

Committee Secretariat
Justice Committee
Parliament Buildings
Wellington

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RE: Summary Offences (Move-on Orders) Amendment Bill

Who we are:

Community Housing Aotearoa – Ngā Wharerau o Aotearoa (CHA) thanks the Justice Committee for the opportunity to share our perspectives on the Summary Offences (Move-on Orders) Amendment Bil. We have prepared this submission in response to documents Summary Offences (Move-on Orders) Amendment Bill released for consultation.

CHA is an Incorporated Society and a peak body for the community housing sector. To achieve our vision of ‘all New Zealanders well-housed’, we have a strategic focus on supporting a well-functioning housing system and working toward the realisation of the right to housing. We are also mindful of the larger institutional and regulatory settings within which our members and other community organisations operate.

Our member organisations provide homes for nearly 30,000 people nationally across 26,000 homes, and our partner members include developers, consultants, and local councils. Community Housing Organisations are primarily not for dividend entities that develop, own, and/or manage social and affordable housing stock, with a variety of tenure offerings.

CHA is a proud tangata Tiriti organisation and works closely with national Māori housing advocate Te Matapihi, which also represents iwi-based and Māori community housing organisations.

More about us can be found [here](#).

Ngā mihi



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1. CHA Position on the Summary Offences (Move On Orders) Amendment Bill

Community Housing Aotearoa (CHA) welcomes the opportunity to submit on the Summary Offences (Move On Orders) Amendment Bill.

CHA strongly opposes this Bill.

Housing is a human right. Everyone deserves access to a warm, safe, dry, accessible, and affordable home. People experiencing homelessness require housing, support and care—not displacement.

The proposed Bill represents a punitive and enforcement-led response to homelessness and social disadvantage. It will not address the underlying causes of homelessness, housing insecurity, poverty, mental distress, addiction, or social exclusion. Instead, it risks criminalising people experiencing homelessness, increasing harm, and pushing vulnerable people further away from the housing and support services they need.

We support the submissions of organisations working to prevent and end homelessness, including Housing First Auckland, Manaaki Rangatahi Youth Homelessness Collective, Coalition to End Women’s Homelessness and the University of Otago.

2. Homelessness in Aotearoa New Zealand

Homelessness and housing insecurity in Aotearoa New Zealand have reached unprecedented levels.

CHA's *Insight Report: Homelessness and Housing Insecurity* (April 2026)¹ highlighted that homelessness is now at its highest level ever recorded. At the time of the 2023 Census, an estimated 112,496 people were experiencing severe housing deprivation, representing 2.3 percent of the population. This is an increase from 99,462 people (2.1 percent) in 2018.²

These figures reflect long-standing structural inequalities and failures across housing, health, welfare, justice, and social support systems. Homelessness is not caused by an individual's presence in a public space; it is the result of systemic failures that leave people without access to safe, secure and affordable housing.

The proposed Bill does nothing to address these causes.

¹ CHA Insight Report: Homelessness and Housing Insecurity (April 2026) <https://chahub.org.nz/api/qr/113>

² Statistics New Zealand (2024) Census 2023 <https://www.stats.govt.nz/2023-census/>

3. Te Tiriti o Waitangi obligations

The Bill is inconsistent with the Crown's obligations under Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Especially in relation to Articles 2 and 3, and the right to exercise rangatiratanga over kāinga.

The Stage One Report of the Waitangi Tribunal's Wai 2750 Housing Policy and Services Kaupapa Inquiry considered 79 claims concerning Māori homelessness and found that the Crown had breached Te Tiriti because its legislation, policies and national strategies since 2009 "fail to adequately address homelessness and severe housing deprivation and fail to meet the needs of Māori under Te Tiriti o Waitangi."³

Rather than responding to these findings through greater investment in housing and support, the proposed Bill risks repeating the very failures identified by the Tribunal by relying on enforcement instead of addressing the structural drivers of homelessness.

4. The Bill will disproportionately impact those already experiencing inequity

People experiencing homelessness are not a homogeneous group. Different populations experience homelessness in different ways and require responses that reflect their unique circumstances. Many also experience disability, mental distress, addiction, family violence, discrimination or social exclusion. These intersecting experiences increase both the likelihood of homelessness and the barriers to exiting it.

The proposed Bill is likely to have the greatest impact on those already experiencing significant disadvantage and structural inequity.

4.1 Impact on Māori

We are particularly concerned about the disproportionate impact this Bill will have on Māori.

