

An evaluation of whānau experiences of living in contracted emergency housing in Rotorua

Final Evaluation Report

January (2023)

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Executive summary

Context

National context

Homelessness and problems with access to healthy, secure and affordable housing are systemic challenges faced by whānau and families, communities and policy makers in Aotearoa New Zealand. While a range of strategies, interventions and investments are in place to address these challenges, there is still a growing number of individuals and whānau who require safe, warm and dry housing; the majority of whom are Māori.

Rotorua context

In 2020, Rotorua was one such community struggling to respond to an increased demand for housing. At that time homelessness was on the rise and more prominent in public spaces, raising community concern and unrest. Median rents were increasing and new builds/developments (public or private) were not moving at a pace to meet immediate demand. Motels were increasingly hosting more individuals and whānau who needed emergency accommodation, raising concerns that children in particular were not safe and secure. The Rotorua Mayor called on central government to help Rotorua to develop short-, medium- and long-term solutions to the housing crisis.

One intervention¹ piloted in Rotorua was contracting motels for the exclusive use of whānau (parents with children), individuals with disabilities, rangatahi and kaumātua. Thirteen motels in Rotorua were contracted by Te Tūāpapa Kura Kāinga - Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, with attached 24/7 security services and wrap-around pastoral support. Triage of clients into contracted motels was facilitated through a newly established Rotorua Housing Hub – Te Pokapū.

Evaluation

In June 2022, Te Tūāpapa Kura Kāinga | Ministry of Housing and Urban Development commissioned Te Paetawhiti Ltd & Associates specifically to evaluate the experience of whānau living in contracted emergency housing in Rotorua. The findings from the evaluation were intended to inform decisions on emergency housing models in other parts of the country, as well as emergency housing policy. The evaluation scope included developing a theory of change and an outcomes framework designed to inform a more comprehensive evaluation of the Rotorua Emergency Housing Pilot in 2023.

The evaluation involved a review of background documentation, interviews with whānau² and key stakeholders (including local and central government agency staff involved in the pilot, social service provider staff and moteliors) and a whānau survey. In total 91 whānau contributed to the evaluation (representing the interests of 115 adults and 154 children³) and 35 stakeholders⁴. Since the majority of whānau living in contracted emergency motels in Rotorua identified as Māori, the evaluation approach and design was informed by kaupapa Māori theory, principles and practices. A draft evaluation report was submitted in September 2022.

¹ This is one of many interventions initiated to address housing issues in Rotorua. Refer page 9 of this report for more detail.

² No individuals (that is, single people living alone) were interviewed; however, 15 individuals completed the whānau survey.

³ Some whānau who were interviewed may have also completed the whānau survey.

⁴ Stakeholders included moteliors, government agencies and wrap-around support providers.

Evaluation findings

The experience of whānau

The evaluation found that contracted emergency housing provided whānau with respite from a range of challenges and trauma they were experiencing in their lives, including homelessness. The secure accommodation provided whānau with the time and space to settle and stabilise. The wrap-around support provided whānau with the opportunity to reorientate themselves and plan towards a positive future inclusive of finding a place they can call home. As a result of this support, whānau were rediscovering their confidence both to aspire and to achieve some of their aspirations.

The survey data found that the majority of whānau had completed a whānau plan, had regular visits from their provider, and felt listened to and empowered. Whānau were also setting and achieving a range of goals and aspirations, including engaging with health care providers, finding employment, budgeting, becoming drug-free, and strengthening parenting and relationship skills. Some whānau interviewed were ready to move on from contracted emergency housing and had a wide range of aspirations they wanted to achieve in their lives, including moving into their own home, continuing further training and education, and finding employment.

Living in contracted emergency housing, however, is not well suited to every whānau, so the initial triage and assessment process is critical. Contracted emergency motels have rules that residents need to abide by to keep children safe and secure, including rules relating to drinking and drug-taking, visitors, and leaving the premises after certain hours. A small group of whānau did not agree with the rules or how they were being applied, in particular, rules relating to access and visiting hours⁵ for adult children and extended whānau members.

Mostly, however, whānau experience of living in contracted emergency motels was positive, with the majority of whānau agreeing that contracted motels were safer and more secure, had reasonable amenities, and provided them with a sense of community.

⁵ The rules had subtle variations depending on the social service provider. For example, one provider did not allow any visitors, whereas another provider allowed visitors on to the motel premises during certain hours.

The experience of stakeholders

All members of the Rotorua Housing Taskforce interviewed agreed that working collaboratively to solve complex housing issues was key. No one organisation had the levers to resolve complex issues.

At an operational level, aspects of the pilot were stood up quickly, with clear progress reporting in 2021. Implementation continued successfully in 2022; however, there was a view that governance oversight of the whole pilot had waned. There was no clear evidence that performance of the pilot, including outcomes for whānau, were being monitored against an overall agreed framework. There was also no public relations or communication strategy to mitigate the growing and potentially harmful rhetoric that developed in Rotorua in 2022 around whānau living in emergency housing. The Taskforce was aware of these issues and recognised that leadership and coordination of the Taskforce needed to resume again⁶.

Moteliere were also interviewed as key stakeholders. Representatives⁷ from all 13 motels shared their experiences, which were triangulated with evidence from providers and whānau. Motel staff interviewed said they felt safe at all times. There was good communication between themselves, wrap-around support providers and security. Whānau were generally respectful of motel property, facilities and other residents. Any issues that arose were attended to and addressed quickly by security and/or providers.

Overall learnings

Contracted emergency housing provided whānau a safe and secure place to rest, recover and reset. Combined with an empowerment-based provider approach (that is, hand-up not hand-out) whānau were also able to use their time to rediscover and achieve their aspirations.

Strategically, the Rotorua Housing Pilot tested the parameters of a locally led, regionally supported and nationally-enabled place-based approach to resolving complex issues. This approach was enacted quickly given the urgency of the situation, and interventions were stood up well. However, not all solutions identified as valuable locally could be progressed, due to national policy settings. It was generally understood that locally led solutions need to fit within national policy frameworks; however going forward the design of funding, regulatory and policy settings need to provide the flexibility required to give effect to the true intent of locally-led, place-based solutions.

Conclusion and recommendations

In conclusion:

- Contracted emergency motel accommodation (inclusive of security and wrap-around support) is creating a safe, secure and empowering environment for whānau (adults with children). However, due to constraints (rules, space, amenities), motel accommodation is not suited to all whānau and not a long-term living option.
- To ensure whānau are safe, secure and well supported it is recommended that whānau have the opportunity to regularly provide feedback on how well contracted emergency housing is meeting their needs.
- It is recommended that the Taskforce is reconvened with clear leadership including roles and responsibilities; a clear public relations/communications strategy; and a clear performance framework.
- It is recommended that the evaluation tools developed as part of this project, including the draft theory of change and outcomes framework, are tested as part of the comprehensive evaluation planned for late 2023.

⁶ This commitment was confirmed through the Rotorua Housing Accord signed in December 2022.

⁷ All 13 moteliere were invited to participate in the research. There were a mix of owners and managers who participated.

Background

Strategic context

Homelessness remains a significant issue in Aotearoa New Zealand

Homelessness and access to healthy, secure and affordable housing are systemic challenges faced by whānau and families, communities and policy makers in Aotearoa New Zealand. In 2018, 101,123 people were identified as severely housing-deprived, nearly two percent of the total population, and Māori were disproportionately represented (Amore, et al., 2021). Housing policies over decades have not met the needs of Māori. Māori have disproportionately low home ownership rates (28 percent compared to 57 percent for the general population), high rates of public housing tenancies (36 percent of public housing tenants were Māori, despite Māori comprising just under 15 percent of the general population), and five times more likely than Pākehā to be homeless (Office of the Associate Minister of Housing, n.d). In addition, housing and economic policies have contributed to Māori displacement and alienation from turangawaewae, which in turn has disrupted whānau connectedness and the continuation of cultural norms (Durie, 2019).

Despite a range of government initiatives to address homelessness and housing, the challenges were exacerbated through the Covid-19 pandemic. House prices and rents continued to rise nationally, and new builds were delayed due to limited labour and building supplies. As a result, the pathway from emergency and transitional housing to more sustainable housing options for whānau became congested and supply struggled to keep up with demand (Office of the Associate Minister of Housing, n.d).

For Māori, homelessness and housing insecurity is anchored in the enduring effects of colonisation and historical trauma

A small kaupapa Māori research study undertaken by Lawson-Te Aho et al. (2019) indicated that *Māori homelessness is firmly anchored in colonisation and the rapid alienation of Māori land, destruction of a Māori economic base, demise of Māori worldviews and oppression of Māori during the colonial period of New Zealand history and beyond (p.6)*. The ongoing effects of colonisation have contributed to the poor health, educational and economic outcomes often experienced through generations. Transformative solutions for homelessness for Māori therefore need to sit within a paradigm that is Māori/iwi-led, whānau-centred, holistic and integrated, and founded on te ao Māori values.

A number of strategic frameworks provide strategic guidance on how to understand and address housing insecurity and homelessness from a kaupapa Māori perspective

Sir Mason Durie's Mauri o te Kāinga framework developed in 2018 supports the holistic and integrated nature of solutions to homelessness. His framework proposed te mauri o te kāinga being based on whānau – the wellbeing of the people who will live in the kāinga, whenua – the land on which kāinga will stand, and whanaungatanga – the connections that will enable the kāinga to flourish.

In 2019, Lawson-Te Aho et al. developed Whare Ōranga: An Indigenous Housing Interventions Principles Framework, a unique kaupapa Māori framework developed in Aotearoa/New Zealand to end Māori homelessness. The framework draws on the principles of Housing First, Whānau Ora and tino rangatiratanga.

In 2021, Te Tūāpapa Kura Kāinga | Ministry of Housing and Urban Development released MAIHI Ka Ora, the National Māori Housing Strategy 2021-2051⁸. The strategy provides a whole of system approach underpinned by partnerships with Māori, kaupapa Māori approaches and kaupapa Māori principles. The principles and framework guide the strategic direction for Māori housing over the next 30 years (refer [Appendix 2](#)).

Demand for emergency housing has grown

Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants (EH-SNGs) were introduced in 2016 to help vulnerable individuals and families with urgent housing needs to meet the cost of staying in short-term accommodation (most often motel rooms for seven nights and up to 21 nights in certain circumstances). Funding was originally provided in the government's Budget 2016 for 3,000 emergency housing places per year, and 800 at any one time. EH-SNG numbers however have grown since then. In the quarter ending 30 June 2022, in the Bay of Plenty region alone 3,799 grants were made supporting 826 households, and in the quarter ending 30 September 2022, 3,405 grants were made supporting 738 households⁹.

Rotorua Contracted Emergency Housing Pilot - a collaborative, place-based approach to housing whānau in urgent need

In 2020 the Rotorua Mayor called on government to focus its attention on Rotorua to help develop short-, medium- and long-term solutions to the housing crisis. At the time, insufficient housing was identified as one of the biggest issues the Rotorua community was facing. Rotorua's population was growing but the lack of new and available housing resulted in severe housing deprivation (Rotorua Lakes District Council, 2020). Demand for the EH-SNG had increased in Rotorua (by 67% between June 2019 and December 2020) resulting in an increasing number of families staying in motels. The numbers of Rotorua whānau waiting on the public housing register also increased, the majority of whom were Māori¹⁰. Housing needs were exacerbated by Covid-19 which put pressure on existing transitional housing stock¹¹. Median rents and house prices had also increased sharply over the five years to 2020 (54 percent and 84 percent respectively). Homelessness was on the rise and prominent in public spaces, raising community concern and unrest.

