



Placemaking for tenant wellbeing: Exploring the decision-making of public and community housing providers in Aotearoa New Zealand

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ABSTRACT

In addition to housing tenants, many public and community housing providers engage in placemaking to foster tenants' connections to people and place. This paper reports on the placemaking practices of four community housing providers and two urban regeneration programmes in Aotearoa New Zealand. Twenty-four semi-structured interviews were conducted with provider staff – including those leading strategy, community development, tenancy management, planning and design efforts – to investigate the placemaking strategies adopted by providers and the values, priorities and investment tensions that underpin their decision-making. Common placemaking strategies included site selection to secure tenants' locational access to community services and amenities, and designing shared 'bump spaces' into housing complexes to encourage neighbourly encounters between tenants. Efforts to foster a sense of community through increased stability and diversity of households were hindered by a predominance of single-person units in older housing developments, and by funding and regulatory constraints. Māori, the Indigenous people of Aotearoa New Zealand, comprise approximately half of all public housing tenants and many have deep intergenerational connections to place. Where providers were engaging with Māori, early steps had been taken to incorporate cultural landscapes and values into placemaking initiatives; such practices were more evident in urban regeneration than community housing provider developments, enabled by longer-term planning horizons, broader development mandates and partnerships with iwi (Māori tribes) and local government. Nonetheless, placemaking aspirations of all providers were tethered to resource constraints and investment trade-offs, with any social infrastructure provision weighed up against the value of providing one more home instead.

Introduction

Placemaking refers to practices and interventions that nurture people's sense of place and is based on the premise that a sense of belonging to people and place contributes to quality of life and wellbeing (Chisholm et al., 2024; Ellery et al., 2021). In a review of literature on placemaking in public housing, Chisholm et al. (2024) concluded that tenants' sense of place can be supported by "forming relationships and by participating in planning activities and other community activities, by access to public space and amenities and by spending time in and forming memories of a place" (pp. 8–9). In this paper we consider if, and

if so how, six public or community housing providers in Aotearoa New Zealand provide Māori (the Indigenous people of Aotearoa New Zealand (AoNZ)) and non-Māori tenants with placemaking opportunities and the values, priorities, resources and trade-offs that inform their decision-making. We aim to stimulate thinking about placemaking opportunities within public and community housing by sharing the placemaking strategies and trade-offs of a diverse group of housing providers.

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Background literature

Concepts of placemaking differ (Strydom et al., 2018). It can be understood as an outcome of relationships and activities that arise naturally between residents, or members of a community that, if practised over time, imbue place with meaning (Chica, 2021). It is also used to describe the actions and interventions of non-residential agents – such as planners, urban designers, architects and housing providers. For the purposes of our study, placemaking refers to strategies that straddle the realm of development design and the provision of shared amenities and activities, both with the goal of enabling residents to interact and develop a sense of place. For Indigenous communities, placemaking or place-knowing (Jojoia, 2024) can involve reclaiming and re-Indigenising spaces in ways that reflect Indigenous history, aspirations, processes and protocols to (re)create a “material and discursive

sense of place” (Nejad et al., 2019, p. 414).

In a recent review of international literature on placemaking in public and community housing environments, Chisholm et al. (2024) found most studies reported tenants experiencing a positive sense of place. Social ties arose through shared proximity, circumstances and experiences, and by participating in community activities and events. Housing stability and length of residency were also significant contributors to tenants’ connections with others and with place. A shortcoming identified in the literature was a reliance on individual appraisals of sense of place at one point in time rather than over time, limiting knowledge of how different placemaking practices, changing urban form, or longer-term regeneration efforts may affect sense of place. Nonetheless, several themes emerged around built and social environment factors that are open to influence by housing providers and that can provide pathways for public housing tenants to engage and create



Fig. 1. (a) Interior of community room, and (b) green space with tree benches outside of community room at Central Park Apartments, provided by TTM in Pōneke/Wellington (photos by Crystal Victoria Olin).

connections to people and place: easy access to safe and well-maintained shared or public spaces; proximity to amenities and services; and events and occasions that facilitate meeting and sharing with others. Shared, place-based histories and memories formed in these environments could also heighten sense of place. Despite significant attention to placemaking in certain international contexts, little has been written about placemaking in the context of AotNZ public and community housing, a gap this paper aims to address.

Public and community housing in Aotearoa New Zealand

In AotNZ, public housing encompasses properties owned or leased by either the central government housing agency Kāinga Ora – Homes and Communities, or community housing providers (CHPs) who also receive the Income-Related Rent Subsidy (IRRS). The IRRS is provided by the state to public and community housing landlords to cover the balance between rent paid by tenants (generally set at 25 % of the tenant's income) and the market rent for a property (Ministry of Housing and Urban Development -MHUD, 2024). CHPs are diverse in size and structure and are run by a range of organisations – including Charitable Trusts, and iwi (Māori tribe). Since April 2014, CHPs have been eligible to claim the IRRS for tenants housed directly off the Public Housing Register, a list of people assessed as eligible and ready to be placed in public housing (Ministry of Social Development (MSD), 2024).

Housing provided by the state and the community housing sector makes up only 3.8 % of dwellings in AotNZ (OECD, 2020; Fig. 1.1), and as an indicator of unmet need, in June 2024, 22,923 applicants were on the Public Housing Register (Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, 2024). As well as a shortfall of homes, a history of underinvestment in public housing has left many dwellings in need of repairs and maintenance, and a housing stock that is not always well-suited in location or size to current needs. Lack of supply has also contributed to tighter eligibility criteria for public housing. Prioritisation is based on severe and persistent need, which includes consideration of factors such as homelessness, disability and health status (including mental health). Over time, this has changed the composition of public housing residents (Schrader, 2005). In response to housing need, the recent Labour government (2017–2023) increased investment in public housing through the state and initiated large-scale housing redevelopment and urban regeneration programmes. This investment has been associated with a shift to higher-density, mixed-tenure and mixed-use developments and use of more sustainable building practices (Fraser, 2021; Kāinga Ora, 2024).

