes.

4.5. Encourage mātauranga Māori-informed designers to be involved from the formative stages across all community and housing development to honour Te Tiriti.

4.6. Ensure that training supports a sustainable construction sector, which can continue to increase delivery of quality housing.

4.7. Use public housing and building programmes to provide continuity of work for building industry workers in both boom and bust scenarios.

4.8. Create an independent auditing body to ensure both new and existing buildings meet minimum modern standards.

4.9. Discourage the loss of existing houses in rural areas.

4.10. Create public, purpose-built, rent-assisted living units for older people in all areas (including rural towns and villages) that maintain community inclusiveness.

4.11. Consolidate and greatly expand public financial support, including by grants and loans, for renovation and repurposing of existing buildings and the construction of new buildings with priorities for funding being:

4.11.1. Māori and Pasifika housing (in addition to funding identified in sections 1 and 2 of this Policy)

4.11.2. Providing healthy buildings and reducing climate change impacts.

4.11.3. Ensuring universal access and use for disabled people and older people.

4.11.4. Improving resilience against natural hazards (including managed retreat) and network utility outages.
4.11.5. providing public housing to meet the needs of those who need to move due to climate change effects.
4.11.6. providing affordable housing

A. Community Housing Sector

4.12. Ensure that community housing is provided with the local decision-making input of those that are living in community sector housing
4.13. Support, and partner with, community housing groups where the objectives and methods align with the principles outlined in our policy.

B. Provide private renters more security

4.14. Set up a rental warrant of fitness system that ensures that affordable, healthy homes are guaranteed in all rental housing.
4.15. Implement rent controls to ensure rent increases do not exceed whichever is lower of inflation or increases in average wages, with the aim of privileging the rights of renters in their home over the investments of the wealthy.
4.16. Act to provide accessible housing, and mandate that disabled people must have an accessible house before ending a tenancy.
4.17. Support and enable efforts (such as renter’s unions and more legal protections) for renters to take direct action against corporate and bad-acting landlords to demand better conditions and affordable rents.
4.18. Review the Tenancy Tribunal system to ensure it is accessible and balanced for renters and that their privacy is protected.
4.19. Work towards ensuring that no one pays more than 25% of their income in rents, including by expanding the Income Related Rent Subsidy to councils and building more public housing.
4.20. Create a register for landlords and property managers to promote better oversight and reporting on how landlords are achieving obligations to tenants.
4.21. Allow for renters to have pets, subject to any restrictions aimed at protecting wildlife.
4.22. Ensure continued availability of rental accommodation in rural towns and villages.

5. Economics of Housing

Issues

● The current investment and housing market encourages accumulation by those who already have wealth, inflating the housing market.
● There are limited alternatives for many people (“nest egg investors”) to housing as a means of saving for retirement and for unexpected large expenses.
● The housing crisis is exacerbated by land banking and vacant, not-fit-for-purpose, underutilised housing stock.
● Banking regulations currently favour investors.
● The current market is not providing lower-quartile housing that would ensure affordable housing for those who most need it.

Actions

5 ‘Community housing sector’ does not refer to Māori housing organisations
5.1. Ensure that tax, monetary and fiscal policy, and controls on banks incentivise productive investment, rather than speculation in property.

5.2. Establish a land value tax on urban residential land (including appropriate exceptions for Māori land), and use that tax income to provide infrastructure, including public and active transport and public reserves, to create vibrant and sustainable communities (see our Economic Policy).

5.3. Ensure that banking rules support first-home buyers and do not privilege investors.

5.4. Investigate establishing a cap on how many houses can be bought by an individual or a private company or family estate.

5.5. Introduce a value uplift levy where rezoning, the provision of public transport and/or other public works results in increased land development potential.

5.6. Use a range of tax on land, wealth and capital gains to discourage land banking, decommodify the housing market and rebalance investment, whilst ensuring secure means for saving for retirement and for unexpected large costs.

6. Sustainable Communities

Issues

Although the government recognises the benefits of transit-oriented urban density for sustainability, this is not yet reflected in the urban areas it creates and redevelops. An equity lens has not been applied to the form of urban development and local boards and councils struggle to engage broadly. There needs to be a change to urban environments that are centered on human experience. We fail to have transport mode choice with safe, equitable and accessible infrastructure. Gentrification of urban areas has forced low-income whānau/residents into substandard housing as the more wealthy enjoy increased amenity.

Actions

6.1. Support the use of redistributive policies such as inclusionary zoning to create urban areas that are more inclusive (especially of disabled people) and equitable.