⁸ The strategy is based on Te MAIHI o te Whare Māori, the Māori and Iwi Housing Innovation Framework.

⁹ Refer Ministry of Housing and Urban Development Regional Fact Sheets and Quarterly Public Housing Quarterly Reports

¹⁰ Nationally the number of applicants on the public housing register increased from 2,622 in 2017 to approximately 25,000 in 2022. Fifty-one percent of applicants were Māori. In the Rotorua district the number of applicants increased from 102 in 2017 to 1,011 in 2022. Refer to [Housing Register - Ministry of Social Development \(msd.govt.nz\)](#).

¹¹ In Rotorua, the number of transitional housing places increased from 16 in 2016 to 111 in 2021 (594% increase compared to a 319% increase nationally).

In response to the growing housing issues, the Rotorua Housing Taskforce was convened in March 2021. The Taskforce consisted of iwi representatives, the Rotorua Lakes District Council and central government. The following Taskforce recommendations were approved in May 2021. These recommendations included:

- a. Government directly contracting motels for emergency accommodation
- b. Wrap-around social support services for those whānau living in contracted emergency accommodation
- c. Grouping cohorts like families and tamariki in particular motels
- d. The establishment of a one-stop Housing Hub (Te Pokapū) to improve referral, assessment and placement services for whānau into contracted motels
- e. Acceleration of medium- and long-term housing supply solutions by Kāinga Ora
- f. Improved supports available for those whānau remaining in non-contracted emergency hotels through the assignment of Ministry of Social Development (MSD) Case Managers and Navigators.

Thirteen motels in Rotorua were contracted by Te Tūāpapa Kura Kāinga | Ministry of Housing and Urban Development to cater for whānau who needed emergency accommodation. At the time priority was given to approximately 250 families and whānau with children living in emergency housing to move into contracted emergency housing. Between 1 July 2021 and January 2022, 482¹² whānau were supported through contracted emergency housing. Of the 482, 80 whānau moved into transitional/public housing, 51 moved into private rentals, 73 found alternative (unknown) accommodation, 39 returned to their whānau homes, and 29 left Rotorua; 47 left the motel accommodation due to non-compliance with rules of stay.

As of 5 October 2022, a total of 221 of the 297 contracted units were occupied. Of the 221 occupied units, 168 units were occupied by 203 parents and 288 children, five were occupied by couples, and a further 29 accommodating singles¹³.

In addition to whānau living in contracted emergency housing, in 2021 a further 1,121 clients entered emergency housing in Rotorua through the use of EH-SNGs and thirty-one percent of these clients lived outside Rotorua prior to registering for emergency housing support in Rotorua (Ministry of Social Development, 2022)¹⁴.

¹² This number includes parent(s) with children, elderly, rangatahi, and people with disabilities.

¹³ An additional 11 units were being used for the onsite management services offered by the support providers. Of the 76 unoccupied units, 54 were undergoing some form of cleaning or remediation work (Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (2022e)).

¹⁴ This is based on an MSD assessment of its data and case notes - 19% were living in one of the Neighbouring TLAs one month before entering emergency housing, while 12% came from other TLAs across New Zealand or had an unknown address one month before their stay in emergency housing began.

Evaluation

Framework

To evaluate whānau experience of the pilot, an evaluation framework was developed based on a brief supplied by Te Tūāpapa Kura Kāinga | Ministry of Housing and Urban Development. The framework defined the objectives and key evaluation questions as outlined in Table 1.

TABLE 1
KEY EVALUATION OBJECTIVES AND QUESTIONS

Evaluation objectives	Key evaluation questions
<p>The findings from the evaluation will inform decisions on emergency housing models in other parts of the country as well as emergency housing policy. It will also provide evaluative tools and learnings that will inform a more comprehensive evaluation in 2023.</p> <p>Specifically, the evaluation will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• confirm a theory of change for the Rotorua emergency housing pilot.• identify outcomes for whānau and individuals in contracted emergency motels as reported by whānau and those who are working/interacting with them.• identify the extent to which the Rotorua pilot was successful in achieving its intended outcomes for family and whānau with children accessing contracted emergency motels.	<p>What are the experiences and initial outcomes for whānau in contracted emergency motels? (Refer Outcomes framework)</p> <p>What are the particular features of the contracted emergency motel model that have made a difference for whānau, and what, if anything, could be improved? How and in what ways are contracted emergency motels different from other emergency housing whānau have experienced? (Refer Whānau Experiences of Contracted Emergency Motels)</p> <p>How well has the model been implemented given the crisis context and time constraints? What improvements are needed to ensure the model delivers on its intended objectives? (Refer Stakeholder Experiences)</p> <p>What is the theory of change and intervention logic that underpins the pilot and how does it link to the strategies of decision makers? (Refer Theory of Change and Outcomes framework)</p> <p>What should be included in an outcomes framework (or evaluative criteria) for a comprehensive evaluation of the pilot? (Refer draft Outcomes framework)</p> <p>What can we learn from the Rotorua pilot that can be applied to other parts of Aotearoa New Zealand? (Refer Lessons Learned)</p>

Data collection

To answer the evaluation questions, a mixed-method approach was applied, with a focus on in-depth qualitative interviews with whānau and semi-structured interviews with remaining stakeholders. Interviews with whānau were conducted in August/September 2022. Findings from the whānau interviews were then tested more broadly through a whānau survey in preparation for the final evaluation report. In addition to the interviews listed in Table 2, the evaluation team also talked informally with social service provider staff on site at motels, including social workers, community navigators and housing navigators. Table 2 provides a summary of the interviews completed.

TABLE 2
COMPLETED EVALUATION INTERVIEWS

Stakeholder group	Number interviewed
Whānau	11 whānau (representing 13 adults and 38 children living in the emergency housing accommodation). In some cases whānau had other children not living in the motel with them. Most interview were with an individual member of the whānau, two interviews were with couples. 80 (42% response rate) survey responses, representing approximately 102 adults and 116 children (Refer Whānau survey results). One survey was allocated to a room with the expectation that one person would complete the survey on behalf of all occupants.
Moteliars	13
Te Hau ki te Kāinga (Provider collective - Governance and Operations)	8
Rotorua Taskforce (Rotorua Lakes District Council, Ministry of Social Development, NZ Police, Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, Kāinga Ora)	12
Government (Policy)	2
TOTAL	126

Sampling of whānau

Each provider was invited to nominate four whānau¹⁵ to participate in the evaluation, based on the following criteria:

- Participants needed to be whānau (that is, adults/parents with tamariki).
- Participants needed to be in a position where they felt comfortable to engage and share with the evaluation team their experience of living in contracted emergency housing.
- Participants needed to be from a range of contracted emergency motels.

Once participants were nominated, the provider staff were invited to be on site to introduce the evaluation team to the whānau. Some provider staff sat in at the interviews to support the whānau at the request of the whānau.

Given the focus on whānau experience, no whānau case notes or data were requested from providers or the Taskforce. Data and insights about the pilot, emergency housing and homelessness more broadly were drawn from online publications, Cabinet papers and relevant research.

¹⁵ One provider only nominated three whānau.

Data analysis and reporting

The analysis involved a process of wānanga where the evaluation team reflected on the insights from interviews through a whakaaro Māori lens. This process resulted in the theory of change. The data was summarised into themes and used to answer the key evaluation questions. The emerging findings were presented to the Ministry of Social Development and Te Tūāpapa Kura Kāinga | Ministry of Housing and Urban Development before finalising the draft written report. The findings were also presented to members of the Rotorua Housing Taskforce and Te Hau ki te Kāinga governance group.

Further detail about the methodology is included in [Appendix 1](#).

Out of scope

The evaluation was focused on whānau experience of living in contracted emergency motels. It did not evaluate the EH-SNG or seek to provide an in-depth comparison between the experience of whānau who may have lived in both contracted motels and non-contracted motels used for emergency accommodation. The evaluation did not look in-depth at the mechanics of the operating model of Te Hau ki te Kāinga and Te Pokapū, or other housing initiatives associated with the pilot.

Use of quotes

To maintain the confidentiality of the respondents, individuals and agencies are not named in the report. Quotes are attributed to either whānau or stakeholder (irrespective of stakeholder group). Quotes have been edited for clarity.

A whānau informed theory of change

A theory of change is a description of how and why a desired change is expected to happen in a particular context. It provides the underlying theory that links the programme initiative to the high-level outcomes intended. Once the theory of change is established, the outcomes framework articulates more explicitly all the outcomes intended for whānau and the contextual conditions that must be in place for the outcomes to occur¹⁶.

What was found through conversations with stakeholders and whānau was a shared desire for whānau to be safe, and for their children to be living in a stable home environment and to be interdependent, resilient and vibrant. Ultimately this result would lead to thriving communities in Rotorua. While achieving these outcomes is achievable for whānau, for some, this may take years to achieve. With support from social service providers, whānau will eventually overcome a range of barriers and challenges that have contributed to their vulnerability, including debt and/or poor credit ratings, family harm, unemployment, alienation from friends and whānau, low confidence, and low resilience. Contracted emergency housing is providing respite from these challenges and barriers, providing time for whānau to settle, stabilise and reorient themselves towards moving out of emergency housing and finding a place they can call home.

All whānau interviewed who came into contracted emergency housing had experienced some form of trauma that had left them and their children vulnerable including:

- A relationship breakdown, or family harm incident
- Drug and alcohol issues
- Tenancy issues (either evicted, or rental sold, or tenant no longer allowed or able to stay with family).

Some whānau had come from living in non-contracted motel accommodation where the environment was less than optimal, contributing to high levels of stress and anxiety for families. Contracted emergency housing therefore provided a safe, secure, temporary haven for struggling whānau to reset, recover and rebuild.

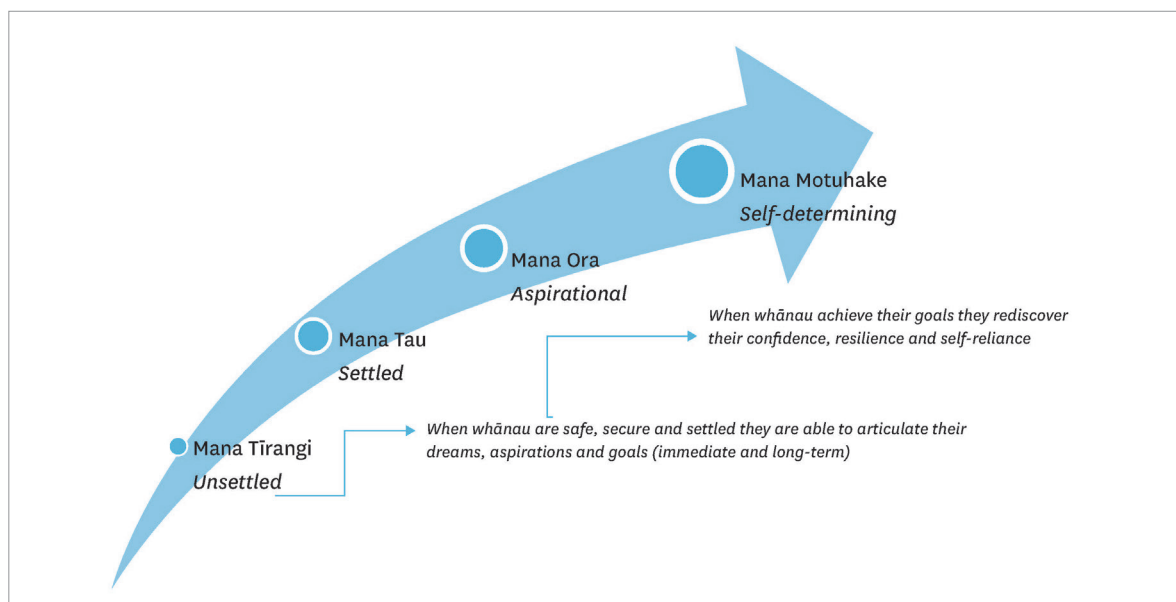
The following theory of change was developed based on the experiences shared by whānau and summarised in the framework below (Figure 1). The framework draws on the concept of mana¹⁷ and shows the journey whānau experience as they transition from an unsettled state of wellbeing towards a vibrant interdependent state. As whānau move from Mana Tau to Mana Ora, their aspirations and goals are wider than housing. However, achieving their aspirations is fundamental to being able to live in their own home.