Māori living in public and community housing

Māori make up 39 % of public and community housing tenants (Amore et al., 2018; Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, 2023; MSD, 2024); and of the 32 % of public housing households comprising one parent families with children, 52 % are Māori (Kāinga Ora, 2023/24). However, an unmet need for Māori housing remains (Amore et al., 2018; Ministry of Social Development, MSD, 2024), evident in the disproportionate number of Māori recorded in statistics on homelessness – 59 % identify as Māori (Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, 2020, 2025) – and of those listed on the Public Housing Register, half identify as Māori (Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, 2024). Many hapū (subtribes), iwi (tribes) and other Māori community organisations are actively engaged in meeting housing needs of whānau Māori (extended families) and at the end of 2024, 36 of the 89 registered CHPs in AotNZ identified as Māori entities (Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, 2025). While housing developments initiated by these CHPs frequently take place on iwi-owned land and nurture cultural connections to place, Māori public and community housing tenants often live away from tribal whenua (land). While there is a gap in our understanding of placemaking practices adopted by public and community housing providers to foster a sense of place and promote the

wellbeing of all tenants, in AotNZ, these tenants warrant focused attention.

Indigenous placemaking

Chisholm et al. (2024) review highlights a notable absence of studies on Indigenous placemaking in public housing. This omission needs redressing, particularly in AotNZ, where Māori are overrepresented in the public housing system (Amore et al., 2018; Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, 2023; MSD, 2024). Although not directed specifically to public and community housing settings, literature on a resurgence in Indigenous planning and urban design is informative (Hoskins, 2008; Jojola et al., 2013; Matunga, 2013; Nejad et al., 2019, 2020; Puketapu-Dentice et al., 2017; Thompson-Fawcett, 2022; Thompson-Fawcett et al., 2019). As Jojola et al. (2013) points out, Indigenous peoples have always engaged in place-based planning and “moulded a landscape” as successive generations “assume the values and practices that are necessary to sustain them” and secure their futures (p. 310). He uses the term place-knowing rather than placemaking to describe Indigenous people's connections to place, and he identifies intergenerational participation and knowledge of place-based histories and stories as pivotal to the concept of place-knowing. In contemporary urban spaces, integrating heritage and Indigenous signifiers can “build a sense of Indigenous representation to our places” (Jojola, 2024). A similar call has been made by Hoskins (2008) for urban design in AotNZ that enables Māori to see “our faces in our places”. Incorporating symbolic gestures in art, architecture and landscape features can daylight Indigenous histories, while also acting as a form of resistance to the dominance of settler-colonial structures and planning processes (Thompson-Fawcett, 2022). The latter intention resonates with Lefebvre's (1991) theorising on the production of space. Implicit in Lefebvre's promotion of people's right to the city was an acknowledgement of difference, the power of built form to shape social life, and the right of all inhabitants to participate in urban decision-making and regulation of their lived spaces (Nejad et al., 2019, p. 415).

Placemaking in urban regeneration

Much of the international literature reviewed by Chisholm et al. (2024) examined the placemaking experiences of public housing tenants exposed to urban regeneration programmes. Experiences of those who remained in a neighbourhood as it changed around them were considered alongside those relocated to a new neighbourhood (Chisholm et al., 2024). Both scenarios could trigger disruption to sense of place and emotional responses of loss, grief, worry, fear and anger (Glynn, 2008; Kleinhans and Kearns, 2013; Watt, 2022). When people are relocated, social networks can be severed, and relationships lost. For tenants who remain in a neighbourhood, networks can be undermined if familiar venues like shops or landmarks or street names disappear, new costs are incurred to use facilities, or the behaviours and values of new residents are at odds with those of longer-term residents (Gordon et al., 2017; Hunter et al., 2016). The latter can be pronounced when regeneration introduces mixed-tenure households, including private home ownership, into longstanding public housing communities (Chaskin and Joseph, 2013; Douglas, 2023). Nonetheless not all experiences of regeneration are negative, with reported benefits associated with relocation including new housing, better facilities, safer neighbourhoods and renewed hope (Chaskin and Joseph, 2013; Watt, 2022).

Large-scale regeneration programmes can enable placemaking opportunities generally unavailable in smaller new-build public housing developments. For example, engaging residents in participatory planning and design decision-making becomes feasible where there is a known population of current or future residents. Chisholm et al. (2024) identified examples of participation resulting in public housing tenants gaining better access to community amenities and facilities (Lucio and Wolfersteig, 2012; Nelson and Lewis, 2021), although other studies

found “tenants were unable to influence the urban form in any substantive way” (Chisholm et al., 2024, p.11; Valli and Hammami, 2021). In smaller developments, tenant participation in decision-making is usually only feasible once a complex is completed and inhabited; and in these settings, opportunities for participation are less about planning and design decision-making, and more concerned with enhancing wellbeing through the routines of everyday life and smaller-scale placemaking initiatives, such as through setting up community gardens and running community events, activities and newsletters (Tually et al., 2020; Yu et al., 2023). In mixed-tenure developments, tenure type can confer different levels of power and influence. For instance, Fennell (2015) reported on a situation in Chicago where conflict arose over the appropriate use of public spaces. The outcome, when the interests of private owners prevailed over those of public housing tenants, was a reduction in open space provision.

High housing demand and the rundown condition of public housing estates has been a trigger for regeneration internationally (Bijen and Piracha, 2017; Chisholm et al., 2024). In AotNZ, like elsewhere, there has been a coupling of public housing upgrades and regeneration efforts with a shift to higher housing densities and mixed-tenure development models (Chisholm et al., 2022; Wang and Gu, 2023). Investment through regeneration can be a catalyst for built environment changes designed to improve the lives of public housing tenants, and in new mixed-tenure developments, to increase the appeal of a neighbourhood to potential homeowners and other new residents. Enhancing the public realm and improving shared amenities are common strategies to increase livability and appeal. In these settings, new amenities and public spaces can be sites for building connections between new and old residents. However, investment can also spark gentrification and for longer-term residents, fear of loss and displacement (Gordon et al., 2017). For Māori, disconnection through the erasure of local histories is often particularly acute (Puketapu-Dentice et al., 2017).

Placemaking and wellbeing

Social interaction, support and a sense of place are crucial pillars of wellbeing (Banwell and Kingham, 2023; Cattell et al., 2008), as well as notable outcomes of effective placemaking (Chisholm et al., 2024).

Public or shared spaces are common placemaking settings. Within housing complexes, liminal and shared spaces between homes, like footpaths and hallways, enable casual encounters between tenants. Further afield, well-maintained parks, playgrounds, and other outdoor open spaces can be sites of neighbourly greetings, as well as venues for formal and informal community activities (Cui et al., 2024). Likewise, amenities and services can be important placemaking sites. Retail, health, social and recreational services enable tenants to meet their routine needs while also providing regular opportunities to see and be seen by others, to meet and converse. Like libraries, parks and cafes, these amenities function as ‘third place’ destinations, offering familiarity, and for some, connection, support and friendships (Oldenburg, 1989; (Witten and Ivory, 2018). Chisholm et al. (2024) note the importance of feeling safe in public or shared spaces in order for tenants to spend time and experience a sense of place in these settings.

