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Opposition to Move-On Powers, Calls for Housing-Led Action to Address Homelessness

Housing peak bodies Te Matapihi He Tirohanga mō te Iwi Trust and Community Housing Aotearoa are urging the Government and local authorities to abandon any consideration of “move-on” powers targeting people experiencing homelessness, warning that such measures are ineffective, discriminatory, and fundamentally at odds with a solution focussed approach to ending homelessness.

The organisations are calling for a decisive shift toward approaches that uphold mana, strengthen whānau, and deliver lasting change, including:

- Country wide investment in Housing First and kaupapa Māori housing models
- Stronger focus on Wraparound, tikanga-based support services
- More investment in affordable, safe, and culturally grounded housing supply
- Partnerships with iwi, hapū, and Māori housing providers
- Policy settings that honour Te Tiriti and address structural inequities
- Ensuring no one is discharged from health, justice, care, or protection systems into homelessness.

“Communities deserve real solutions, not cosmetic ones. Move-on powers create the illusion of action while leaving the underlying crisis untouched,” says Ali Hamlin-Paenga Te Matapihi CEO.

Hamlin-Paenga and Paul Gilberd, Community Housing Aotearoa CEO agree that homelessness is a symptom of policy failure, not individual failure. They are calling for housing-led leadership that confronts the real issues: housing shortages, affordability, and the need to bring back investment into Māori-led solutions.

“Move-on powers do nothing to address the causes of homelessness and instead create a cycle of displacement and harm. We support the approach mentioned by the Prime Minister that we can’t have move-on orders and move people around, we have to solve the problem. The latest statistics from the Government’s Housing Dashboard tells us that even with their increase of 300 Housing First places, over 1,000 people are still without a home.

Forcing whānau to move along does not create homes, does not restore dignity, and does not provide a long-term solution. It is a short-sighted response that shifts the issue from one street to the next while ignoring the systemic failures that created it.”

Move-on powers would:

- Break vital connections with providers, outreach teams, and health services.
- Increase instability, making it harder for whānau to access housing pathways or maintain safety.
- Exacerbate trauma, particularly for those already experiencing dislocation, violence, or mental distress.
- Criminalise poverty, pushing people into the justice system instead of into support.



“All New Zealanders have the right to a decent home. This type of punitive approach causes further harm to already vulnerable communities, with no solutions in sight.” says Paul Gilberd, Community Housing Aotearoa CEO.

The broader community risks include:

- Displacement without resolution, pushing homelessness into neighbouring suburbs or unsafe, hidden spaces.
- Erosion of social cohesion, as enforcement approaches foster fear and division rather than collective responsibility.
- Increased pressure on emergency services, as people become harder to reach and support.
- Diversion of resources, pulling attention away from long-term, evidence-based housing solutions.

Policing homelessness is a reaction. What we need are solutions.

References:

<https://www.hud.govt.nz/stats-and-insights/the-government-housing-dashboard/public-homes>

Quote from Christopher Luxon <https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/political/579892/opposition-mps-community-groups-call-for-proposed-auckland-homelessness-ban-to-be-binned>

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