¹⁶ For more information about theories of change refer to [What is Theory of Change? - Theory of Change Community](#)

¹⁷ Mana is a person's influence, authority, prestige, integrity and power. Mana can determine how people are regarded by others.

Mana can be decreased or increased by virtue of a person's actions; it is a force that can motivate an individual to do better for the betterment of the collective (Ware & Welsh-Tapiata, 2010).

FIGURE 1
THEORY OF CHANGE



The following table provides an overview of each state of wellbeing, and what it looks like based on whānau experience.

TABLE 3
THEORY OF CHANGE UNPACKED

Wellbeing state	Description (in this context)	Whānau experience
Mana Tīrangī	An unsettled state, unable to rest, relax, breathe, anxious and stressed	<p><i>I was in a rental for four months and then it got sold, I went to apply for another rental and found out my ex-partner had put a loan out in my name which is how I got stuck in emergency housing (Single dad, two dependents).</i></p> <p><i>I was living with my sister but she wasn't allowed to have anyone stay so I went into emergency housing, every 21 days I had to reapply and each viewing my anxiety got higher; there were domestics at my motel I couldn't sleep (Single mum, one dependent).</i></p> <p><i>I was living with my Aunty but after Covid the house was sold so I moved in with Nan in a rundown caravan, when I got my two kids back I had to move, I was going through grief, I wasn't in right place, the right mind, I needed a fresh start (Single dad, two dependents).</i></p>
Mana Tau	A settled state, a time and safe place to think, to settle, to recover from trauma, to reset	<p><i>I know it's safe, I can sleep (Single mum, one dependent).</i></p> <p><i>I came here for the weekend to see my partner and got Covid so had to stay...I was so stressed as I had nowhere to call home (partner was in emergency accommodation)...I was stressed for a week, I had rung up WINZ but they couldn't help me so I rang my mum and she referred me to a provider who referred me to Te Pokapū...Te Pokapū was so quick, I got into a whare that night...it feels safe here, all gated, this is the first whare me and my babies have ever got to call our own as we have been living with whānau most of the time, my kids love it (Single mum, two dependents).</i></p>
Mana Ora	A state of wellbeing, of vitality, having a renewed sense of purpose and being.	<p><i>I have a job and a car...I am ready to move forward in life and be greater than last year. I had my days of being depressed and now it's time to wake up, I can't feel sorry for myself and have my kids see me like that. It's taken 8 months to breath and not worry (Single mum, 2 children).</i></p> <p><i>I am now in a transitional house. It's been six weeks and it's been amazing. I am happy, kids are happy. 1.5 years of waiting in emergency housing and doing what I had to do for this has paid off (Single dad, two dependents).</i></p>
Mana Motuhake	A state of independence, interdependence, self-reliance, able to sustain wellness for the whānau (as whānau interviewed were living in emergency and transitional housing they had not yet achieved full independence in the way that they desired).	

Outcomes framework (draft)

An integrated approach to supporting whānau

The diagram below provides a high-level overview of the complexity of factors in play that support whānau to achieve Mana Motuhake.

Context / Situation:	<p>Inadequate supply of affordable housing in Rotorua shortfall of up to 2000 homes). Limited supply of public and transitional housing.</p> <p>Increase in housing prices (84%) in five years.</p> <p>Increase in market rental prices (54%) in five years.</p>	<p>Increase in whānau staying in motels for emergency accommodation creating unsafe environments for tamariki</p>	<p>Increase in families accessing Emergency Housing Special Needs Grant (81 in 2016 and 498 in 2019)</p>	<p>Māori make up 58% of households accessing the EN-SNG nationally</p>
66% of renters in rental stress		Low motel occupancy due to Covid-19 settings impacting on tourism		
Intervention and activities	Outcomes			
<p>Contracted emergency housing in Rotorua (pilot)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Centralised triage and assessment of housing and wellbeing needs Wrap around support (advice, guidance, navigation) to whānau staying in contracted emergency housing 24/7 security of contracted motels Financial assistance to whānau Medium to long term housing solutions 	<p>Mana Motuhake (Self-determining)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whānau are employed, self-sufficient Whānau are living independently Whānau are vibrant, thriving, contributing Whānau are mentally, spiritually, culturally and physically well Whānau are in a place they call home 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National and regional support is available but decreased Local-led solutions are evident, effective and well managed Solutions are Te Tiriti based (honouring partnership, participation, protection, equity and potential) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rotorua is a thriving community that whānau are proud to call home Local economy is thriving and stimulating interest in Rotorua as a great place to live, work, visit. Policy settings enable locally-led solutions
	<p>Mana Ora (Aspirational)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whānau are confident Whānau are independent, motivated, aspirational Whānau have plans for the future Whānau are accessing services Children attend school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong governance and oversight to monitor progress; develop and advance areas of potential; remove existing and potential barriers Data and insights are reported regularly to inform decision-making (governance and operations) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supply of affordable rentals and owner-occupied homes is meeting demand Emergency options significantly reduced to a few managed short-term facilities
	<p>Mana Tau (Settled)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whānau emergency housing needs are met preventing homelessness Whānau are safe and secure Whānau are comfortable Tamariki are settled 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agencies and iwi are working collaboratively and transparently to support locally-led solutions to emergency housing Contracting is supported by a collective outcomes based framework and regular reporting Wrap-around support is supporting whānau aspiration, development and self-determination Monitoring infrastructure is effective High trust 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public housing and transitional housing options have increased Emergency housing options are managed Community support is strong A wider range of longer-term housing options are underway
	<p>Mana Tirangi (Unsettled)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whānau are in unsafe living situations Whānau are anxious and distressed Tamariki are unsettled and at potential risk of harm. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agencies are siloed in their response NGO's are individually contracted and competing Outcomes are not clear or not clearly understood No collective infrastructure to support performance Monitoring functions are inadequate No communication strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited affordable housing options (EH, TH, PH, private rentals) High demand on emergency housing and longer stays in concentrated areas Risk of dependency on State provided housing solutions High risk of long term social costs

Re-discovery

Recovery phase

Urgent

Unpacking the framework

Context

The contextual information situates the pilot within the housing challenges and issues of the time. Those issues are expanded further in the [Background section](#) of this report.

Interventions and activities

The ‘intervention’ that was collectively developed by the Rotorua Housing Taskforce in 2021 is referred to as the Rotorua Contracted Emergency Housing Pilot. The intervention and associated activities were designed to support the achievement of the long-term outcomes for whānau.

Outcomes

The outcomes of the pilot are framed by the theory of change. The outcomes framework is designed to show what the outcomes look like for whānau at each level of change. The framework also shows the relationship between whānau growth and the agencies (the ‘Collective’) collectively activating their respective funding and regulatory levers to create the conditions that enable whānau growth to occur. The framework also acknowledges that the pilot is situated within a wider community context that could influence the extent to which the pilot is successful.

Phases of time

On the right-hand side of the framework are phases marked by time. When whānau are in a Mana Tīrangī state, an urgent and immediate response is required. Whānau informed us that once they entered into contracted emergency housing, this phase was generally overcome within a day, but for some whānau it took up to four days. Following the urgent response, the phase of recovery began which could take anything from six to 18 months. By 18 months most whānau interviewed had reached a state of Ora; that is, goals had been set and achieved and a strong foundation of confidence and resilience had been built, so that whānau were ready to move on to more suitable housing options. While recovery can vary significantly by whānau, what is evident is that three months is an unrealistic timeframe to expect whānau to have progressed from an unsettled to an aspirational state of wellbeing.

The framework does not outline the unintended consequences. While some of those became evident during the evaluation they were not explored in detail. It is expected that a wider more in-depth evaluation will test and develop the framework further.

Whānau experience of contracted emergency motels

Whānau presented to contracted emergency housing through different pathways

Whānau were able to access contracted emergency housing through multiple access points, including referrals from providers, from MSD, from whānau and from Police. Only two whānau spoke of using Te Pokapū triage and assessment.¹⁸

Whānau experiences of living in contracted motels, while not ideal, is an improvement on their prior living conditions

All whānau spoken to felt contracted emergency housing was a safer more secure option for their children than living in unsecured facilities.

I looked at options and where we went suited my whānau, it felt whānau friendly, it felt more secure, it was fenced...I was thinking about my kids, their safety and spaces where they could go. (Single dad).

I like the motel, it's safe, it's a good place to stay while we wait for transitional housing, its cheap and not a big whare to clean up...my ex-partner (meth addict) can't get in. I am thinking about my kids and this is a good environment for them for now... Even though they have rules here I can't go anywhere anyway. I don't need to leave after 10pm and I don't need visitors. (Single dad, parenting six kids).

All whānau felt the amenities in their rooms were reasonable given the circumstances. Amenities such as freezers, ovens and laundry facilities (including washing lines) were often cited as the main facilities whānau would like improved. However, whānau appreciated and valued the access they had to power, wifi, and heating.

Rooms generally suited the composition of the whānau. In some cases where living arrangements were not suitable, providers were proactive in finding other rooms/motels within the collective that were more fit for purpose.

My son had an operation and was in a wheelchair, my last motel was two-storey. We weren't utilising the upstairs space so the provider offered us a place here as it has a wetfloor and wider hallways for the wheelchair and easier access to outdoor space... so we were able to move (Single mum, one dependent).

In one night we were moved, it was pretty quick. I had choice of rooms but not really motel. The first room there was no space so I asked to be moved to a different room; there's not a lot of space, but you can't expect to have a lot, it's still a roof over our head and it's safe (Single dad, two dependents)

Whānau experience of the quality of the accommodation was tested in the survey. The results were similar to what was found through the qualitative interviews, where whānau agreed that laundry and cooking facilities were the main areas for improvement. Overall, however whānau agreed that the accommodation was clean, dry and comfortable.

¹⁸ Whānau who had been in contracted emergency housing for more than a year recalled being assessed and referred to contracted emergency housing by MSD. Given the names of whānau participating in the evaluation were confidential we did not verify with MSD or Te Pokapū how whānau were assessed and referred into contracted emergency housing.

Security plays a critical role in creating safe and secure environments that facilitate Mana Tau

The secure facilities at the motel and the accommodation rules were key features of the contracted emergency housing model that all whānau spoke about. Some whānau felt inconvenienced by access hours and visiting hours (especially whānau who had adult children who were not allowed to visit without making prior arrangements), but understood that it was in the best interests and safety of all the children residing in the motel.

I can't have my oldest boys visit after hours due to the rules, I hate my boys being referred to as visitors. One son visited after 6pm and he was told he couldn't come in and security didn't even tell me...I get quite vocal but they are my kids...but I feel safe and secure here especially when I work late at night...for me personally I feel scared to live in unmanaged motels, you never know what might break out with the neighbours and who can walk through. It's comforting to know they (security) are present (*Single mum, one dependent*).