Māori wellbeing in public and community housing

The Whakawhaungatanga Māori Wellbeing Model developed by Penny et al. (2024) is informed by earlier models of Māori wellbeing (for

example, Durie, 1999; McLachlan et al., 2021) and Indigenous approaches to placemaking and homemaking (Boulton et al., 2022, 2020; Logan, 2022). The goal of the model is to help guide housing providers and urban designers to give effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi¹ and support Māori identity and wellbeing. An essential element of the model is recognition that relationships based on Māori tikanga (cultural practices) with whānau (extended family), tūpuna (ancestors) and the natural environment (e.g., rivers, mountains, forests) are central to Māori wellbeing and the provision of secure, healthy, affordable housing. Incorporating “locally relevant and meaningful Māori symbols” (p. 7) into development designs is a suggested strategy to foreground the history and genealogy of a location and make this knowledge accessible to residents. Places for spiritual expression such as sight lines and/or physical connections to significant cultural landmarks and features of the natural environment are also advocated. These and other sites where customary practices and protocols can be observed are seen as crucial for reinforcing values, connections and identity.

Intergenerational benefits of embedding local cultural symbols and knowledge in the urban landscape are also emphasised by Raerino (2024). For kaumatua (elders), “everyday environmental cues” serve to “reinforce their identity and validate their presence in the community”, and for rangatahi (young people) it is vital if they are to “learn and carry forward” traditions (Raerino, 2024, p. 21). For Māori tenants who do not have strong cultural connections, Penny et al. (2024) suggest housing providers have a role forming relationships with local marae (traditional gathering places) and other Māori cultural groups, and where appropriate facilitate access to these communities to help sustain a sense of belonging and strengthen knowledge of tikanga (cultural practices).

Research context

The research reported in this paper was conducted as a component of the Public Housing and Urban Regeneration: Maximising Wellbeing (PH&UR) research programme funded by the New Zealand Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment (MBIE) (Centre for Sustainable Cities, 2024). This five-year programme partnered with six providers of public or community housing to investigate organisational policies and practices around governance, design and delivery of housing and associated urban regeneration efforts. The six housing providers include central and local government agencies and CHPs established by Charitable Trusts (including one affiliated with a religious organisation). The providers themselves, and case study developments owned and/or managed by the providers, were selected for their diversity of size, structure, and location as well as the provider’s willingness to partner with the research programme. The overarching goal of the research is to understand how public and community housing providers can optimise the wellbeing of tenants through the provision of socially and environmentally sustainable housing. It has a strong focus on initiatives that enhance the wellbeing of Māori whānau. The study comprises seven research strands (Te Ao Māori – Māori world, Governance, Energy, Transport, Community Formation and Urban Design, Housing Design Quality, and Wellbeing). This paper reports on some key findings from the Community Formation and Urban Design research strand. Ethical approval for the research was granted by the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee (D22/205).

The PH&UR research programme’s six housing provider partners include two public housing and urban regeneration programmes and four CHPs, as listed in Table 1.

¹ Te Tiriti o Waitangi is an agreement signed in 1840 between the British Crown and Māori chiefs and a founding document of AotNZ. It has great relevance for public housing, as its principles include equitable outcomes for Māori and non-Māori, and recognition of Māori rights to self-determination and active protection (Smail, 2024). Te Tiriti places clear obligations on the government and public housing to promote Māori wellbeing.

Table 1

Case study sites: Public and community housing providers.

	Public and community housing providers					
	Tāmaki Regeneration Company (TRC)	Eastern Porirua Regeneration (EPR)	Ōtautahi Community Housing Trust-(ŌCHT)	Te Toi Mahana (TTM)	Salvation Army Social Housing (SASH)	Dwell Housing Trust
Type of provider organisation	State (public housing)	State (public housing)	Charitable trust (CHP)	Charitable trust (CHP)	Charitable trust (CHP)	Charitable trust (CHP)
Location	Tāmaki Makaurau/Auckland	Pōneke/Wellington	Ōtautahi/Christchurch	Pōneke/Wellington	Tāmaki Makaurau/Auckland	Pōneke/Wellington
Partnership	TRC with Auckland Council	EPR with Ngati Toa iwi, Kainga Ora, Porirua City Council	ŌCHT with Christchurch City Council	TTM with Wellington City Council		
Organisation's Property portfolio/number of tenancies	2800 state homes to be replaced by up to 10,500 public, affordable and private homes	2000 public homes to be upgraded, and 1500 new public, affordable and private homes built	2300	1900	549	70+
Tenure type	Mixed: public, affordable rental and owner occupier	Mixed: public, affordable rental and owner occupier	Community housing tenants	Community housing tenants	Community housing tenants	Community housing tenants
Case study sites	Hinaki, and Overlea (two separate sites)	Cannons Creek neighbourhood (one site)	Gowerton Place, and Whakahoa Village (one joined site)	Central Park apartments, and Daniell Street (two separate sites)	Kaitiakitanga Village (one site)	Mahora Te Aroha, Kilbirnie (one joined site)

This paper reports on public and community housing provider decision-making relating to placemaking strategies, practices and interventions. It is largely oriented to housing development design and provision of shared amenity with decision-making investigated at an organisational level and with reference to case study sites.

Methodology

In-person or online interviews were conducted in 2022 with 24 individuals employed by the six housing providers listed in Table 1. Interviewees were drawn from different levels of management and covered roles in strategy development, planning and design, community development and tenancy management, as well as CEOs. The ethnic backgrounds of interviewees included Māori, Pasifika, Asian and Pākehā (New Zealanders of European descent). The interviews were semi-structured and based on a common set of questions adjusted to engage with the particularities of each provider and their case study site(s). Interviews were conducted by two of the authors (KW and CVO who identify as Pākehā and American respectively). They commenced with a discussion of the individual's role within the organisation, followed by questions on organisational policies and practices around site selection, decision-making and rationale relating to development design, on-site community amenities and tenant services. Future placemaking intentions and constraints were canvassed. If not covered in the prior discussion, questions were asked about organisational policies and actions to enhance the wellbeing of Māori and Pasifika tenants.

