

# KĀINGA STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN

A plan to improve housing outcomes for Māori in Tāmaki Makaurau

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## FAMILIAR STORIES - UNFAMILIAR SOLUTIONS

Homelessness, affordability, health impacts, cultural competence, ‘policy limbo’ and a reminder that ‘mainstream housing policy is just doing its job: providing for mainstream outcomes.’ Sound familiar?

### Kāinga Strategic Action Plan priority areas this issue relates to:

- Leading toward a National Housing Strategy
- Building a case for an Auckland Māori Housing Commission and Commissioner
- Optimising Associate Minister delegations relating to housing
- Contribute to the Government Policy Statement

### Issues

- *Back to basics:*
  - *Closing the Gap - elevating the indigenous voice*
  - *“The constitution is the heart of the system”*
  - *Self-determination for Aboriginal communities*
- *Pathways to success in reducing homelessness* – commitment, innovation, investment
- *Filling in the strategic void* – comparing structures of advocacy in Australia and New Zealand
- *Cultural competency and compliance* – turning public criticism into change in the public sector
- *Real universal policy hurdles* – policy ahead of strategy, the common state of *policy limbo*, and the promulgation of plans, policies and processes without historic truths and dimensions

### What we’ve been advocating for

- *Strategy, policy and operations underpinned the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and co-governance*
- *A new political, policy and agency understanding of housing as kāinga*
- *The emergence of strategic coherence in housing and urban development*
- *Recognition that urban development is relevant to Māori and Māori outcomes*
- *Commitment, innovation, and investment to reduce homelessness*

### Back to basics: Closing the Gap

*A mantra with renewed authority*

In 2008 the [Closing the Gap](#) plan (AUS) spanned Federal and Territory/State governments to reduce inequalities impacting on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and individuals. This quote, however, from the [Australian Government website](#) succinctly sums up criticism of the plan’s implementation between 2008 and 2018 voiced at the conference:

*Since 2008, Australian governments have worked together to deliver better health, education and employment outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and to eliminate the gap...*

The idea and practice of ‘Australian governments working together’ without Aboriginal partnership has taken a decade for Indigenous leaders to de-bunk (again) and definitively reverse. The result is a [new partnership](#) (2019) between the governments and Aboriginal peak sector bodies to take shared responsibility for delivering on a revamped Closing the Gaps plan:

*In December 2018, COAG committed to forming a genuine formal partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to finalise the Closing the Gap Refresh and provide a forum for ongoing engagement throughout implementation of the new agenda.*

In another iteration of this shift, a separate Australian report is commonly referred to as the *FIBI report* and it has created a movement of its own: **FIBI** – For Indigenous, By Indigenous.

*This is a bit of return to first principles. How is the New Zealand government and local authorities doing with actually just closing the gaps, or with FIBI?*

The Waitangi Tribunal found in the [2017 Tū Mai Te Rangi Corrections Report](#) that it is precisely the *gap* in recidivism rates defined by ethnicity that presents constitutional problems for the department and government. Corrections is responsible for managing our justice project, and higher recidivism among Māori emerges as a simple failure to provide *equal outcomes*.

With regard to *FIBI* Mangere, Tamaki, Porirua, and many other areas are currently being ‘redeveloped’... *FIBI?* How does *FIBI* play out in Housing New Zealand elements of the Auckland Housing Programme? The new Ministry of Housing and Urban Development – intended to be a Ministry for Change - has been developing its Māori Unit and the Māori work programme. A co-design process on both points was proposed by government... *FIBI?*

## **Back to basics: “The constitution is the heart of the system”**

*Remembering where to start*

The Kāinga plan grapples with the idea of a national housing system (one that [HUD is the steward](#) of and have been asked to provide information on), and a national housing agenda – what we want from our housing system, and especially from our public investment and intervention. It’s easier if you start in the right place: what does Te Tiriti and our constitution expect of a housing system?