At first I didn't like the rule of not having visitors but understand why. We feel safe and secure. I can sleep without worry... no one wants to kick your door in or steal your car (*Single dad, six dependents*).

Having security is great, we have heaps of kids and we want them to be safe...There were people we couldn't say no to. Now they can't come in, they are not allowed through security. At first we didn't like the security but then we came to like the security it offered. It has helped us with our recovery [from meth] (*Couple, four dependents*).

The added security means its ok to go to sleep at night, someone is literally onsite making sure you are safe (*Single mum, one dependent*).

Survey feedback confirmed that the majority of whānau felt safe and secure.

The contracted motel environment is creating a positive sense of community for whānau

Whānau talked about the motel environment being family oriented with opportunities to engage as a community of residents from time to time. Being placed with other families also meant that whānau were on the same journey to rebuild their lives and put the wellbeing of their children at the centre:

Our current motel is great, there is more space and it is child and whānau friendly. Everyone in the motel are on the same journey... it's about the kids. To be here you have to show them (provider) you are working to improve yourself. (*Couple, four dependents*).

There is a sense of community in the motel... but I generally kept to myself (*Single dad, two dependents*).

I am grateful to have a roof over my head, it's like family here, everyone is nice, its relaxed... for people that have been through so much in life, this is a good place to rest (*Single mum, two dependents*).

It's whānau orientated, tamariki can play with each other, maha ngā whakawhanaungatanga kei konei (*Couple, two dependents*).

On Mothers Day and Easter we went outside and had a BBQ put on by the provider, each household was encouraged to bring a koha...we also go to the top office to have meetings and to hear what is going on (*Single mum, one dependent*).

This sense of community was also confirmed by moteliers and providers. Moteliers in particular noted that whānau were respectful towards each other in shared spaces, and that providers encouraged group gatherings on special occasions.

Providers are proactively providing support and enrichment activities for tamariki

One of the main challenges of living in motel accommodation is the limited space and the tensions this creates between couples, between parents and children, and between siblings. Providers therefore were proactive in providing afterschool activities for tamariki and/or providing the following:

- Access to after school programmes (karate, mentoring programmes, sports);
- Creating school holiday activities;
- Providing toys and bikes for all tamariki to use in shared spaces; and
- Providing resource packs for tamariki and information to parents on facilities or activities they can engage in for free (for example the library, forest, parks).

Providers also noticed the number of school-aged children who were not attending school and worked proactively with schools to make transport available¹⁹

The (provider) helps with kai and provides programmes and activities for kids in the school holidays...the kids get picked up and dropped off by bus to school and kindy. (*Single dad, six dependents*).

There are toys outside for kids to share. They have friends here as well. Kids are provided transport to hockey. One child attends a positive role-modelling programme every Tuesday, he gets to spend time on something positive (*Couple, four dependents*).

Options are provided for kids for example karate. They have a play area for kids. Babies love it here. They have made friends here. Everything here is safe, they can't go on to the street, I know no one is going to take my babies. (*Single mum, two dependents*).

Wrap around-support is navigating whānau from an unsettled to an aspirational state of wellbeing

Whānau were aware of the support available to them when they arrived at the accommodation and how to access the support. All the whānau interviewed had developed a plan and identified goals. While goal setting is important, the process of thinking about the future and how to realistically achieve goals was important for whānau who may have struggled to think beyond the present day.

About a month after I moved in, I sat with (staff member) who asked where do I see myself in the future and what I want to work on and how can they help...every month they came back to see if I had progressed. (*Single mum, one dependent*).

The navigators have time for their clients, they got me to open-up. I have had navigators come and go and that's it. But here I have a whānau plan with goals to achieve. I used to be in my shell but the process of planning has helped me to come out more, speak more around what I need and what my family needs. (*Single dad, two dependents*).

One whānau interviewed felt the support and regular monitoring of whānau plans was inconsistent.

I did a plan and identified barriers holding me back but I am not sure support is provided to help people tick off the list – no one regularly came back to follow up with me. I want to move but I only found out recently that I wasn't on the list for transitional housing. There's also no contact with social register housing people. (*Single dad, two dependents*).

¹⁹ The evaluation team did not interview any staff from schools; however this stakeholder group should be included in the fuller evaluation planned for late 2023.

While some whānau had the capability to navigate themselves to the support and services needed, it was still reassuring for whānau to know that someone was there to help if needed:

I haven't fully utilised the services available to me, but they have given me a safe place... I was off the radar for five days and they (provider) came to see if I was ok. It's reassuring to have someone there if we need it, especially if I just need to cry. I feel cared for and that my identity as Māori is respected. *(Single mum, one dependent)*.

They (provider) tell us if we need support they are there. We get good information, and the (provider) is good at leading people the right way, and where to get help and advice, especially for those new who need support. They will let us know if they can help us or not and when... you can't expect them to come straightaway as there are other families here but I have never had to wait for long for them to respond. *(Single mum, two dependents)*.

We did a whānau plan when we moved in, we shared our backstory and we set aspirations. We have achieved a lot since being here, the (provider) has become part of our life, we felt there was something different with her, she didn't judge us, she understood us. We don't have a car so (provider) always offered us a ride. (Provider) works here onsite which is great, she is always available when we need to talk, she doesn't give up on us, we feel like she cares and this isn't just a job for her. *(Couple, four dependents)*.

The survey tested the extent to which whānau were provided an opportunity to plan in an empowering way with the support of providers, where they felt listened to and supported. Feedback was generally positive, where the majority agreed that they were supported to develop a whānau plan and were regularly followed up by the provider.

A small group of seven respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the adequacy of support they received from providers. These seven were from five different motels run by two different providers.

Whānau have longer term aspirations they hope to achieve

Whānau are setting and achieving a range of goals and aspirations with the support of the providers. The size and scope of these achievements varied depending on the need of the whānau. Achievements included:

- Visiting a doctor for the first time in ten years.
- Gaining photo ID and birth certificates - *"Having a birth certificate makes our life much easier, its proof we exist"*
- Finding and participating in creative passions
- Attending relationship counselling
- Budgeting support including learning how to save and pay bills
- Finding part-time work
- Completing courses to improve parenting skills and strengthen wellbeing including Incredible Years, Parenting through separation, Violence prevention, and Māori wellness
- Moving into transitional housing
- Resuming care of children removed from their custody

With the (provider) support we got our kids back, we got a lawyer who helped us. We didn't know we could get our kids back, but (provider) made everything possible. *(Couple, four dependents)*.

Whānau achievements were also tested with survey respondents. The most common achievement from survey respondents was increased confidence and independence, followed by accessing health services, eating healthy kai, and reconnecting with whānau.

Some whānau interviewed were ready to move on from contracted emergency housing and had a wide range of aspirations they wanted to achieve including:

- Moving home to live and/or build on whānau whenua; moving into private rentals
- Further training and/or study to upskill (including photography, drug and alcohol counselling, grief counselling, building and carpentry)
- Finding part-time or full-time employment
- Continuing to support their children in their education (early childhood, or transition to school and or secondary school).

The most common aspirations whānau identified through the survey were to move out of emergency housing, to be healthy physically and mentally, to be happy and content as a whānau, and to save or earn more money. Of note was the low number of respondents (less than a third) who aspired to reconnect with their identity as Māori, to whenua and to whānau. There could be a number of valid reasons informing these responses, including the fact that these connections may already be strong, or strengthening these connections may not be a priority at this time. However, if parents have a negative association with their identity as Māori and are choosing to stay disconnected, then the impact of this decision on a generation of Māori children is a concern and may warrant further exploration.

Contracted emergency housing is unlikely to contribute to whānau dependency on emergency motels

All whānau interviewed did not want to live in motels. This finding was supported by the survey results, where over 75% of the respondents stated that their main aspiration was to move out of contracted emergency accommodation. This view was also affirmed by moteliers who felt that motel accommodation was not suited as long-term accommodation for whānau, as space and facilities were limited. Some whānau residing in the contracted emergency motels were only still there because there were no transitional, public or affordable private housing options currently available to them.

Our goal is to have our own house. We did look at a house but it wasn't the right one for us. Here we have the money to save, to have a breather, we realise we haven't been introduced to the real world of paying power and Wi-Fi yet! But there are brighter days ahead. Life is good. *(Couple, four dependents)*.

I don't see myself living here, I just want a home for me and my babies...I am ready to move forward in life and be greater than last year...money is a big issue, renting is not affordable, but where I am now means I can save money for a better life for my kids. *(Single mum, two dependents)*.

Contracted emergency housing is not suitable for all whānau

It was noted however that not all whānau are ready to make a change in their lives or adhere to rules, so contracted emergency motels may not be suitable for all whānau.

Family managed (motels) are better, it's safer for kids. If it's an individual or couple it's a problem not being able to come and go and you can't drink here. It's like parole, there are conditions, it provides routine and stability, so it depends where you are in life as to whether this works for you or not. But if you don't like it here, go somewhere else basically. *(Single dad, two dependents)*.

Stakeholder experiences

Commitment and collaboration are key to developing an innovative response to a complex issue

All active members²⁰ of the Taskforce (Te Rakau Taumata) interviewed agreed that working collaboratively with decision-makers from key agencies to design and implement locally-led solutions to complex housing issues was key to standing up the pilot. In particular, having regional but also national agency government officials lend their support to the initiative ensured that what was being designed locally sat within what was legislatively and broadly politically acceptable.

The Homes and Thriving Communities Strategic Framework was the first strategy developed to address housing challenges developed locally by Council and Te Arawa iwi with support from the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (Rotorua Lakes District Council, 2020). This was followed by the instigation of the Taskforce which developed the Rotorua Contracted Emergency Housing Pilot in collaboration with the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, the Ministry of Social Development, Rotorua Lakes District Council, Te Puni Kōkiri, Kāinga Ora, and Te Arawa iwi.

High trust was also important. Initiatives were being stood up at pace in recognition of a combination of factors at play that were creating unsafe environments for children living in motels used for emergency purposes. Agencies spoke of genuine engagement, open sharing of knowledge and resources by senior agency officials, and a clear understanding of the legislative and regulatory parameters of each agency during the initial discussions of the Taskforce.

Taskforce members had a shared understanding that the priority outcome of the pilot was to create a safe environment for children, whānau and ultimately the wider community. Longer-term it was intended that whānau would be in a stronger position to contribute positively to a thriving Rotorua community.

No one agency had the levers to create an innovative solution to housing issues in Rotorua

It was clear from the outset that each agency member of the Taskforce had a limited suite of tools to address the breadth of housing challenges. Only together could they develop a plan that enacted real solutions and transformative change. Taskforce members felt that the intent of working together collectively was achieved well initially, as all agencies brought solutions and resources to the table that collectively enabled the pilot to stand up.

Some stakeholders questioned whether the logic of the pilot was realistic

As noted above, there were mixed views on whether the logic of the pilot was realistic, in particular, the intent that whānau residing in emergency housing would move seamlessly through the housing continuum as shown in Figure 2 below. This continuum relied on an adequate supply of transitional housing, quality and affordable private rentals, and new public housing stock that has not eventuated at the pace needed to accommodate whānau currently living in emergency housing.

²⁰ Te Puni Kōkiri and Te Arawa iwi are no longer active on the Taskforce and therefore were not invited to participate in the evaluation.

FIGURE 2

HOUSING CONTINUUM SOURCED FROM HOMES AND THRIVING COMMUNITIES STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK (2020) ROTORUA LAKES DISTRICT COUNCIL



As noted in the data reported on page 9, 27% of whānau who resided in contracted emergency motels moved into either transitional/public housing or private rentals, while 188 whānau were recorded as having left contracted emergency motels to various destinations. Further investigation is needed to understand whether these outcomes are good or not, and how these align to whānau aspirations and mana motuhake.