Interviews ranged from 60–90 min, and were audio recorded and transcribed. After multiple readings of transcripts, a coding frame for data was generated, added to and refined in discussion between KW and CVO. NVivo software was used to manage the interview data. Approaching the data from a critical realist position, we sought to understand the why and how of organisational decision-making as expressed through placemaking practices. Themes were advanced as we worked with the coded text and reflected on the contexts within which the data were gathered. All authors, Pākehā, Māori, and American, contributed to writing and critiquing the manuscript.

Although the intention was not to explicitly compare the placemaking practices of the housing providers, patterns of shared and divergent meanings and practices reflecting the contexts in which providers were operating are discussed in the findings below.

Findings

We present our findings on the placemaking practices of housing providers under three themes: (1) connecting tenants to people and

place; (2) investment in community resources; and (3) trade-offs in provision. However, before doing so, we discuss several situational and organisational factors impacting on the six housing providers' placemaking decision-making: differences in the placemaking opportunities open to regeneration programmes compared to CHPs; distinctions in the organisational histories of CHPs and their access to financial resources; and regulatory constraints.

The size and scope of urban regeneration programmes (TRC and EPR) provide opportunities for placemaking that are seldom available to CHPs. Such programmes usually address a larger scale and scope of work, have a resident population to engage in participatory planning processes, and familiar meeting places with collective histories (like marae, public spaces, and service hubs). As entities, TRC and EPR have significant government funding, or leverage, to upgrade infrastructure to support more intensified housing, and authority to invest in new or enhanced public spaces and other shared amenities. A deep Māori presence in both Eastern Porirua and Tāmaki – both historical and due to mid-late 20th century urban migration – and development horizons of >20 years have been catalysts for social change and regeneration agendas that extend beyond housing into areas such as employment, education, and biodiversity. These areas all offer tenants potential avenues for connecting to people and place and enhancing wellbeing. By contrast, CHP developments are smaller in scale and scope, and are, with notable exceptions where they have City Council support (e.g., TTM's Central Park Apartments and ŌCHT) less likely to engage with an existing population prior to development. CHPs also work within a funding and regulatory framework that limits investment beyond housing.

The organisational histories of the four CHPs also differ in ways that influence their placemaking decision-making. ŌCHT and TTM originated as local government housing that transitioned to become independent charitable housing trusts, in 2016 and 2023 respectively, to facilitate access to government funding through the IRRS. Wellington City Council retains ownership of most of its housing stock, while tenancy management was transferred to the new entity TTM. These two organisations remain intertwined around the remaining upgrades needed for approximately half of their stock, which varies in size, age, typology, and location, and in the presence or absence of on-site community amenities. Placemaking opportunities and constraints vary

accordingly. To illustrate the range, we consider some of this variation between the TTM and ÖCHT developments we investigated. TTM case study site Central Park Apartments is a multi-level complex of 190 dwellings. The development (Fig. 1) has a relative wealth of on-site shared facilities including a community room, kitchen, playground, garden and other green spaces, computer room, gym space, workshop and library available to residents, as well as tenants living in TTM complexes clustered close by. The complex was significantly renovated by the government in 2012² through a process, relatively uncommon in the community housing sector that engaged existing tenants about the future design of their site through a series of workshops (Bierre et al., 2013). Research interviewees indicated the upgraded community facilities and associated services and activities are well-used to this day by tenants of Central Park Apartments, as well as nearby complexes. In contrast, TTM also provides housing that is sparse in its provision of on-site community amenities; around 180 dwellings in a series of smaller-scale housing sites along Daniell Street in Wellington are home to many families and children, yet there is no community room or comprehensive amenity provision to serve some of their needs.

The developments ÖCHT inherited were largely spatially dispersed, one-bedroom units occupied by older people, many single men. Many units were earthquake damaged and required strengthening. Twenty community rooms were part of the property transfer and were again dispersed across the city; according to interviewees, few of these were used well for community events or other placemaking activities. As discussed later, after appraising the situation, in new builds, ÖCHT opted for alternative practices to assist tenants to build community connections and a sense of place.

Dwell Housing Trust is a small provider that has provided community housing for over 40 years, mostly in smaller-scale developments. The organisation's first community room has been completed in the last stage of developing Mahora Te Aroha (Fig. 2), and was funded through a donation and borrowing leveraged from equity in existing assets. SASH, the fourth CHP, is a charitable trust affiliated with The Salvation Army (TSA) which is a religious organisation with a 100+ year history of providing housing and social services in Aotearoa. Prior contact with TSA services for addiction or transitional housing, for example, can be a pathway into tenancy with SASH. The SASH development model includes either an on-site community room or access to a TSA corps and associated facilities, chaplain and volunteers who are central to the 'wrap around' support they aspire to offer tenants. To provide more-than-dwelling amenities in developments, TSA, as a faith-based entity, can use its own resources (Power and Bergan, 2019).

While placemaking initiatives and community resources can be provided with relative ease when there are existing built environment venues, or when a housing provider has sufficient organisational resources, new provision is often financially challenging. Further, regulations of the Community Housing Regulatory Authority (CHRA), under which CHPs operate, stipulate that CHPs have primary responsibility for housing and not provision of social services. To do otherwise requires negotiation with CHRA and independent funding (Community Housing Regulatory Authority, 2024).

'...a CHP ...is not permitted to deliver social services under the regulatory authority. Having said that, the regulatory authority has given us permission to have three social supports that can't be connected to tenancy management and funded differently. And they are coaching, whānau support and job employment.' (ÖCHT)

As this example indicates, approval for social service provision has been achieved by some CHPs through partnering with local government, iwi, businesses or philanthropic groups.

² Central Park Apartments were originally built in 1969; upgrades undertaken in 2012 with tenant input and won an architectural design award in 2014.

Connecting tenants to people and place

All housing providers involved in this research aspired to support tenants to make connections to others; in fact, they saw person-to-person connections as fundamental to tenant wellbeing. They used a mix of built environment and relational strategies to facilitate these connections. Integrating bump spaces or soft touch points into development designs – shared spaces where tenants could see others and be recognised as neighbours – was a common approach. Walkways around dwellings (Fig. 2), community garden spaces and seating (always with an eye to passive surveillance) were amongst the design elements used to foster interaction (Fig. 3). A rationale for bump spaces in developments is illustrated in the following quote:

"...but that extra element of the chance meeting with someone else and the chance to say hello, or be greeted, or have an impromptu conversation, I mean those are fundamental parts of being human." (Dwell Housing Trust)

Although generally considered beneficial for tenants, providers were also mindful that interactions can spark conflicts and anti-social behaviour, with one interviewee explaining that walkways between dwellings in their developments were designed to give tenants the option to both avoid as well as seek out encounters.