The Kāinga plan calls for national strategy with human rights and the Treaty of Waitangi at its heart. New Zealand’s constitution is referred to as an ‘unwritten constitution’. It is true other countries have specific documents referred to as ‘written constitutions’ but really, what a ridiculous thing to say. That said, mild uncertainty about the actual full and total contents of our constitution has probably been useful over the years – for both parties to Te Tiriti.

But it has also enabled us to not think too directly about it, not to teach it, for example, or pop it up on the fridge. The idea of our constitution being the heart not only of a future housing agenda and strategy, but also at the heart of our actual living housing eco-system is compelling.

## **Back to basics: Self-determination for Aboriginal communities**

*A Rangatiratanga – Self-determination ‘compare and contrast’*

Fundamental differences exist in the political voice, the well-beings, and aspirations of Māori and Indigenous Australians. Fundamental differences also exist in government responses.

In Australia, a sociologically led process of reconciliation has been underway for decades now. The idea of meaningful financial or commercial settlement of historic wrongs against Aboriginal communities is side-lined behind a framework promoting reconciliation with the wrongs and with one another. This model can and has been deeply criticised, but hope is frequently restored when you hear people like Shona Reid (see below) speak about her work.

In New Zealand a commercially driven framework for 'reconciling' historic breaches of Te Tiriti has been implemented – Treaty *settlements*. The law is the basis of our process of *reconciliation*. Commercially the process is flawed (commercial settlements are nominal at below 5c on the dollar of agreed loss), and socially it obscures reconciliation.

In both countries the mode of exchange has been underscored by an obvious need to enable a new era of independence, political voice and engagement with the state. Rangatiratanga is a building force in New Zealand, both at a collective and iwi level. We heard frequent reference to public investment leading to self-determination, but we were unable to find key indicators of that outcome, or a shared understanding of what it meant.

We didn't hear Indigenous leaders standing up and saying 'we've achieved self-determination through this program'. The new Closing the Gaps partnership should be a turning point...

## Pathways to success in reducing homelessness

### Commitment, innovation, investment

Sydney has had some success in addressing inner-city homelessness. Practitioners in Auckland are of course familiar with this success, but I have already had my balloon popped by too many reminders that *the difference is that in Sydney they had resources*.

So we are in agreement then. Addressing homelessness requires *resources*. There is plenty of proof that plans and promises without funding are meaningless, but not just because there's no money. An absence of funding also means that the strategic driver for organisational investment has not been identified; it means the people who hold the money don't know about it.

So getting a project or initiative *funded* means having money *and* mandate. This, in turn, means one more thing - usually. If money flows down, it has strings attached. Outcomes expected. Business cases required. Evidence gathered. Reporting reported. Evaluation of value for money.

And if senior leaders see value for money, that in turn leads to another thing. More money.

Auckland Council likes to sheet funding decisions back to the Auckland Plan with the Long-term Plan on the interchange bench, relied on because they are both publicly consulted. Funding is a key marker of organisational commitment... So why then do we need to *follow the money*?

### Following the money

With the time and expertise, it is relatively easy to look through the books of councils and governments to see where money is allocated – to departments (like *Parks and Recreation*) or to other line items, like the *scrabble world champs*. *Following the money* involves chasing those allocations through the hands and channels of the institution until you see the actual programme or project where the money is spent on an activity that +/- delivers an outcome.

The amount may get smaller as you go, but the notion of an intended outcome should remain. There are a couple of classic learnings. One is that money allocated for an outcome can get steered away – this is a double-edged sword as it means there is the flexibility to change direction. Another is that where the desired outcome is a hard one – because it isn't well understood or because it was over-ambitious – the money lies dormant. Over time, however, money has a habit of slowly getting whittled down - distributing and redistributing itself.

A *follow the money* movement is emerging over federal allocations for Aboriginal housing in the order of AU\$ billions. The consensus is not enough of it is flowing to the outlet and reaching communities (FIBI). In the background is a tough question: if the outcomes allocated for are not being reported, who is monitoring the process and holding interim recipients to account?