While contracted emergency motels were implemented well, unintended consequences were not managed effectively

Stakeholders felt the contracted emergency motel model was implemented as intended²¹ (inclusive of contracting single-use motels; wrap-around support; security; and a centralised triage and assessment team). However, as Taskforce initiatives were gaining momentum, the number of whānau and individuals entering non-contracted emergency housing in Rotorua (through EH-SNGs) increased. This led to a number of unintended consequences, including an increase in crime and disruptive and intimidating behaviour in and around Fenton Street,²² which the public directly attributed to the increase in emergency housing accommodation. As a result, the contracted approach became a visible target for public unrest and concern, and the ongoing media attention had the potential to impact negatively on the mana and wellbeing of those whānau and children temporarily residing in contracted emergency housing.

It was not evident that a counter-narrative was introduced by the Taskforce to ensure the mana and wellbeing of whānau living in contracted emergency housing was maintained. The extent to which these unintended consequences have impacted or may impact on the overall effectiveness of the pilot is yet to be seen. Of most concern is how these issues may impact on the aspirations and future wellbeing of those whānau and children who are proactively trying to create a better future for themselves.

²¹ The implementation of Te Hau ki Te Kāinga was not part of the evaluation, therefore this assessment is based on stakeholder perspectives and whānau experience.

²² There are 157 accommodation providers listed on the RotoruaNZ website ([Emergency Housing & Visitor Accommodation | Rotorua NZ](#)) of which 57 take emergency housing clients (EH-SNG and contracted). At least 20 of these motels are located on Fenton Street. Fenton Street therefore became regarded as a hub for emergency housing accommodation and referred to locally as MSD mile [Rotorua emergency housing motels: Locals make heartfelt pleas to commissioners to end 'chaotic' system - NZ Herald](#).

Moteliere experience of contracted emergency housing so far has been positive

Moteliere are another key stakeholder group. All 13 motels were invited to participate in the evaluation and all 13 agreed to participate. Some participants were onsite managers and others were lease owners (mostly based locally). Their feedback resonated with what we heard from providers and whānau including:

- the importance of security²³ to ensure whānau and any motel staff onsite are kept safe at all times
- the importance of the rules²⁴ that they felt kept children safe
- the importance of working collaboratively with security and wrap-around social support staff to ensure everyone knew each other's roles and responsibilities and worked within those parameters.

Motel management and staff who were on site daily felt whānau were respectful to others and to motel property. At least three motel managers thought they had experienced more issues and damage to property from tourists in the past than whānau using the motel for contracted emergency accommodation. It was noted however that given the cramped conditions of living in motel rooms, arguments between whānau members did occur. However, any issues were dealt with promptly and addressed by either security or provider staff. Overall, motel respondents were satisfied with how Te Tūāpapa Kura Kāinga | Ministry of Housing and Urban Development was managing the relationship with them locally. However, they felt more could be done to counter the negative narrative in the media around contracted emergency motels that they felt was damaging public perception of contracted emergency housing and creating a stigma for parents and children.

Governance oversight for the Pilot is needed to monitor outcomes and guide strategic interventions

In 2021, establishment activities were well monitored and documented. However, the Taskforce agreed that oversight of the pilot had waned since the initial actions of the pilot were completed in 2021. As a result, accountability for the impact of the pilot including robust and informed evidence of successes and challenges was not evident. A monitoring and evaluation framework and system are needed for tracking progress and outcomes for whānau living in contracted emergency housing²⁵. This framework should be wider than Te Hau ki Te Kāinga and inclusive of Te Tūāpapa Kura Kāinga | Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, Rotorua Lakes District Council, Kāinga Ora and Ministry of Social Development pilot initiatives that are contributing to solving wider systemic housing issues in Rotorua. Validation of data is an issue, with there being no agreed 'sources of truth' to guide decision-makers on progress and impacts of the investments on whānau and community. Similarly, there was no deliberate and collective strategic communications agreed by the Taskforce to mitigate the growing and potentially harmful rhetoric that developed in Rotorua concerning whānau living in contracted emergency housing.

The Taskforce recognised the need for renewed leadership and co-ordination of the Taskforce. A reset is needed that is inclusive of mana whenua, not only as a genuine expression of the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, but also in recognition of the depth and breadth of resources and wisdom mana whenua bring to the table. Māori also represent a majority of whānau living in contracted emergency housing and therefore solutions should reflect a te ao Māori worldview. The te ao Māori frameworks provided in Appendix 2 may offer some guidance to those designing and implementing future solutions.

²³ One motel manager thought security behaviour at their site had improved in 2022.

²⁴ One motelier noted that providers had different rules. They felt having no visitors enabled them as motel owners/managers to know who was on the property at all times for fire safety purposes.

²⁵ It is noted that a monitoring and evaluation system is in progress for Te Hau ki Te Kāinga

Lessons learned

How well is the Pilot being implemented?

Whānau experience of contracted emergency housing so far is positive

From the perspective of the whānau who took part in the evaluation, contracted emergency housing is working well for them. All whānau were heartened by the speed in which they were housed and the suitability of the motel to their needs. Where rooms were not suitable, proactive measures were taken by providers to re-house whānau as soon as more suitable motel rooms became available. Whānau were grateful and appreciative of the opportunity to be housed in a safe and secure environment.

Contracted emergency housing is providing a circuit break for whānau suffering anxiety and stress

Whānau came into emergency housing as a last resort. Their prior experiences varied but were consistently traumatic to some degree. The contracted emergency housing response was vital to circuit breaking the stress, anxiety and trauma parents were experiencing and providing them with a safe, secure place to rest, recover and reset. Provider support was therefore key to ensuring whānau continue to move forward in their journey to Mana Motuhake.

Whānau felt that providers genuinely cared about them and their futures and were proactive in providing support particularly for their children. Based on whānau experience, follow-up on whānau progress may be inconsistent across providers and/or across staff within the same provider. The extent and impact of potential inconsistency in monitoring progress of whānau needs further exploration.

Enrichment programmes for tamariki living in emergency housing is essential

The evaluation team interviewed 13 parents who in total represented 38 children living in contracted emergency housing, where the majority of children were under the age of 10. Parents talked about the stress for themselves and their children residing in small spaces, and also the anxiety they felt for their children. This may be contributing to attachment issues where single parents, in particular, are keeping their children at home rather than encouraging them to attend school.

Parenting programmes for adults and enrichment programmes that encourage tamariki to engage in play, sport and education are essential. Providers adapted quickly to the large number of children living in contracted emergency housing and have stepped in to assist parents as and when needed, including providing support (kai, transport to school and activities, resources) and by also encouraging parents to take their young children off site and into the community.

For whānau, contracted emergency housing is unlikely to create whānau dependency on motels, whānau aspire to live in a place they can call home

During the course of the inquiry there were concerns that contracted emergency housing had the propensity to create whānau dependency on motel accommodation. Our inquiry indicates that this outcome is unlikely for whānau. While motel accommodation meets their needs in the immediate and short-term, parents were adamant that long-term it is not suitable for children and motels is not where they want to be. They want to find a place they can call home.

This is not to say that parents were not anxious about transitioning out of contracted emergency housing. The prospect of having to pay for all utility expenses (currently some are provided free), potentially increased rent, and living in unsecured properties was creating some anxiety. While whānau may be ready to transition, intense support may still be needed to help whānau to re-settle, reset and rediscover their confidence and capability to live more independently.

Develop opportunities to independently gather whānau voice and experience living in emergency accommodation is recommended

During our evaluation we heard that there may be some inconsistencies in the follow-up support provided to whānau who have completed their plans. The survey also identified some concerns regarding the inconsistent application of rules, and the extent to which whānau felt safe in their emergency accommodation. While these issues have not been substantiated, it does raise the issue of who is independently gathering the voice of whānau. Independent checks are needed to ensure the support provided - inclusive of triage and assessment, suitability of motel accommodation, whānau planning, security, and support to transition - is appropriate, consistent and safe. Currently monitoring is based on a high trust model where staff and providers report on their own performance to funders. Funding agencies also have a vested interest in ensuring the pilot performs. An independent monitor therefore would be someone who is not an employee of any provider or any agency involved in the pilot.

Addressing housing insecurity is inextricably linked to broader outcomes

The pilot is showing that housing from a whānau experience does not sit in isolation from broader outcomes. Housing is both a cause of detrimental health, education and social outcomes and also a solution and catalyst to wellbeing. It makes sense that agencies responsible for the social development of whānau, health and wellbeing, building better homes and communities and Māori development are working together. Potentially there is a need for agencies responsible for educational and economic outcomes for Māori to offer experience, knowledge and resources to the Collective that enable whānau-centred aspirations. This collaboration is particularly important given the emerging evidence indicating that some parents do not have the basic requirements needed to positively engage in work and community, including obtaining birth certificates and driver licences.

Locally led, regionally supported and nationally-enabled place-based support has potential

While the pilot is focused on housing solutions, the pilot is also testing locally led, regionally supported, and nationally enabled place-based approaches to resolving complex issues. What the evaluation team heard is that initially this approach worked well, as senior leaders nationally worked together quickly to invest in and kick-start local solutions. However, there were differing views on what the collective commitment of resources looks like going forward and how long national support is needed to ensure locally led solutions are fully enabled and successful.

While it was generally understood that locally led solutions still need to fit within national policy frameworks, it is recommended going forward that funding, regulatory and policy settings provide the flexibility required to give effect to the intent of locally led, place-based solutions.

Conclusion and recommendations

In conclusion:

- Contracted emergency motel accommodation (inclusive of security and wrap-around social support) is creating a safe, secure and empowering interim environment for whānau (adults with children).
- Living in emergency housing is however restrictive and not a long-term option. There are rules to abide by, indoor and outdoor motel space is confined, and amenities are limited for whānau. Whānau living in contracted emergency motels therefore aspire to move into a place they can call home.
- Whānau are in a vulnerable situation and therefore susceptible to unfair, inconsistent and inappropriate practices. Therefore, it is essential that there are independent mechanisms in place going forward that enable whānau to voice their experiences of living in emergency housing.
- At a governance level it is critical that the Taskforce is reconvened with clear leadership, roles and responsibilities, a shared understanding of the parameters of nationally enabled, regionally supported and locally led interventions, and a clear reporting/performance framework. This framework should guide the operational teams in gathering the data and evidence needed to demonstrate the whānau journey towards mana motuhake.
- It is recommended that the wider evaluation of the Rotorua Housing Pilot is initiated early in 2023 and that the evaluation test the theory of change and outcomes framework proposed. These tools could inform a broader monitoring and evaluation framework that supports the collective work of the agencies and providers involved.

Appendix 1 | Methodology

Kaupapa Māori theory

Kaupapa Māori theory (Smith, 1999) positions Māori worldviews and what Māori value and believe as authoritative, legitimate and valid to guide research with whānau, hapū and iwi. It lends itself to qualitative research processes which privilege the voice of Māori so Māori feel empowered to participate and influence change and improvement to processes and policies that impact on them, and to generate discussions that explore possibility, aspirations and development.

Kaupapa Māori evaluation 'in practice' means as a team we inherently privilege Māori ways of doing and being. We acknowledge inequity and difference in power; we acknowledge the impact of colonisation on the survival of our culture and language and the struggle of revitalization; we acknowledge and respect that as Māori evaluators we occupy an 'insider' position that comes with privileges but also responsibilities. We also acknowledge being Māori as a strength.