Several CHPs mentioned trying to diversify the mix of tenants in their developments. By increasing the number of couples and families living near one another, they hoped to bring stability to the area and create more of a sense of community. Reflecting a time when single men were in greatest need of social housing, and there was a tacit understanding that local councils would provide housing for older people and the state for families (Ferguson, 1994), both ÖCHT and TTM inherited complexes of 'one bedders'. To include larger dwellings, and remain eligible for IRRS, CHPs need to negotiate with central government to ensure dwelling sizes meet the needs of people on the Public Housing Register. This situation and the rationale for change is described as follows:

"So, a lot of our housing was a bunch of single men living together ... a lot of isolation, loneliness, no opportunities to interact with each other apart from sort of noise complaints and stuff like that. And without diversifying the tenant mix in there, it did lead to yeah lots of antisocial behaviour there as well, and crime. So, it was a real, when we did the reconfiguration [of Central Park Apartments] it was definitely to try and bring more families in, couples, age groups, and really make it like a community anywhere." (TTM)

While a mix of household types and sizes across a development is a common goal for providers, they are taking different approaches to integrating families into developments. At Gowerton Place (ÖCHT case study site) where there is no on-site tenancy manager, family-sized dwellings are located at a distance from single-person dwellings, in part to reduce children's exposure to any antisocial behaviour that may occur in the vicinity.

"At this end we tried to give the families their own space away from the single units....most troubled people are the one beds they have the most problems, whether it's drug, alcohol, mental health issues and at times they'll create an unstabling environment for families whereas generally for families it's just money issues" (ÖCHT)

TTM and SASH are attempting to create communities of mixed ages and household types with on-site access to support services.

All CHPs held activities and events intermittently to facilitate interaction between tenants. On-site venues were used where available. For instance, at SASH's Kaitiakitanga Village, the community room (Fig. 4) was used for social gatherings and events such as prayer meetings and kapa haka (Māori group dance) practice. Tenants could also book the space for whānau occasions, such as birthdays. In the absence of on-site meeting spaces, providers talked of connecting tenants to services and clubs in the wider neighbourhood. Walking distance to



Fig. 2. Shared walkway and ‘bump space’ between dwellings at Mahora Te Aroha, provided by Dwell Housing Trust in Pōneke/Wellington (photo by Luke Pilkinton-Ching).



Fig. 3. Community seating area and walkway at Gowerton Place, provided by ŌCHT in Ōtautahi/Christchurch (photo by Amber Logan).

public transport and a range of neighbourhood amenities and services was a major consideration when investing in new developments or redeveloping sites. For organisations with existing land portfolios, poor access to amenities has been a reason to sell properties: “...where we didn’t think the amenity would be great for our tenants, we disposed of it. We sold it off” (ŌCHT). Small development size was also a reason to

sell, because of the increased difficulty of providing tenants with more-than-dwelling supports and services.

The urban regeneration programmes, TRC and EPR, have partnerships with iwi and local government which expand the scope of interventions and the nature of relationships. Te Ao Māori (the Māori world) had a presence in urban regeneration decision-making around



Fig. 4. Exterior of community room at edge of Kaitiakitanga Village, provided by SASH in Tāmaki Makaurau/Auckland (photo by Crystal Victoria Olin).

placemaking initiatives. With reference to The Whakawhanaungatanga Māori Wellbeing Model, we found that interventions to improve the wellbeing of Māori tenants were evident across the domains of te ao tāngata (people), te taiao (natural and built environments) and te ao ōhanga (economic world), and tenants contributed to decision-making across these domains. Partnership with local government opened the door to negotiations around joint funding of community infrastructure and services. Although this was less evident with CHPs, ŌCHT and TTM retained formal and informal links with local government. Regarding placemaking to enhance Māori tenant wellbeing, all CHPs had this in their sights, but the relationships and practices in place were seen as early steps on a longer journey.

Many public housing tenants in TRC and EPR have intergenerational connections to place, so strategies to avoid disrupting these relationships to people and place are as germane as placemaking activities to support tenants' existing connections. The risk of gentrification is addressed in the following comment:

"...to ensure that the demographic of Tāmaki at the start of the regeneration programme is the same as it is at the end... to me that's the best measure that we didn't displace our whānau, our demographic and the essence of the character of the area." (TRC)

Placemaking approaches to bring the past into the present, to reference and engage Māori history and strengthen the visual presence



Fig. 5. Wooden sculptures by artist Anton Forde outside the Hinaki Street Apartments in the Hinaki neighbourhood by TRC in Tāmaki Makaurau/Auckland (photo by Crystal Victoria Olin).

of Māori values and culture, included integrating traditional architectural forms, place names, symbols and stories into housing developments and public spaces (Fig. 5), and creating sight lines to culturally significant sites such as maunga (mountains) and marae. With reference to a proposed new build in Tāmaki, a participant explained:

“So the way the buildings are shaped and sitting on site, the way the roofs are designed, they’re starting to integrate place, very specific place-based narratives so the whole idea of Māori and Pacific being able to see their faces in their places.” (TRC)

Unlike the urban regeneration programmes that were primarily rehousing existing tenants, the CHPs were placing people directly off the Public Housing Register. Consequently, intergenerational connections to place were not a feature of CHP narratives. Nonetheless, creating a sense of place for Māori residents new to a development was a rationale offered for incorporating Māori symbols and Indigenous planting in developments, and in the naming and blessing of developments. These actions showed respect for Māori and were seen to support “wairua and that sense of place and whenua, and trying to help people to feel at home somewhere where they haven’t been at home before” (SASH).

In TRC and EPR, the Crown Entity Kāinga Ora – Homes and Communities provided ongoing government funding and support. In different ways, TRC and EPR described an aspirational end point of urban regeneration being when authority and agency for community wellbeing was vested (back) with residents and local organisations. In Tāmaki this was framed as “growing mana motuhake” (self-determination or independence), and in Eastern Porirua as having the agency “...to ‘paddle our own waka’ (canoe). To exert our rangatiratanga (sovereignty), to invest and co-invest.” Engagement and support for tenant-led initiatives, and partnerships established with local organisations, were nudges towards this end point.

