



APPENDIX 1 - KEY CONCEPTS

Health

In 1948 the World Health Organisation defined health as a state of complete physical, social and mental wellbeing, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. The 1986 Ottawa Charter lists the prerequisites of health as peace, shelter, education, food, income, a stable ecosystem, sustainable resources, social justice and equity. These definitions are commonly used in New Zealand.

Despite these holistic understandings, almost all the literature reviewed concentrated only on the physical and, less often, mental health effects of housing on individuals. They did not question the nuclear-family design of houses.

Common models of Maori health go beyond individual physical health to include whanau health as well as spiritual, mental and physical health. “To be a total person ... in one’s own right is from a Maori perspective to be in an unhealthy state.”²²³

For many Pacific people, illness is seen as directly related to the disruption of a kin-based social order, and both the cause and the cure are sought in the realm of the family.

“Consequently, Samoan and Cook Islands people seek to ameliorate the ill health linked with living in New Zealand by attempting to maintain good family relationships over long distances. They do this by sending money, food and clothing ‘back home’, by attending family occasions in the Islands, and by hosting family members in New Zealand.”²²⁴

These concepts of health make housing that isolates Maori and Pacific people from their whanau or wider family less likely to contribute to their wellbeing.

House

Housing policy assumes that a house is a building which can be rented or bought to accommodate a family or as a money-earning investment. When the family changes or moves, the house can be sold.

One Maori study said that an essential role of all houses was to support the “continued collectivity of whanau, hapu and iwi, and their ability to sustain a cul-

“These concepts of health make housing which isolates Maori and Pacific people from their whanau or wider family less likely to contribute to their wellbeing.”

ture”.²²⁵ This study supported collective home ownership as a model for Maori, as individual home ownership reduces whanau strength and creates dependency on the state.

Household

New Zealand laws and policies about housing have assumed that households are independent economic units and families are made up of only parents and children. This is often not true for Maori and Pacific families, and may not be the case for many other families.

Modern whanau are responsible for -

- The organisation of “gatherings to mark important events in the lives of individual members or the whole whanau”, the most important of which are tangihanga (funerals).²²⁶
- The management and care of group property, such as marae, whakapapa or family history, and taonga or heirlooms.
- The support of individual members and parent-child families.

“One of the values associated with the whanau is that one’s home should be open to one’s kin. Having people to stay, often for long periods, is part of life.”²²⁷

Maori households often view contributions to tangihanga and other whanau obligations as calls on their income which come before household bills. Maori households are therefore not always independent economic units, but part of the wider whanau economy.

Pacific households usually have extensive obligations to their church and the extended family around New Zealand and in their country of origin. Their economy may be based on the extended family rather than the household. Money earned by members of a household is often a resource for the extended family. How it is spent may be decided by a senior family member who does not live in the household.²²⁸

In the mid-1990s, Pacific peoples were the most likely of the main ethnic groups to live in extended families, often of three generations.²²⁹

Home

Emergency house clients in Auckland in 1998 said five things turned a house into a home -

- Having a secure tenancy or ownership
- Being able to personalise it
- Being able to offer hospitality
- Being able to set the rules
- Being able to choose where to live.²³⁰



Older people see “home” as a place of security and refuge, where they can retain control over their lives and remain independent.²³¹

For Maori people, home usually has additional meanings, expressed as *turanga-waewae* – “a place to stand from which one can whakapapa back to the land”.²³² Depending on tribal affiliation, Maori people may have more than one *turangawae-wae*.

In this sense, home is a place which must be maintained for future generations. “The individual basis of ownership, the capital investment and the realisable asset that can be sold when no longer required, represents almost the direct opposite of [this] Maori concept of home.”²³³



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NOTES

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ABBREVIATIONS

- AS - Accommodation Supplement
- BERL - Business and Economic Research Ltd
- BRANZ - Building Research Association of New Zealand
- CHR - Centre for Housing Research/Kainga Tipu
- CNOS - Canadian National Occupancy Standard
- CPAG - Child Poverty Action Group
- DHB - District Health Board
- EECA - Energy Efficiency Conservation Authority
- GP - General practitioner, family doctor
- HEEP - Household Energy End-Use Project, BRANZ
- HNZC - Housing New Zealand Corporation
- ICESCR - International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
- NGO - Non-Government organisation
- OECD - Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
- WHO - World Health Organisation



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- ²²⁹ **Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs**, *Scoping Report on Status of Housing for Pacific People*, p 13.
- ²³⁰ **Lynch**, *Healthful Housing*, p 22.
- ²³¹ **CHR**, *Accommodation Options for Older People in Aotearoa/New Zealand*.
- ²³² **Maori Women’s Housing Project**, *For the Sake of Decent Shelter*, p 15.
- ²³³ *Ibid*, p 17.



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