6.2. Support development that creates vibrant, connected streets and public spaces at human scale, with universal design to ensure accessibility for disabled people.

6.3. Ensure public spaces are designed consistent with the intended urban density, including by:

   6.3.1. Using urban street space for people and public transport, not cars
   6.3.2. Providing safe, protected and accessible cycling infrastructure
   6.3.3. Creating walkable urban fabrics (see our Transport policy)
   6.3.4. Bringing nature into our cities through green networks, urban ngahere, migration corridors for native species, and restoring urban waterways
   6.3.5. Encouraging equitable mixed-use development around transit routes and infrastructure corridors, including through form-based zoning.

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6 ‘Inclusionary zoning policies’ are planning rules that require a given share of new construction to be affordable by people with low to moderate incomes

7 ‘Human scale’ means being readily relatable to the people who interact with it, and not being overbearing or massive.

8 ‘Walkable’ means that a wide range of things you may want or need are within walking distance.
6.4. Prioritise equity in applying universal urban design, by:

6.4.1. Targeting transport investment into deprived urban areas, prioritising transport modes that support equity.
6.4.2. Reviewing and reducing the extent, scope and significance of ‘special character areas’, with a refocus to better prioritise Māori heritage, natural heritage, and providing a strong heritage fabric.
6.4.3. Creating regulatory structures, including affordable housing requirements, to force developers to provide for equitable developments.
6.4.4. Enabling a localised assessment of urban density and form with leadership by mana whenua and local government organisations.

6.5. Mitigate suburban sprawl and green field development by:

6.5.1. Supporting the implementation of the National Policy Statement for Highly Productive Land.
6.5.2. Protecting and enhancing greenbelts, and enhancing the legislative protection of the rural-urban boundary.
6.5.3. Adopting proactive spatial plans around satellite cities that have strong rail or rapid transit connections.
6.5.4. Developing regional networks of towns and villages that are well connected by rail and have transport modes that promote equity internally.

6.6. Discourage the mass provision of parking (especially on-grade) in metropolitan areas, and remove land use planning regulations that force development to be car oriented.

6.7. Ensure coordination of development and the provision of supporting infrastructure.

6.8. Encourage economic and social development which includes reductions in the need to travel and promotes more local self-sufficiency.

6.9. Develop national standards on climate change adaptation, such as managed retreat, for use when planning development in both urban and rural areas.

6.10. Avoid and mitigate natural hazard risks, including those worsened by climate change, with appropriate planning and construction techniques.

6.11. Ensure an ecosystem approach is taken to urban development to minimise adverse impacts on our environment, including water catchments (see our Environmental Protection Policy).

6.12. Work with Māori, local government, conservation organisations, and the community to protect, conserve and restore natural ecosystems in or near urban areas (see our Conservation Policy).

6.13. Ensure that subdivision and urban development respects and enhances the natural habitats and ecosystems they are part of, including by planting and protecting urban trees and maintaining ‘green corridors’ for wildlife movement (see Local Government policy).

6.14. Make use of existing surveys based on census information and demographic statistics to establish and maintain an overview of housing needs.

6.15. Support the development of co-housing and other communal housing.

6.16. Include housing in the National Infrastructure Development Plan.

6.17. Prohibit covenants that undermine positive social or environmental outcomes.
7. Local Ownership and Decision-Making

Issues

- Many members of local communities are excluded from decision making on housing issues, especially minority or underserved groups.\(^9\)
- The existing planning framework is based on a growth model, where private development is seen as a necessary way of providing improved public amenity and housing, when this approach only provides adequately for the wealthy.
- Profit motives and a lack of engagement leads to design plans that further the preferences of the developers over the needs of residents. This is of particular concern to disabled people.

Actions

7.1. Support the formation of regional housing forums as a means of collaboratively developing, implementing and monitoring design policy at the local level to promote well designed in-fill housing that meets future demand.
7.2. Establish representative housing committees in all local communities that reflect both home-owners and renters, ensuring diversity of representation for minority or underserved groups, with good communication with regional housing forums.
7.3. Establish public housing tenants' committees to give voice and increase accessibility for disabled people, low-income and other housing disadvantaged communities.
7.4. When requested, allow for and fund management of public housing by local council or regulated community housing providers that are established not for profit trusts or to local iwi/hapū trusts, working with their relevant local housing committees and with oversight and support from central government/Kāinga Ora.

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\(^9\) ‘Minority or underserved groups’ in the housing context include Māori; disabled people; Pacific peoples; women; rainbow communities; migrant/ethnic communities; sole parents; renters; and low socio-economic communities throughout Aotearoa New Zealand.