



Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei is working hard to house its whānau

Tāmaki Makaurau hapū Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei is finding that managing whānau housing issues within the whānau is one of the benefits of being a community housing provider.

“Housing and tenancy management has its own challenges but the most uplifting part of this mahi is knowing that we’re supporting our whanau” says Kirsteen Durham, the Housing and Tenancy Manager for Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei Whai Maia Ltd.

Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei, whose rohe spans Tāmaki Makaurau and includes Takaparawhau Bastion Point, successfully became a registered community housing provider (CHP) in 2015. It manages 69 fully tenanted rental homes, and provides social and affordable housing for whānau on the papakainga in Orakei. The housing opportunities are delivered through its commercial and social arms, Whai Rawa and Whai Maia.

The 69 rental homes are all former Kāinga Ora/ Housing New Zealand homes, with some returned and some purchased. When Whai Maia became a CHP, many of the homes were handed over with existing tenants living there.

“It was a significant change in mindset for the tenants, going from the government managing the tenancies, to the hapū,” Kirsteen says.

Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei is committed to providing a higher standard of living conditions for whānau that live in these homes. In 2014, the hapū began implementing the Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei Housing standards which sees the ex-state homes upgraded

All the homes are within 1km of the Ōrākei Marae, which is helpful for whānau wanting to access support for health, social services, kaumātua assistance, educational support and other services.



Kaumātua homes overlooking Auckland City and the Harbour



Kāinga Tuatahi - innovative home ownership for whānau

with insulation, carpets, thermal curtains, heat pumps, bathroom fans, and other upgrades, creating warmer, safer, drier and healthier homes.

“We have seen a significant rise in whānau wanting to live in our homes, closer to the Marae and whānau support networks. We have 167 whānau on the housing waitlist, which represents more than 500 people. The high cost of housing is contributing to the rapid growth”.

“Our hapū has just over 5000 members, so 10 per cent of our whole whānau is on our waitlist,” Kirsteen says.

The rental homes are allocated according to need and other priorities, considering factors such as young children and the amount of time that whānau have been waiting for a home.

Need for housing can be particularly acute for those in retirement years, and the iwi has nine kaumātua units, built about 10 years ago, and will build 10 more units in the next year. Specially designed for over-60s, they will include accessibility features and space for an overnight carer, if necessary.

“I think our kaumātua quite like having their own space; the units are across the road from the marae and they walk over there any time, they get picked up to go shopping, the services are all available here and that’s what they like,” Kirsteen says.



Whaea Esther in kaumātua housing

In 2016, Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei built Kāinga I which is a medium density development with 30 homes that whānau have purchased, through an innovative financial structure that saw the hapū provide the mortgages to the homeowners through its commercial arm Whai Rawa.

More homes are on the horizon, Kirsteen says.

“We are fortunate to have the land to be able to build more housing. We’ve got quite a few empty blocks of land, and we’re constantly searching for new and innovative ways to build more homes, as there are still not enough. It’s the same right throughout New Zealand,” she says.



Papakāinga housing