Investment in community resources – amenities and services

Site selection was a primary strategy for public and community providers to secure tenants’ locational access to community services and amenities. For example, Dwell Housing Trust asked the question: “How close is it to amenities like schools and parks and marae, churches, public transport.... all those things that make it a good place to live?”

To facilitate use of the services, housing providers – often tenancy managers and community development teams – would establish relationships with community facilities and services to bridge tenants’ connections with them.

“Our model is that we work with our tenants, so they reach out into what is around them. We will know of all the services that are available to them, be it doctors, dentists, all the usual, parks, schools, and we will advise people. When they move into their home, we tell them what bus they need to look for, where they need to go for x, y and z, and that’s how we manage it.” (ŌCHT)

On-site provision of community resources varies. SASH has a range of TSA health and social services available to tenants (addiction, chaplain, social workers, and Army corps volunteers) and in addition the on-site Kaitiakitanga Village tenancy manager brings services into the village (hearing and vision services). However, linking tenants to wider community services is a more common model and can accommodate changing needs and interests – for instance, SASH indicated indoor bowls was popular in the past, now kapa haka more so. Māra kai (community food gardens) are sometimes provided on site and while they can be incredibly successful, they can also struggle without ongoing leadership and resourcing. ŌCHT inherited vans from Christchurch City Council for transporting tenants to events but ceased this service as interest dropped off. Now tenants are encouraged to use public transport and join wider community events and activities. Contracting with community organisations is another avenue for securing services for tenants:

“...we fund Ruapōtaka Marae to do a project called Whānau by Whānau, which is an all-of-whānau support service that people can come to, it focuses on debt, housing and food.” (TRC)

Although supporting social and cultural connections underpins many CHPs place-making interventions, examples of activities to promote economic relationships were also evident. ŌCHT had secured external funding to provide employment mentoring and digital skills training. The urban regeneration programmes have employment-related interventions targeted at individuals, such as apprenticeship training, but also business mentoring and other long-term strategies to grow local businesses in the construction industry and position them to build the area’s future homes via social procurement processes. Both sites supported employment and innovation hubs as physical and relational space:

“It’s this beautiful old building. And it enables our local Māori and Pacific tenants that are wanting to set up entrepreneurial businesses or entities, to come and learn in that space and grow whatever they’d like to grow. So, we provide not only the physical resource of the building and the space, but we also provide mentoring.” (TRC)

Seeking wider wellbeing outcomes has been enabled through partnerships in the urban regeneration programmes. For example, EPR partnerships have facilitated access to funding for community engagement, upgrades to public space, support for a youth space, and in the example below, to secure Wi-Fi access:

“...in conversations with Ministry of Education, Ministry of Social Development, MBIE and school network to look at how do you connect the school Wi-Fi, networked across the precinct, by installing aerials that enable each school to be attached to each other?” (EPR)

Community rooms had mixed support. To some providers, they were a “no brainer” – desirable, if affordable, with a caveat that a development needs to be a reasonable size. The SASH model for all their developments includes a community room or hall, either purpose-built as at the Kaitiakitanga Village site, or available in adjacent TSA facilities. An on-site tenancy manager keeps an eye on lounge use, and while this takes time, it is possible given the availability of TSA corps volunteers, social services and chaplains to support tenants. However, the success or otherwise of community rooms was noted to ebb and flow with the available staffing resources and/or as tenants who champion their use come and go. A warm, appealing atmosphere created by refurbishment was also noted to trigger a rebound in use.

Investment in other amenities also varied across the case study sites. Children’s playgrounds and play spaces were provided in some larger complexes. Community food growing gardens were provided in various ways – integrated into the development design, set up as pop-up initiatives, or tenant-run on vacant sites. In Tāmaki, a collective of Pacific churches and a Māori organization were running community gardens and arts and culture workshops on vacant lots. However, tenant enthusiasm for community gardens was seen to “go in waves” (TTM).

Interviewees affiliated with the urban regeneration programmes noted plans for future provision of community amenities, either self-funded or developed in partnership with local government and/or iwi, but as the following comment indicates, there was some community reticence for upgrading facilities.

“The community already thinks that it’s perfect how it is... We don’t want it to change the vibe or the heart of it. It’s a multi-cultural community. There’s lots of community halls and cultural assets that are there, that are definitely deteriorating but they’re loved, so much.” (EPR)

Fear of gentrification and being “moved out” of a place where “generations of their family have lived” (EPR) was a suggested explanation for reticence to upgrading amenities. To bring community voice into organisational decision-making, the urban regeneration programmes deployed a range of engagement strategies, facilitated by

employing people with lived experience as residents in the neighbourhoods' undergoing regeneration. Engagement was described as "more important than anything else that you do, if you don't do it right in the beginning, you will burn all of your bridges and everything you do will be really hard" (EPR). Bringing local people onto the TRC Governance Board and staff increased Māori and Pasifika influence in decision-making:

"...so all of my team is Māori or Pasifika, and half of my team is connected to the community in some way. Either live here or have whakapapa here....we are an ear for the community.....". (TRC)

Being a TRC employee and resident was seen to open pathways to bring community knowledge, values and aspirations into development planning and decision-making: "because we're so heavily connected into TRC we therefore come back [from engaging community] and we have the ear of our colleagues in strategy and master planning, and we can share straight away." (TRC)



Fig. 6. a A temporary placemaking mini-plaza area; 6b: Materials located on-site for upgrading infrastructure provided by EPR (photos by Crystal Victoria Olin and Philippa Howden-Chapman).

Nonetheless, while recruiting staff with connections to place was helpful, resolving differing perspectives held by the physical asset and social development arms was still identified as a challenge for the urban regeneration organisation. Conflict could arise when formulating a community's vision for neighbourhood change lagged, or differed from, an organisation's mandate and readiness to deliver houses to a typology and a timeline:

"The biggest thing is trying to work with those brick-and-mortar people to see what the community's actual vision is and help us make sure that the community voice is integrated into all of our project plans, whatever is coming up." (EPR)

Trade-offs in provision

Trade-offs were a constant feature of provider decision-making – with "one more house" often the pivot for trade-offs. In the words of a SASH interviewee, to fund an additional amenity, "there better be a damn good reason, or you could put another house there." Consequently, decision-making around delivery of placemaking opportunities was rigorously shaped by property characteristics, financial constraints, and CHRA regulations: "...it's just like how do you pull that off? With very limited staff members, no extra money sloshing around?" (Dwell Housing Trust).