### *Sydney - A brief illustration*

In 2017 Martin Place in the commercial centre of Sydney became a tent-city occupied by up to 60 rough-sleepers in highly visible tents. This catalysed action, with public sector resource and expertise led by the Lord Mayor reaching an agreement with the Tent City Mayor that the rough sleepers would move to a secure 24-hour safe space when available. Not surprisingly, establishing a secure 24-hour safe space for rough sleepers *suddenly seemed really easy*.

In this case, funding and resources which may not have been allocated to rough sleeping previously was suddenly found and made available. Not surprisingly, the funding was well spent including for innovation, with outcomes plain to see... the media was watching like a hawk.

In Auckland, despite facing an on-going battle with a lack of housing supply, the Auckland Housing First collective continues to achieve success in addressing homelessness. On a dollar for dollar basis through, and despite recent additional funding, the Auckland Housing First is simply not resourced to make an impact for all rough-sleepers across all of Auckland.

Other initiatives are underway, which mostly fit into a service design and re-design category, where the idea of additional funding is just one of the things hoped for as a new input.

One senior practitioner said to me we need to remember to prioritise *turning of the tap*, too. *Turning of the tap* means intervening to prevent additional people becoming homelessness. If this is not done, we continue in our aspirations to assist rough sleepers into kāinga, but more flow onto the street behind us because of unaddressed problems in the housing system itself.

Two things are clear - (a) attempting to reduce rough-sleeping through better coordination alone (i.e. no new funding) simply makes a difficult task as difficult as it can be, and (b) the public sector is charged with using public money for public good on behalf of the public.

It took a tent city to get traction in Sydney. Time for a visit to MacPac or Kathmandu?

### **Filling in the strategic void**

In Australia a constellation of organisations advocate and progress Indigenous housing matters to and along-side the public sector. How does the NZ constellation compare?

Like New Zealand, Australia lacks a National Housing Strategy. While a national strategy in Australia might seem unwieldy, where there is investment strategy helps link the initial investment decision with desired outcomes (notional or real). A federal strategy would be something state and territory governments interact with by necessity: aligning or differentiating their interests. Either way, understanding and changing the strategic landscape would be easier.

Two presenters illustrated modes of Aboriginal expression to the housing system and strategy constellation. Shona Reid is a proud Eastern Arrernte Woman. She is currently the Chief Executive of Reconciliation South Australia and has a concurrent role with South Australian Housing Trust (a 'mainstream' public sector housing body) Board of Management, creating a unique strategic alignment which the trust is already seeking to leverage through projects Shona is leading.

There was a real defining quality about the way Shona described her dual professional roles and her vision of influencing outcomes for Aboriginal communities through both.

Jody Broun (Yindjibarndi) is Chief Executive of the NSW Aboriginal Housing Office (AHO), a statutory body established to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have access to affordable, quality housing. The AHO is governed by an all-Aboriginal Board, which provides advice to the Minister for Housing on Aboriginal housing issues in NSW.

In addition, the AHO manages and coordinates an annual capital works program, along with developing and implementing financial and resourcing strategies. This is an example of a mainstream public service entity with Aboriginal leadership for Aboriginal communities and outcomes. Importantly, the organisation is resourced to fund and undertake its own programme of capital works under its own strategic leadership and direction.

Collectively and separately these examples suggest where we could head with the idea of an Auckland Māori Housing Commission and Commissioner. It is no longer the case that Māori housing and whānau outcomes are too well hidden or the cohort not large enough for a specialised independent service and operational capacity to not be a potential game-changer.

## Cultural competency and compliance

“Reconciliation starts with our-selves, then with others” - a good starting point in New Zealand. Cultural incompetence can be a huge barrier to Indigenous outcomes, while strong cultural competence creates conditions for change. In between a lack of competence and strong competence is *learning and introspection* – understanding our own personal positions.

Cultural competence emerged consistently throughout the Darwin conference. In the public sector it enables a new alignment of aspirations, building actual capacity and capability in understanding issues sufficiently to recognise, pursue and implement change options.

