

Haumaru Housing - going the extra mile

“You’re not alone. We’re just a phone call away.”

That’s the focus for the team at Haumaru Housing during the country’s level 4 lockdown, says CEO Gabby Clezy.

Haumaru Housing LP is committed to the health and wellbeing of tenants and staff. Since January, they have been following advice from the Ministry of Health and the Auckland Regional Public Health Service and implemented measures according to their guidelines. It has been an evolving situation, so Haumaru monitored events closely and responding accordingly.

As a social housing provider with tenants living independently throughout Auckland, the pandemic plan in place was actioned. They provided extra staff training on hygiene and social distancing measures outlined by the MOH and have circulated MOH information around their villages.

They have been updating tenants on the wide range of precautionary measures that the company were taking to reduce the risk of potential infection within their village communities, and have provided advice on good hand hygiene and social distancing etiquette, for example. Haumaru Housing has also developed a database of community groups, both locally and Auckland-wide, which are offering support to older people during the lockdown. The staff then refer tenants to the essential service that meet their needs, be it social welfare or medical.

Haumaru reminded tenants about the best way of contacting them if they needed emergency repairs or any other form of support. To counter any feelings of loneliness and social isolation, they increased ways in which tenants can stay in touch including regular telephone calls and connection via technology such as telemonitoring.

They’re also conducting ‘drive-throughs’ to each Haumaru village twice a week to collect mail and carry out visual health and safety checks. Tenants and stakeholders have received regular correspondence and the Haumaru web site has been updated with news as the Covid-19 situation changed.

“It’s about letting our tenants know that we will always help them in whatever way we can.”

Their villages differ from retirement villages or care homes in that all our tenants live independently in the community and are able to choose who visits them in their homes. They are encouraging the same commonsense measures that other people living in the community are being urged to follow.

All tenants have access to the Haumaru 24-hour 0800 helpline number and can also contact their GPs directly or ring Healthline, should they need to.

It is paramount to Haumaru that they do everything possible to reduce the risk of community transmission amongst village communities and help all tenants remain physically and mentally well.

Neighbours, families and local community groups including food banks have been stepping up to look out for each other, helping with shopping and generally working to make sure others feel safe.

And that neighbourliness has paid off. Gabby Clezy says tenants contacted the Haumaru team when they noticed a neighbour had not been seen all morning. She went to the village and, after swiftly assessing the situation, called an ambulance to take the tenant to hospital following a suspected stroke.

Haumaru has also provided a range of services when other essential services could not fill the void. These included the supply of mobile phones, whiteware, collecting medication and other supplies that tenants required, and posting mail

With over 1500 elderly tenants, emergency H&S maintenance and tenancy management continues with the aim to protect tenants and staff by remaining at home and working remotely unless there is an urgent reason to enter the villages and workplaces.

And as the country prepares to move to alert level 3, Gabby Clezy says Haumara Housing is providing the following information to tenants:

<http://www.communityhousing.org.nz/resources/article/haumaru-level-3-communication-to-residents>.

More information about Haumaru Housing is available at <https://www.haumaruhousing.co.nz>.

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