Organisational priorities also influenced the trade-offs made. For example, sustainable building practices were a priority for ÖCHT, so a question asked was: one more house, or a higher environmental rating for other homes? Tensions arose for the urban regeneration programmes, between the longer-term infrastructure investment and tenants' more immediate priorities, like food security and Wi-Fi access. Sequencing investment was critical, because "until the infrastructure works are complete, we won't be able to deliver higher density that would enable us to deliver community spaces" (EPR) (Fig. 6). But so was "moving at the speed of [community] trust" (TRC), as moving ahead of trust risked losing the support and buy-in of a community. A mix of 'quick wins' for residents nested within longer-term infrastructural investment was seen as a necessary strategy.

"It's having the community help you prioritise. Obviously Bothamley Park, and infrastructure is our priority. The community didn't think it was broken. So even though it is broken, we need to fix it, it's disgusting. There's 40 tonnes of sewage going down there, but to them it wasn't broken. If we're going to do that kind of stuff, which is vital, we need to do it and people are happy we're doing it, we also need to look at the stuff that for other people their number one priority is food, Wi-Fi, services. You know what I mean. Making sure there is a balance, and they can see that we're aligning both outcomes together." (EPR)

Trade-offs also occurred when partner agency funding policies did not align with housing provider priorities. For example, TRC valued inclusion of pocket parks in developments to support placemaking and tenant wellbeing, whereas local government's long-term asset management policy was to maintain only larger parks, so a decision to provide pocket parks was inevitably a decision to continue owning and maintaining them – with an inevitable trade-off of investment foregone elsewhere.

Trade-offs between community goals and individual tenant needs were also implicit in the design of developments. This was well-illustrated around the location and provision of car parks. Should car parks be located peripheral to homes to create space for a communal green space, or adjacent to homes as tenants wanted to provide better security for their most valuable asset? Likewise, should fewer car parks be provided, to encourage a mode shift to public and active transport? What if doing so risked increasing tenant parking-related conflicts, and the transport burden experienced by less mobile tenants or those working night shifts at destinations not serviced by public transport? Tenants' lived experiences have much to contribute to decision-making

when design trade-offs like this are at stake.

Tenancy managers are frontline service providers and often have a critical role in placemaking and community resource provision. Some form of oversight, support, or watchful eye was generally seen as beneficial in developments, especially larger ones, to support tenants, help build connections between tenants, and manage any conflict. But such oversight is costly:

"...so we're losing out weeks' rental revenue to put that office in, but feedback and the presence of having someone on site again to reduce antisocial behaviour, finding out more what's going on in the complex. Trust and confidence in us has been... I mean, you literally can't put a price on it..." (TTM)

There is a cost trade-off. Alternatives for providing an on-site presence were mentioned; for example, providing free rent for students in return for "connecting people together and being aware of where things aren't going well" (ÖCHT), akin to a placemaking programme described by Yu et al. (2023) in a Taiwanese social housing complex. Splitting the compliance and landlord side of tenancy management from the wellbeing and sustaining tenancies side of the role was also advocated as an alternative way to increase wellbeing.

Discussion

Warm, dry, safe homes for tenants was an anchoring mission for housing providers interviewed, but enabling tenants to engage with worlds beyond their dwellings was also highly valued. To this end, placemaking initiatives and ambitions were common amongst all providers; to offer tenants ways to connect with others within their housing complexes and wider communities. Investing in placemaking tended to have dual goals of enhancing individual tenant wellbeing as well as strengthening community and a collective sense of place, as we know has been the case elsewhere (Chisholm et al., 2024; Ellery et al., 2021). Initiatives ranged in scope from a garden seat in a shared space, through support for community gardens or other activities, to interventions and engagement processes to transform aspects of the social, cultural, and environmental landscape of developments. The latter were most often a feature of urban regeneration programmes rather than CHPs (although there were exceptions, such as the Central Park Apartment case study site), in line with regeneration's broader remit, 20+ year timelines, and responsibilities across wider geographic areas. However, for all providers, the personnel and financial resources available, organisational values, and the regulatory regime within which they operated influenced the intent and scale of placemaking initiatives. Inevitably, aspirations were tethered to resource constraints and investment trade-offs.

Placemaking initiatives were not static. Questions around the desirable level of amenity and service to provide for tenants on-site, and/or how to make access available off-site, appeared to be under constant review. These questions were asked as new complexes were proposed and older ones maintained, with decision-making needing to take account of potential changes in the demographic mix of tenants, their needs and interests, the funding environment, economic conditions, locational factors, and for some, climate change. The successes, or otherwise, of an organisation's existing housing developments and placemaking practices were reference points for planning new developments, including provision of infrastructure and practices to support placemaking. As new amenities were planned in the urban regeneration programmes, tenants' views were sought using participatory engagement practices.

Uncertainty around funding was influential in providers' decision-making. At Kaitiakitanga Village, SASH appeared to have a stable delivery model for placemaking: housing clustered in a 'village', located close to Salvation Army amenities, services and volunteers, with an on-site tenancy manager and either an on-site community room or access close by to an Army corps hall. Plans were afoot for a second stage in the development to accommodate families and extended families, in part, as

a placemaking strategy to strengthen community. However, SASH, like other housing providers, relies on IRRS funding to deliver new dwellings and to negotiate access to the IRRS with the government agency involved (Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, 2024), proposed dwelling sizes need to match the needs of households on the Public Housing Register. When stage one on the Kaitiakitanga Village site was built, one- and two-bedroom dwellings aligned with housing needs. But needs change, therefore increasing the number of families in the development is not a *fait accompli*. And securing financial backing for more-than-dwelling related services is even more precarious as, without financial backing from a parent organisation, approval from MHUD and funding from grants, philanthropic or business sources are needed (Community Housing Regulatory Authority, 2024).

Thirty-nine percent of all public and community housing tenants are Māori, and tentative steps had been taken by all housing providers with the goal of increasing the wellbeing of Māori tenants. Practices such as naming and blessing buildings had become routine, and native planting and Māori symbols had been integrated into designs of recent developments; but the providers were quick to acknowledge these were early steps on a longer journey. The urban regeneration programmes had policies to increase Māori presence in decision-making and were doing so by developing relationships and partnering with *iwi*, recruiting *mana whenua* (those who hold traditional authority over a location) and/or people with lived experience of the neighbourhood as staff, and ensuring Māori membership on their governance bodies, with representation increasing over time.