Kaupapa Māori practice and principles

Our practice is guided by the following principles:

- *Whanaungatanga and whakapapa* - Understanding and connecting to people and place; connecting with key stakeholders; building, re-igniting and nurturing the relationships we have that enable us to appropriately locate ourselves and safely undertake the inquiry process.
- *Kaupapa* - Acknowledging, understanding and connecting to the content we are working with and understanding the principles, practices, policies that implicitly guide diverse Māori realities, Māori communities and entities.
- *Kōkiritia* - Discussion, critique, co-construction of meaning, making sense of data with others throughout the evaluation process.
- *Wairua* - Ethical processes that ensure whānau are safe and enriched through the evaluation process by acknowledging our connectivity to the tangible (what we see and hear) and the intangible (what we feel); the enriching of one's mauri through our interactions and the process of whakanoa as we ensure the spiritual safety of ourselves and others.

Kaupapa Māori approach

Our approach is informed by the whakataukī "Mā te rongō, ka mōhio, mā te mōhio, ka mārama, mā te mārama, ka mātau - From listening comes knowledge, from knowledge comes understanding, from understanding comes wisdom" and underpinned by whanaungatanga, as shown in Figure 3 below.

FIGURE 3
MĀ TE RONGO KI TE AO MĀRAMA EVALUATION APPROACH

Mā te rongō, ka mōhio	Mā te mōhio, ka mārama	Mā te mārama, ka mātau
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Co-construct design• Gather insights using mixed methods including focus groups; semi-structured interviews and surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Testing themes• Exploring points of differences and commonalities• Answering the key evaluation questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Presenting and discussing emerging findings• Reporting• Ensuring utility
Whanaungatanga <i>Understanding and engaging with people and context in order to place ourselves and the contribution of the evaluation within the Kaupapa</i>		

Ethics

This research was approved by the Kāinga Ora Human Participants Research Committee on 28 July 2022 for three years.

Our kaupapa Māori ethical practices acknowledge that whānau living in emergency housing are under stress, and the situations that have led them to seek emergency accommodation are harmful and traumatic. To mitigate any further harm or duress to whānau, we leveraged our kaupapa Māori practice, which is culturally appropriate and sensitive to diverse realities of whānau Māori.

We understand that the majority of participants engaging in the evaluative research, including whānau, are Māori. As a kaupapa Māori research and evaluation company we are Māori, we speak Māori (second language learners) and we have all maintained a connection to our respective whānau, hapū and iwi, despite some of us now living away from our ancestral home. We value the voice of Māori and we utilize our evaluative inquiry skills and practices to ensure whānau Māori engage in a conversation that is respectful, safe and empowering. Our ethical practice is to ensure whānau feel heard, feel positive about their koha (contribution) to a process that will inform change, and feel enriched through our interactions.

In addition, we believe it is important that whānau are approached by someone known and trusted by them. Therefore, we worked closely with the providers to recruit whānau, and provider staff were invited to meet with the evaluators prior to the whānau interviews. Provider staff were advised as to when we were interviewing whānau; they were also invited to meet us at the motel and introduce the whānau to us. Following the interviews, staff were notified of our departure. Our information sheet advised whānau to connect with their support person if our conversations raised any issues for them. We were not advised by providers that whānau experience of the interview process was detrimental to them in anyway.

Our practice is also to inform whānau about how their data will be used in any evaluative reports, and to return transcripts (where available) to whānau and a summary of the evaluation findings.

To guide our practice in all evaluative research with whānau we use the ethical framework based on the work developed by Linda Smith and adapted by Cram & Kennedy (Cram & Kennedy, 2010; Smith, 1999). The ethical principles align well to the guiding principles within Maihi Ka Ora as outlined in Table 4 below. Protocols of informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity were also applied.

All participants were advised that we are not publishing participant names or their organisations in the evaluation reports.

TABLE 4
ETHICS AND KAUPAPA MĀORI EVALUATION

Ethical Principal	Application in evaluation context	Maihi principles
Aroha ki te tangata	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage in cultural ‘rituals of encounter’, guided by whānau Allow whānau to define their space and meet on their own terms Make linkages and connections with whānau where appropriate Respect the fluidity and diversity of whānau 	Whakamana
He kanohi kitea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure the evaluator is known to the whānau 	Whanaungatanga
Titiro, whakarongo... kōrero	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand people’s day-to-day realities, priorities and aspirations to ensure relevance. Allow the whānau to speak to their story. 	Tino rangatiratanga
Manaaki ki te tangata	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sharing, hosting and being generous with time, expertise, relationships including appropriate koha and kai that acknowledges the contribution from the whānau 	Manaakitanga
Kia tupato	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring the whānau feel safe to contribute; are engaged in a space familiar to them; allow time and space for the whānau to practice their own tikanga 	Tikanga
Kaua e takahia te mana o te tangata	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure the whānau enjoy and are enlightened through their participation in the evaluation; share evaluation findings 	Whakamana
Whakamana	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share expertise, knowledge, understandings and findings 	Whanaungatanga

Informed consent: Whānau were recruited to participate in in-depth interviews by someone known to them, usually their wrap-around support social worker or navigator. Prior to the interview all whānau were taken through the consent process by the evaluator which included the right of the whānau to not participate; or withdraw their consent to include their information in the research. The informed consent process was guided and underpinned by a kaupapa and tikanga Māori process – that is, whānau determined how they wanted to give consent (in writing or verbally). Verbal consent was audio-recorded with permission. Written consent forms were securely retained by the project lead.

Voluntary participation: All participants were made aware at the initial point of contact that their participation in the evaluation was voluntary and that their decision to participate, or not, in the interviews, would not impact on their access to emergency housing.

Minors: We did not interview minors (under the age of 16); however in the context of whānau, parents were welcome to have their children with them during the interview.

Confidentiality: Participants were informed that their information (audio-recordings, notes, transcripts) would be held in confidence by the evaluation team.

Storage of information: All information pertaining to the evaluative research is stored either in hardcopy in locked filing cabinets or in soft copy on password protected laptops and password protected cloud-based storage. Files are coded to reduce the risk of participants being identified.

Appendix 2 | Strategic Housing Frameworks

Strategically, a number of kaupapa Māori based approaches to addressing homelessness and home insecurity for Māori have been offered including Sir Mason Durie’s Mauri o te Kāinga framework in 2018 that supports the holistic and integrated nature of solutions to homelessness. His framework propositioned te mauri o te kāinga being based on whānau – the wellbeing of the people who will live in the kāinga, - whenua – the land on which kāinga will stand, and whanaungatanga – the connections that will enable the kāinga to flourish.

Lawson-Te Aho et al. also developed Whare Ōranga: An Indigenous Housing Interventions Principles Framework, a unique kaupapa Māori framework developed in Aotearoa/New Zealand to end Māori homelessness. The framework brings together the principles of Housing First, Whānau Ora and tino rangatiratanga. The model has not been tested.

In 2021, Te Tūāpapa Kura Kāinga | Ministry of Housing and Urban Development released MAIHI Ka Ora, the National Māori Housing Strategy 2021-2051²⁶. MAIHI Ka Ora provides a whole of system approach underpinned by partnerships with Māori; kaupapa Māori approaches and kaupapa Māori principles. The principles and framework guide the strategic direction for Māori housing over the next 30 years.

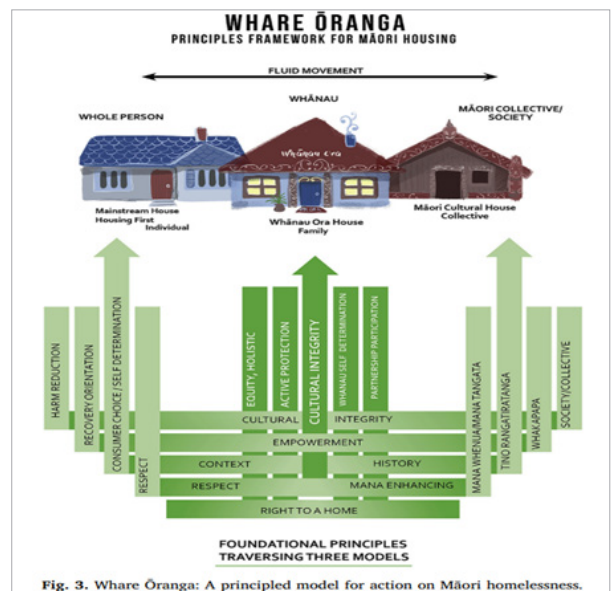
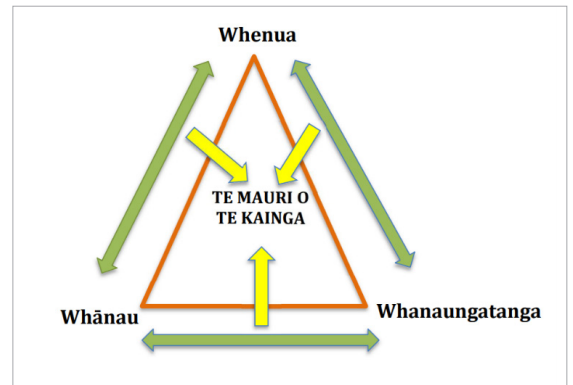
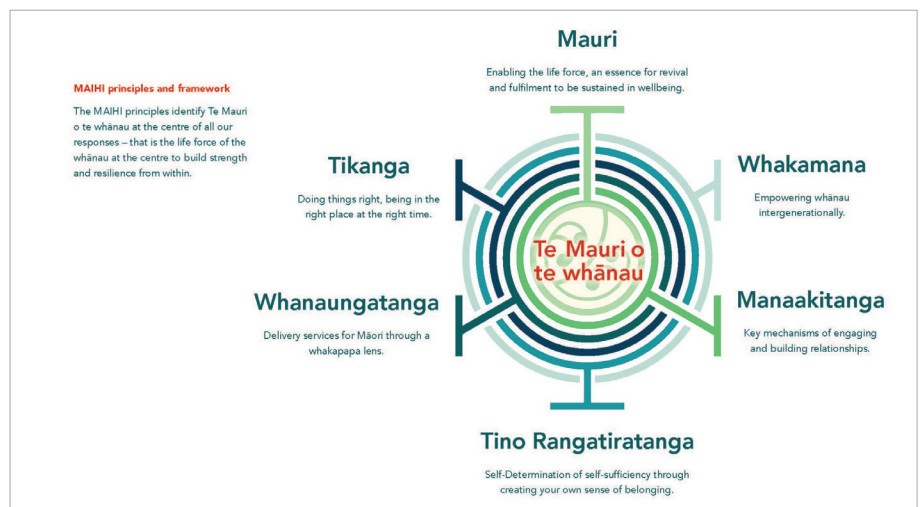


Fig. 3. Whare Ōranga: A principled model for action on Māori homelessness.