### Turning public criticism into change in the public sector

Representatives of the *Victorian Department of Health and Human Services* presented on their response to a highly critical Ombudsman’s investigation into maintenance claims (2017).

*“An internal multi-disciplinary team was charged with designing solutions to implement 18 Ombudsman recommendations, all of which were accepted by the department. The team combines decades of community services operational experience and public policy across a diversity of settings. This enabled a re-think in the design of operational guidance ...”*

The team *“put a recognition of the ... workforce and practice firmly on the departmental agenda.”*

There was a defiant courage in this mainstream government entity facing concerted criticism in the public sphere and turning it into a valuable process of engagement and growth opportunity.

Is a review of public housing management in New Zealand required to drive change... has it been done already? What operational changes have followed the new ‘social objectives’?

## Real universal policy hurdles

Putting strategy ahead of policy, *policy limbo*, and plans & processes without historic dimensions

The idea of ‘policy-limbo’ described at the conference articulates some key issues we face with the implementation of the Kāinga plan and other advocacy.

There isn’t any balance in the equation ‘advocacy in – new policy out’ when it comes to housing Māori, and Treaty issues. This is not a new phenomenon but it is useful to pause and recognise the structural and political barriers to progressing policy and operational change in government – the characteristics of *policy limbo*. The Australian context highlighted that these barriers are softening through a change from imposed policy to negotiated outcomes – is this true in NZ? -

*“The time for imposing policy is over, and the time for informed development has begun”*

Many advocates have concerned themselves with the idea of a social mandate to operate of organisations like HNZ and Kāinga Ora, and issues of community voice and aspirations.

Another presenter suggested mainstream housing policy is actually doing what it is meant to do - delivering mainstream outcomes – reframing the system as highly *functional*, not dysfunctional. “Associate Professor Tess Lea ... asks *why the path to realising seemingly straightforward ambitions is so densely obstructed?* She is also exploring ways in which families might tell their stories and commandeer policy openings and closings for their own ends.”

Similarly in NZ, many advocates are focused on shaping new government policy settings and big moves like Kāinga Ora into a success... turning them to the ends of those we advocate for.

#### Representing the housing system and the housing continuum *with* a historic dimension

Another *back to basics* idea identified that housing need, housing policy, and advocacy tends to be reactive and contemporary but that this approach can subvert and ignore real histories – regardless how otherwise aware of them we are - placing historic truths and resonances at risk.

Those contemporary approaches become a means to disregard or ignore colonisation and critical emotive issues relating to land and loss. The party leading or designing the approach is empowered to hide the most confronting and possibly confusing issues, while the indigenous party is doubly disempowered: by the impact of the events and by those events being excluded. This idea exemplifies de-colonisation in action and should be urgently explored.

### What we will do with this information – opportunities and next steps

#### *Engagement*

In progressing our advocacy on the Kāinga plan we intend to engage actively with

- the [Aboriginal Housing Office](#) (Victoria)
- [Reconciliation South Australia](#) and the [South Australia Housing Trust](#)
- World Indigenous Housing Conference (November 2019) convenors
- Department of Health and Human Services VIC on organisational change
- NSW Department of Family and Community Services & Sydney’s homelessness response
- Dept of Local Government, Housing and Community Development NT on homelessness
- [HealthHabitat](#) in regard to healthy living practices and targeted investment

#### *Research and information gathering programme*

There is scope to undertake mostly desktop/remote enquiry into strategic approaches and structures, enablers and barriers in Australia to inform a range of Kāinga plan actions.

#### *Kāinga Strategic Action Plan advocacy*

These issues are relevant to the National Housing Strategy and Auckland Māori Housing Commission actions, and in the monitoring of government expenditure and outcomes. Evidence of the use of local government land and inclusionary zoning can also be gathered.

#### *Auckland Māori Housing Summit 2020*

The Board is actively considering options for Summit 2020. Where there are relevant examples of success in Australia, presentations could be invited to demonstrate that success. Options include extending the summit over multiple days, including half-day single kaupapa focus sessions (eg. homelessness), and research and best practice presentations.