While urban regeneration programmes were a few steps ahead of the CHPs in establishing partnerships with *iwi* and adopting practices to scaffold Māori tenants' sense of place and wellbeing – aided by strong Māori histories and leadership in the areas – still, they indicated many more steps were needed to secure the wellbeing of Māori tenants (Tamaki Regeneration Company, 2023). Indigenous scholars provide guidance on various ways to promote an Indigenous sense of place. These include participation in decision-making as of right; prioritising Indigenous processes, values and principles; as well as recognition and a heightened visibility of Indigenous histories and continued presence (Nejad et al., 2020; Thompson-Fawcett et al., 2019) – all strategies that can be adopted across the social, cultural, natural and built environments of place. If housing providers are to contribute to meeting the wellbeing indicators set out in the Whakawhanaungatanga Māori Wellbeing Model, placemaking interventions will be needed to nurture Māori tenants' relationships across all domains of place.

A history of colonisation has for many Māori meant displacement from traditional lands, and movement to urban areas where there is a “lack of visible Māori identity” (Puketapu-Dentice et al., 2017). And for public housing tenants who are *mana whenua* where they live, significant landmarks and customary names of places may have been destroyed or hidden from view, fracturing collective place-knowing (Jojola, 2024). The high number of Māori in public and community housing and experiencing economic deprivation is, in large part, a downstream outcome of disconnection from place. The need for housing provider support for Māori placemaking is particularly acute in regeneration areas where *whānau* connections have been disrupted by regeneration, and where tenants have been excluded by the decision-making process (Gordon et al., 2017; Social Services Committee, 2014; Stuart and Thompson-Fawcett, 2010; Waldegrave et al., 2013). This history shows that the actions of housing providers and urban regeneration programmes have the potential to further disrupt Māori tenants' connections to place, or redress past damage and better meet the wellbeing needs of their Māori tenants. Regeneration programmes with their broad remits are well-positioned to engage and resource Indigenous people to create environments that strengthen cultural connectivity and sense of belonging to people and place.

Integrating Indigenous design principles and customary practices into public housing developments signals a pathway forward to improve the wellbeing of Māori *whānau* and help redress spatial injustices

(Hoskins, 2008; Kiddle et al., 2023; Puketapu-Dentice et al., 2017; Penny et al., 2024). Crucial to this redress is partnering with Indigenous people with traditional authority over the land (Hoskins and Kake, 2013) and within the built environment, reinstating Indigenous place names “critical markers and repositories of traditional knowledge about events, people, history and relationships” (Matunga, 2013). However, calls to reclaim and re-Indigenise urban space by Māori scholars (Hoskins, 2008; Kiddle et al., 2023; Puketapu-Dentice et al., 2017; Raerino, 2024; Thompson-Fawcett et al., 2019) extend beyond the built environment and into relational spaces where upholding Māori values and cultural practices such as *manaakitanga* (care as a host/contribution) and *kaitiakitanga* (care as a guardian) will be crucial to tenant wellbeing. The Whakawhanaungatanga Māori Wellbeing Model (Penny et al., 2024) offers guidance on how Māori identity and wellbeing can be fostered and sustained within public housing.

This study has similar limitations to others on placemaking in public housing as identified by Chisholm et al. (2024) – a lack of longitudinal analysis. We gathered evidence of changing placemaking practices over time in Aotearoa, and in some settings, increasing recognition by providers that surfacing Indigenous histories and memories of place is important for wellbeing, but not of the effectiveness of placemaking or place-knowing in relation to the wellbeing of public housing tenants and their communities longitudinally.

Conclusions

A home is essential for wellbeing, but so are relationships with others and with place (Grimes et al., 2024). Community housing providers operate in an environment of high housing need and fiscal constraint. While fostering tenants' connections to people and place was valued and accepted by providers as a role they could and should play, doing so meant balancing competing priorities. The metric of building another home was weighed against advancing social and/or environmental outcomes: the individual wellbeing emanating from a warm dry home versus nurturing the collective wellbeing of tenants through placemaking. Providers varied in how they reconciled these competing aspirations. Strategies that entailed up-front capital expenditure, like selecting amenity-rich locations for developments, and designing shared spaces into developments, were costly but secured enduring placemaking opportunities for tenants, either on-site or nearby. Activities, occasions, and events were popular and lower cost options for nurturing connections, but rely on an available meeting venue, and often, funding from philanthropic or faith-based sources. Documenting and sharing the placemaking strategies of public and community housing, aligns with a goal of stimulating new placemaking opportunities as housing providers embark on new development or regeneration projects.

Tensions were also implicit in the way the urban regeneration programmes approached investment in infrastructure and placemaking. Like the community housing providers, they were juggling provision of houses with community resources, and individual versus community wellbeing. In addition, they were reconciling “the needs of now versus the needs of the future” and taking account of public housing tenants' needs alongside those of other residents in mixed-tenure developments. Simultaneously they were trying to advance the wellbeing needs, aspirations and placemaking opportunities of Māori and Pasifika tenants. Strategies to reinforce the latter included avoiding displacement, inscribing cultural references within the material landscape, and securing the housing futures and rights to the city of *whānau* with intergenerational connections to place (Lefebvre, 1991; Nejad et al., 2019). By acknowledging, and if necessary, reinstating significant cultural landmarks, providers recognized the importance of historical connections and memories of place to community wellbeing. In these settings partnerships with *iwi*, central and local government, a mandate to upgrade public space and other infrastructure, and long-term development trajectories were fundamental enablers of placemaking.

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CRedit authorship contribution statement

Karen Witten: Writing – original draft, Supervision, Methodology, Investigation, Formal analysis, Data curation, Conceptualization. **Cristal Victoria Olin:** Writing – review & editing, Methodology, Investigation, Formal analysis, Conceptualization. **Amber Logan:** Writing – review & editing, Methodology, Conceptualization. **Elinor Chisholm:** Writing – review & editing, Methodology, Conceptualization. **Edward Randal:** Writing – review & editing, Methodology, Conceptualization. **Philippa Howden-Chapman:** Writing – review & editing, Funding acquisition. **Lori Leigh:** Writing – review & editing, Validation.

Declaration of competing interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper. The author PLHC declares the following professional association with Kainga Ora-Homes and Communities which may be considered a potential competing interest: PLHC is a past-board member of Kainga Ora-Homes and Communities and chaired the Urban Development and Planning Committee. The research was not funded by this agency, and she was not involved in data collection or analysis.

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