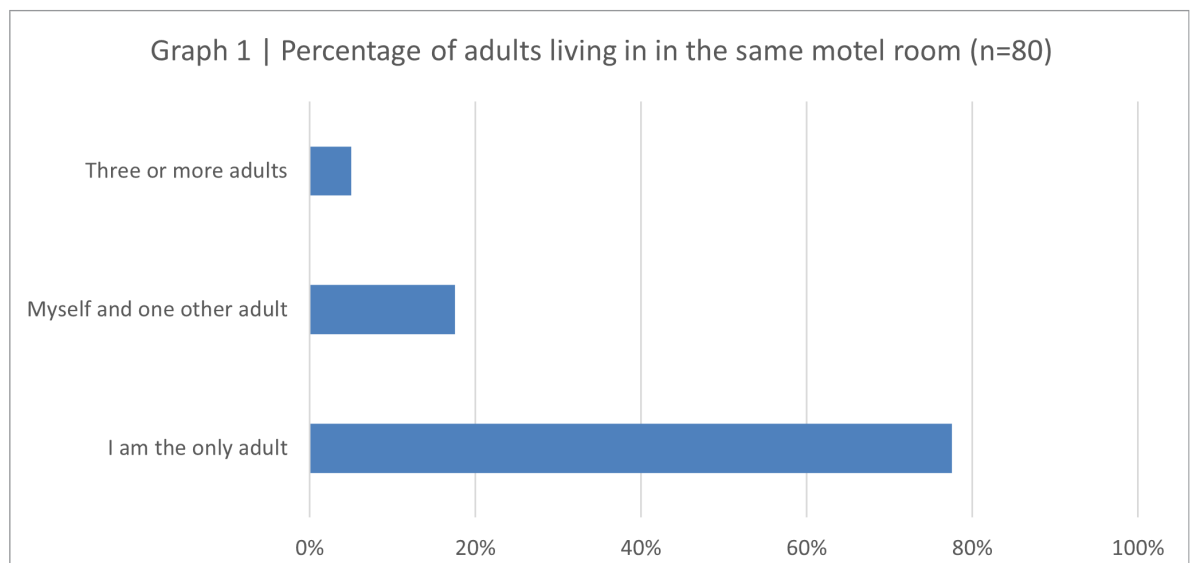
²⁶ The strategy is based on Te MAIHI o te Whare Māori, the Māori and Iwi Housing Innovation Framework.

Appendix 3 | Whānau survey results

1. Participant information

In total, 190 surveys were distributed to rooms across the 13 contracted emergency motels. The number of surveys distributed was based on the number of rooms occupied at the time not by the number of occupants. It was requested that one person complete the survey on behalf of the occupants. Of the 190 surveys, 86 were returned (two of these were submitted online), with 80 fully completed (42% response rate).

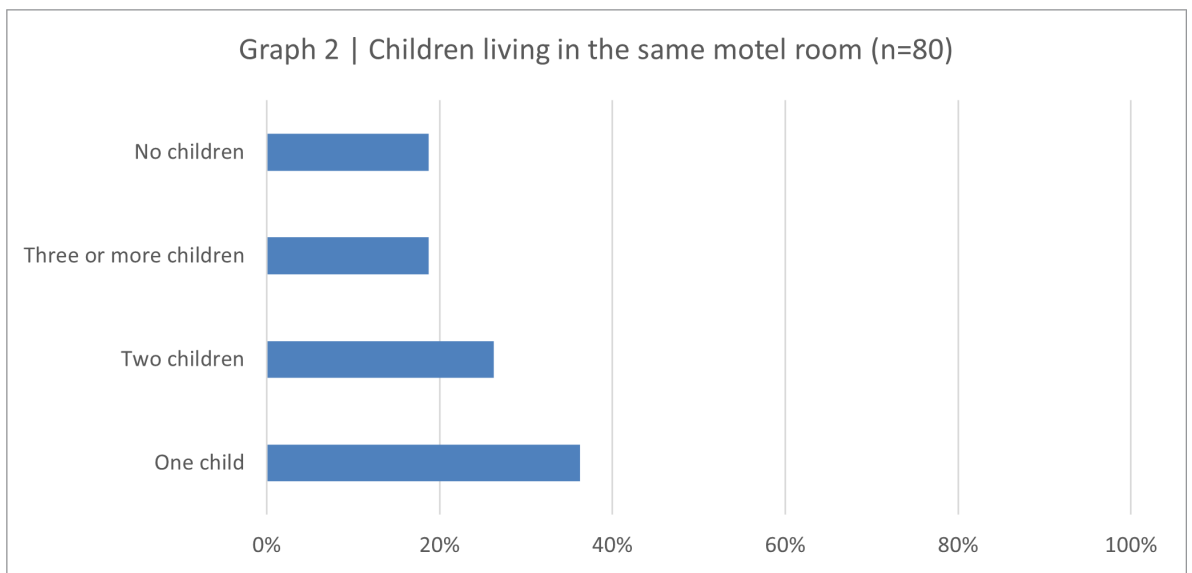
1.1 Adults and children living in contracted emergency housing



Of the 80 respondents to the survey, 64 were the only adult living in the motel room, 14 had two adults, and 4 rooms had three or more adults²⁷. The 80 responses therefore represent at least 102 adults. In addition, 52 of the respondents were the only adults living in the room with children²⁸ (solo parents). Of the 52 solo parents, 24 had one child, 15 had two children, and 13 had three or more children.

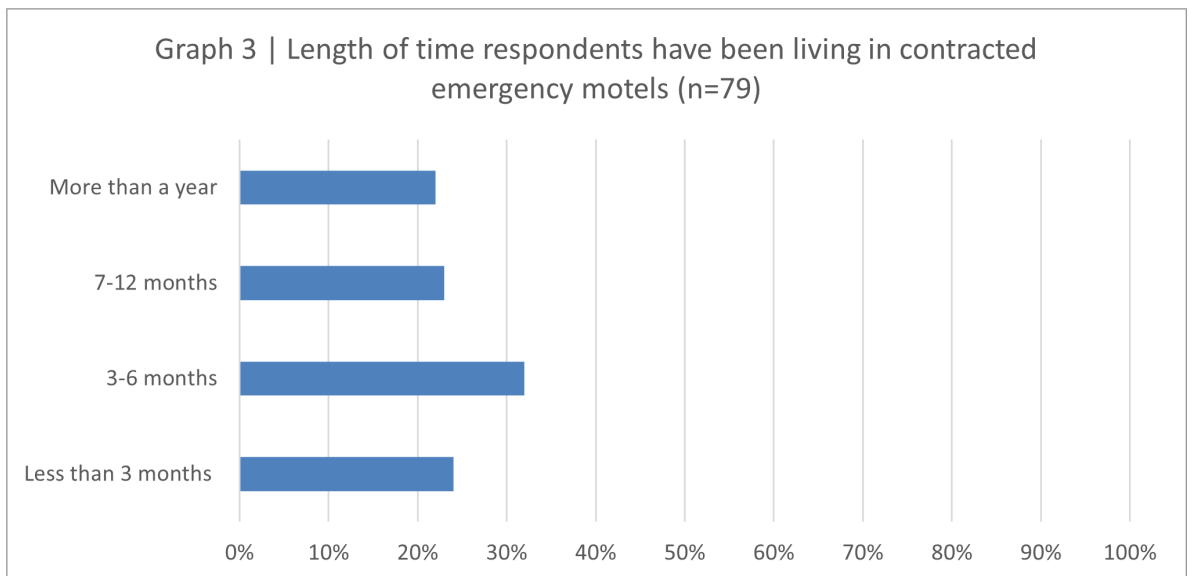
²⁷ Note respondents may have included teenage children as an adult.

²⁸ Note that based on interviews, some adults had other children who were not living with them in the motel. These children were either living with the other parent or living independently.



Across the 80 respondents there were at least 116 children. The majority of the whānau living in contracted emergency housing had one child (29 respondents), 21 respondents had 2 children living with them, and 15 had three or more children. Fifteen respondents had no children.

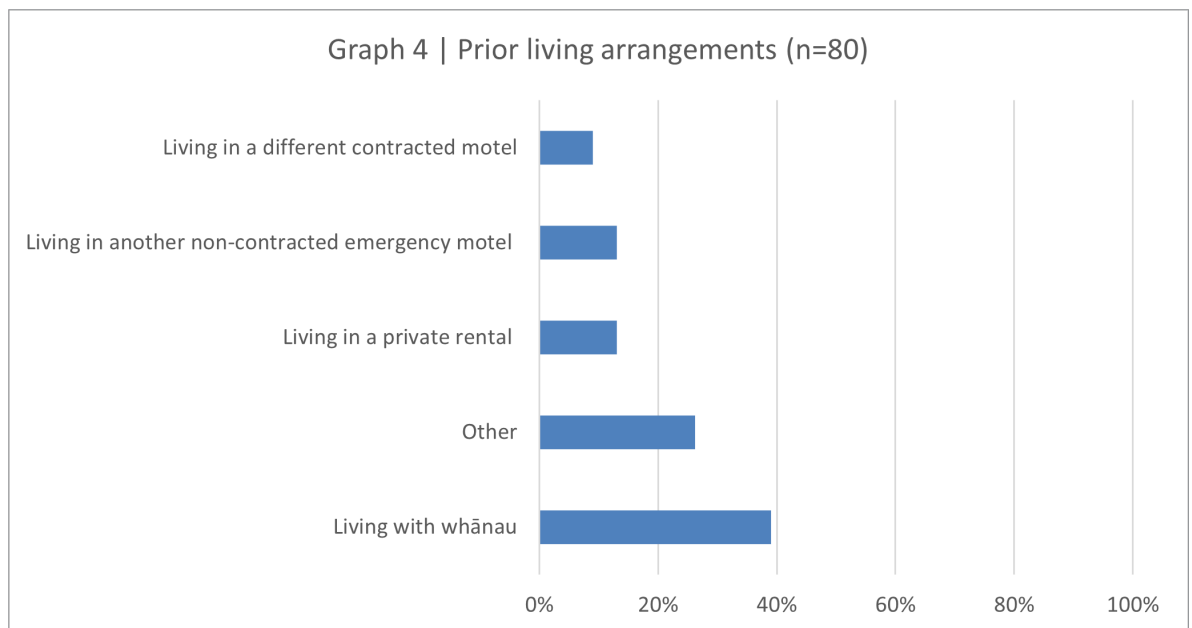
1.2 Length of stay in the motel room



The majority of respondents (60) had been living in the motel room for longer than three months, and 17 of the 60 had been living in emergency accommodation for over a year.

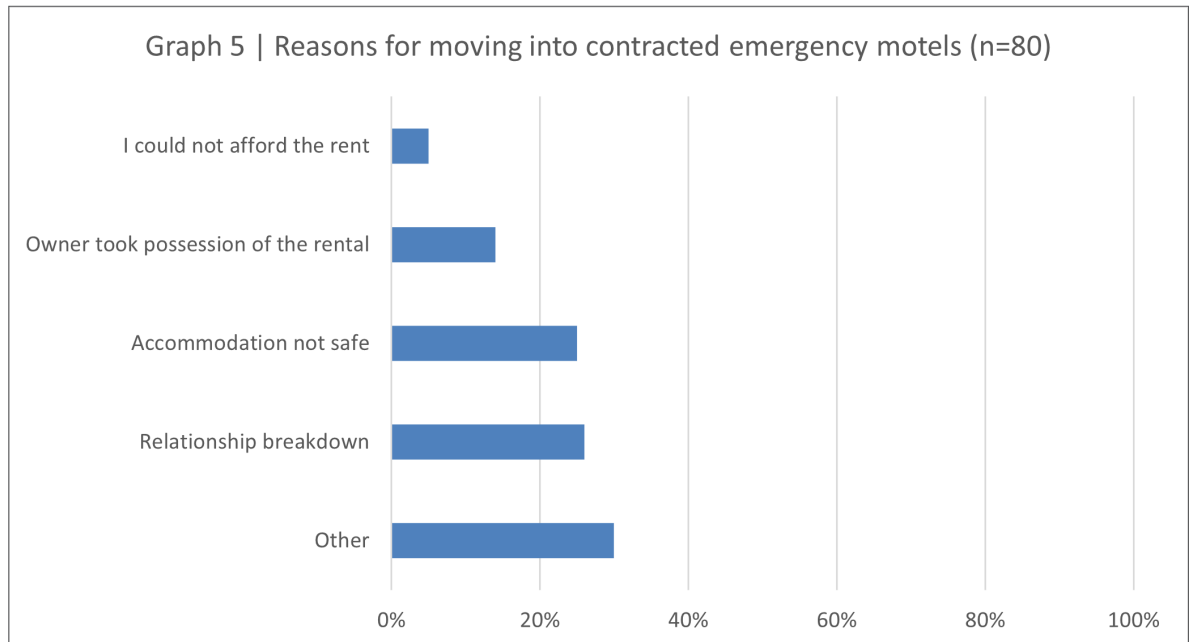
2. Housing history

2.1 Living arrangements prior to moving into contracted emergency motels in Rotorua



The majority of respondents were living with whānau prior to moving into contracted emergency motels. As noted in the graph below the main reason for moving into contracted emergency motels was due to a relationship breakdown with partners and/or whānau members.