Māori are significantly overrepresented among people experiencing homelessness. Approximately 28.8 percent of people experiencing homelessness are Māori, despite Māori making up a much smaller proportion of the general population⁴.

These inequities are the result of colonisation, systemic discrimination, intergenerational trauma, and ongoing inequities across housing, health, education, justice and care systems, including the impacts of state care.

³ Waitangi Tribunal (2023) Kainga Kore Stage One Report of the Housing Policy and Services Kaupapa Inquiry on Māori Homelessness (WAI2750)

⁴ Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (2025) Homelessness Insights Report June 2025

Rather than addressing these structural drivers, move-on orders risk further criminalising and marginalising Māori, creating additional barriers to accessing support and stable housing.

The Crown has obligations under Te Tiriti o Waitangi to actively protect Māori wellbeing and work in partnership with Māori to address inequities. This Bill is inconsistent with those obligations.

4.2 Impact on Pacific Peoples

Pacific peoples are also disproportionately affected by housing deprivation and homelessness, making up 22.6% of those experiencing homelessness.⁵

This correlates with Housing First Auckland data which shows that over 20 percent of the people and whānau they support are Pacific.

Pacific communities experience significant housing pressures, including overcrowding, housing insecurity, and barriers to accessing affordable housing. Enforcement-based approaches do not address these underlying issues and risk worsening existing inequities.

4.3 Impact on Women

Fifty-seven thousand women in Aotearoa experience severe housing deprivation, accounting for 50% of the country's homeless population. More than one-third of women experiencing homelessness are wāhine Māori. In Auckland, approximately 46 percent of women experiencing homelessness are wāhine Māori.⁶

Women are more likely to move between unsafe housing, overcrowding, couch surfing, temporary accommodation, and family violence. For women, move-on orders are likely to cause further displacement and harm, undermine trust, reduce engagement with support services, increase isolation, and heighten vulnerability to violence.

4.4 Impact on Children and Young People

Community Housing Aotearoa is particularly concerned that the Bill may affect children and young people as young as 14 years old.

A [report](#) developed by Manaaki Rangatahi Youth Homelessness Collective noted that nearly 50% of those experiencing homelessness are under 25-years-old, with 29% of New Zealand high school students having had experienced some form of housing deprivation. This challenge is

⁵ Te Tūāpapa Kura Kāinga Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (2026) Homelessness Insights Report

⁶ Coalition to End Women's Homelessness (2025) Understanding the barriers and solutions to women's homelessness

further reinforced by recent research commissioned by the Coalition to End Women's Homelessness found more than 33,000 children and young people experiencing homelessness (severe housing deprivation) in Aotearoa New Zealand.⁷

Compared with their peers, these children and young people are:

- Nearly three times more likely to have experienced abuse (17.7% compared with 6.2%);
- More likely to disengage from education through higher rates of absence and suspension;
- More likely to experience justice system involvement, including police proceedings and parental incarceration;
- More likely to experience poorer health outcomes.

This proposed bill would create a new pathway into the criminal justice system for young people whose presence on the street is typically the result of factors beyond their control, including unsafe home environments, poverty, family relationship breakdown, unemployment, and limited support for those leaving state care.⁸

This Bill would make vulnerable children and young people even more vulnerable.

4.5 Impact on Older Adults

Recent trends indicate that housing insecurity among older adults is becoming increasingly prevalent.

- The Office for Seniors (Long Term Insights Briefing, 2025) estimates that around 138,000 people aged 65 and over are currently not homeowners, with this number projected to almost triple to nearly 400,000 by 2050.
- The [Doors to Dignity](#) campaign found that people living in improvised dwellings also tend to be older than the general population.
- Housing insecurity among older people is not limited to those in the rental market. Even individuals with a long history of home ownership are experiencing housing instability following major life changes, including the loss of a partner, rising costs of living, and lack of housing designed to meet age-related needs.

⁷ Coalition to End Women's Homelessness (2026) Children and Young People experiencing homelessness
[RESEARCH RELEASE: Children and Young People Experiencing Homelessness — Coalition to End Women's Homelessness](#)

⁸ Sarah Bierre, Kimberley O'Sullivan, Jacqueline Paul, Polly Atatoa Carr and Nevil Pierse, (2026) "Move-on orders will criminalise children experiencing homelessness," The Briefing.

- This is insecurity forcing many older adults to resort to live with whānau, in overcrowded situations, and rough sleeping.