2.2 Reason for moving into contracted emergency motels



A summary of comments made by those who indicated 'Other' included:

- Relationship breakdown, including being asked to leave the house by a whānau member
- Leaving their accommodation voluntarily as they didn't want to overstay their welcome living with whānau and/or friends

- Overcrowding – for example one whānau described living in a three-bedroom house with seven people which created tensions amongst the adults; another whānau described living in a single bedroom flat with other whānau members
- Unsafe living conditions, including: living in a car; living in an abusive situation; and living in physically and psychologically unsafe conditions (e.g. verbal abuse, intimidation, addiction, gang activity).

This accommodation has given me space to look after myself. After being forced out of the family home I needed time to heal from this traumatic event (which included many times of bullying, intimidation and threats). It was a very stressful time. *(Survey respondent)*.

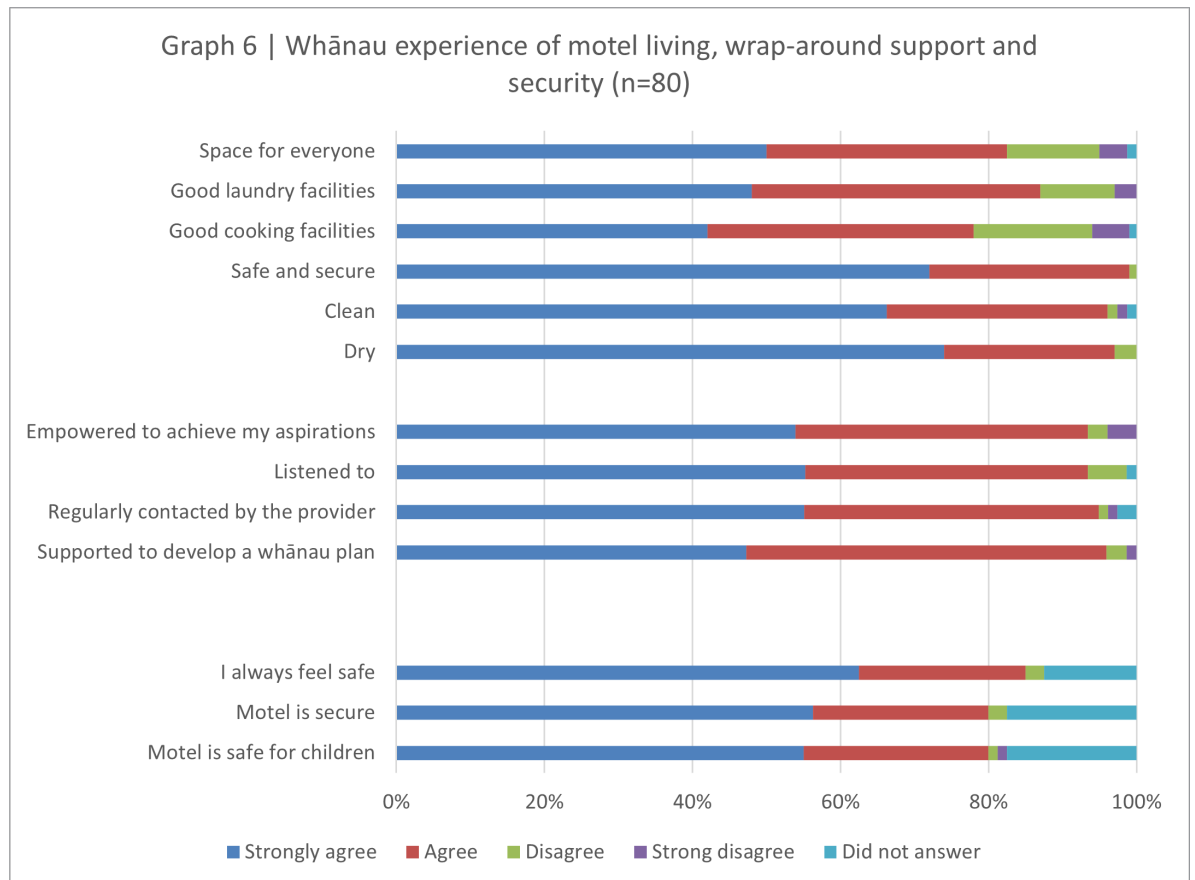
3. Experience of contracted emergency motels

Generally, the living conditions were safe and secure, clean and dry. Some whānau reported that the cooking and laundry facilities and room space were insufficient for their needs.

Overall, whānau agreed or strongly agreed that they were supported by wrap-around support providers. There were a small number of whānau (3) who felt they were not being empowered to achieve their aspirations. These whānau were in three different motels across two different providers.

The majority of whānau felt safe and secure in the motel environment. Three whānau either disagreed or strongly disagreed that the motel accommodation was safe. These three whānau were living at different motels.

3.1 Quality of accommodation, wrap-around support and security



4. Whānau achievements and aspirations

4.1 Whānau achievements

Generally, the most common achievement for whānau was increased confidence and independence (64%), followed by accessing health services, healthier eating, reconnecting with whānau, and ensuring children attend school more regularly. In terms of aspirations (Graph 8), the majority of whānau agreed that moving out of emergency accommodation into a more stable housing environment was their primary aspiration, followed by living healthier lives (physically and mentally), being happy and content as a whānau, and saving money (and increasing income).

Aspirations that were rated lower were reconnecting with whānau, reconnecting to identity as Māori, and returning to whānau land.



A summary of achievements made by those who indicated 'Other' included:

- Getting a driver's licence and/or car
- Drug free; free from violent/unsafe environments
- Gaining new skills and knowledge through training for work programmes
- Establishing new friends and networks of support
- Finding employment, seeking counselling support, and attending health checks.

One participant had managed to achieve a range of aspirations while in emergency accommodation.

In the first two weeks of being in EH I managed to get off weed, slowed down on smoking cigarettes. Budget my money a lot better. I got my mental health in check. My biggest achievement is that I am a better mother to my sons. Having somewhere to get back on my feet helped me get out of a life I was unhappy in. I finally applied for my learners all within two weeks. Everything slowed down due to my health. (*Survey respondent*).

Two respondents made specific complaints, one related to the visitor rule:

Well for starters we should be allowed to have visitors during the day. Having no whānau visits is stupid I think! And if that isn't allowed we should be able to have the ones in the same complex have sleep overs. *(Survey respondent)*.

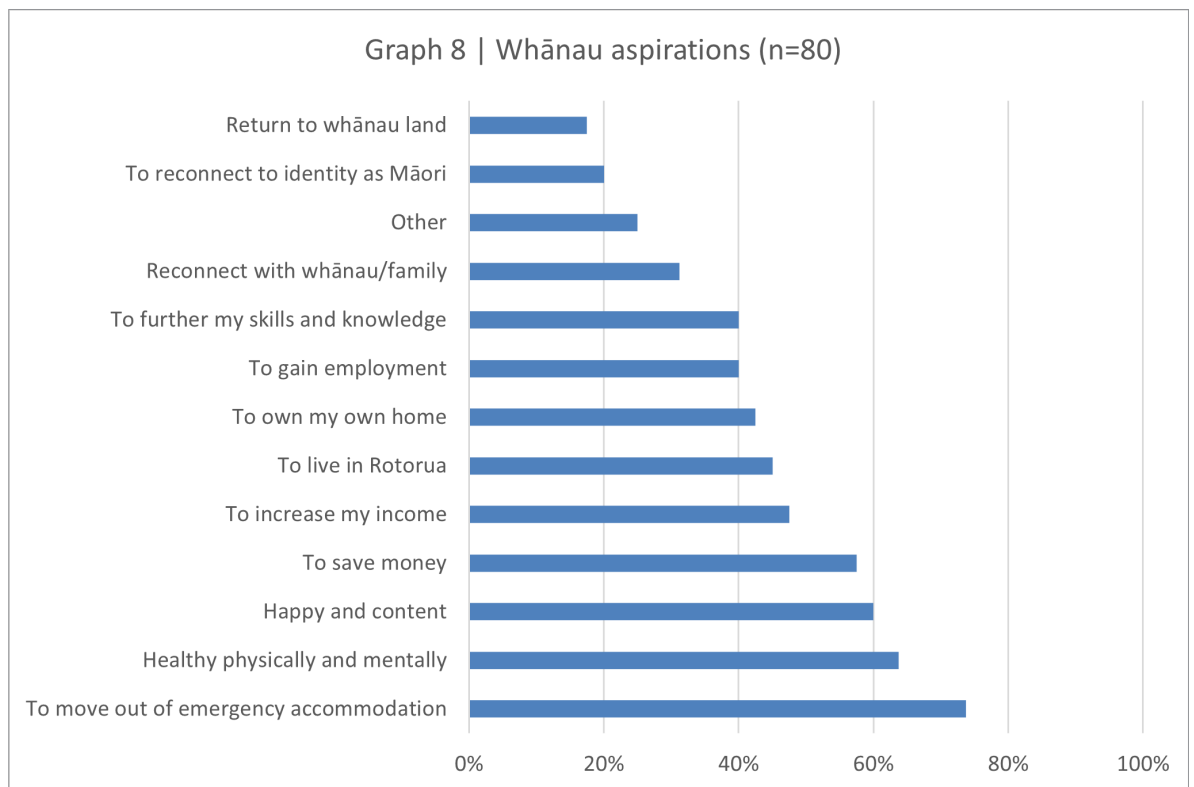
The other whānau felt the support they received from navigators was inconsistent:

Only felt listened to by a very limited amount of genuine navigators. Confidence increased only due to the guidance and genuine efforts of the first and second navigators bothering to understand our situation and how to better proceed further. I have achieved self-healing. I rebuilt burnt bridges with my children. *(Survey respondent)*.

A third whānau commented on children's toys being moved and therefore not available for all the tamariki to enjoy:

Children's toys get taken from outside front door and then not seen for 2 weeks. *(Survey respondent)*.

4.2 Whānau aspirations



Additional aspirations that whānau added in the comments section included their desire to:

- Continue to build confidence and self-esteem
- Find a career including training to be a chiropractor, sales representative, jewellery apprentice, whānau advocate
- Gain a driver's licence and/or truck licence
- Find a place to call home
- Gain their children back, maintain a healthy, happy and stable home and learn to be a better parent.

My aspirations in life would be to give my son the best life as possible and be the best mother I could possibly be. My aspirations would be to become more confident within myself and to have more self-love towards myself, try and be more active and motivated. *(Survey respondent)*.

5. Final comments

Respondents were asked to make any final comments. Of the 80 respondents, 35 provided additional comment. The majority of the comments were positive, with any negative comments pertaining mostly to the rules of the motels and how these were being applied by security and providers.

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