For this population, policy settings that improve access to affordable, accessible, and culturally appropriate housing and support people to age in place are more closely aligned with the identified drivers of housing insecurity.

Community Housing Aotearoa is concerned that an enforcement-based approach will continue to perpetuate this group's vulnerabilities.

5. Move-on orders undermine health and access to support

People who experience homelessness face some of the worst health inequalities of any population group.

Research consistently shows significantly poorer physical and mental health outcomes, higher rates of chronic illness, greater use of emergency services, and substantially reduced life expectancy.

Displacing people from public spaces does not improve these outcomes. Instead, it can disrupt relationships with outreach workers and service providers, reduce access to support services, healthcare, and increase social isolation and risk.

If we are not aware of who and how many people are experiencing homelessness, this also has a detrimental effect on our national understanding of homelessness. We cannot solve a problem we cannot see. This is particularly of concern with the shift towards admin-first data collection, as if homeless whānau are not accessing support services they become 'hidden' from the system.

There is no evidence that move-on orders reduce homelessness. They will merely move people from one location to another and will create additional barriers to support.

6. Recommendations:

Community Housing Aotearoa recommends:

- **The Summary Offences (Move On Orders) Amendment Bill be withdrawn.**
- Remove the reference to rough sleeping and begging from the draft bill as a minimum required change, these are survival activities.

Instead, Community Housing Aotearoa recommends prioritising and investing in solutions that work.

7. What works:

We welcome the government's recent announcement for support for people experiencing homelessness. The increase in homelessness in Aotearoa reflects years of underinvestment in affordable housing, inconsistent policy settings, and insufficient long-term planning and resourcing. Aotearoa needs long term affordable housing solutions and wrap around support services, not enforcement responses. Evidence from Aotearoa and internationally demonstrates that the following approaches are effective:

- **Kaupapa Māori-Led Housing Solutions** designed and delivered by Māori for Māori uphold mana motuhake and consistently achieve better outcomes for whānau Māori.
- **Housing First** provides immediate access to permanent housing alongside wraparound support. There is a growing evidence base internationally that recognises Housing First as the most effective response to chronic homelessness. New Zealand evidence shows substantial reductions in hospitalisations, police offences, criminal charges and mental health admissions, alongside increased employment and income.⁹
- **Rangatahi youth housing and wraparound support services** recognising that ending youth homelessness is a prevention measure.
- **Safety and trauma-informed approaches** are more effective than enforcement because they recognise homelessness as a housing and wellbeing issue rather than a public order issue. They prioritise trust and early intervention, helping people access housing and support instead of pushing them further into crisis.
- **Transitional housing** provides stability, safety and support while permanent housing solutions are secured.
- **Expand Affordable Permanent Housing** through mixed tenure and ownership models that enable long-term housing stability, through Community Housing Providers and Kāinga Ora to house whānau currently receiving support from Housing First and Transitional Housing providers.
- **Community-Led Responses** recognises that local providers are best placed to deliver tailored, culturally responsive and relationship-based responses.
- **Homelessness Prevention** ensures people are not discharged from health, justice, care and protection systems into homelessness.
- **Develop long-term strategies**, both national and regional homelessness that deliver coordinated housing and support responses and measurable reductions in homelessness.

⁹ New Zealand evidence shows substantial reductions in hospitalisations, police offences, criminal charges and mental health admissions, alongside increased employment and income.

- **Adopt duty-to-assist legislation** requiring all relevant government agencies to ensure people have access to safe, sustainable housing before discharge from care, hospital, or prison.
- **Provide sufficient long-term** funding so providers can deliver high-quality, person-centred support.

8. Conclusion

Community Housing Aotearoa strongly opposes the Summary Offences (Move On Orders) Amendment Bill.

The Bill will not reduce homelessness. Instead, it risks displacing people experiencing homelessness, increasing harm, reinforcing existing inequities, and creating additional barriers to housing and support. People experiencing homelessness are not breaking the housing system; they are living with the consequences of it. Rather than addressing those systemic failures, the proposed Bill risks penalising people for circumstances beyond their control.

Rather than investing in punitive enforcement, the Government should prioritise evidence-based housing solutions that prevent and end homelessness, uphold Te Tiriti o Waitangi, and ensure every person has access to a warm, safe, dry, accessible and affordable home.

Community Housing Aotearoa recommends that the Bill be withdrawn.

We welcome the opportunity to appear before the Committee to speak to this submission.

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