



Housing and Sustainable Development Policy

Vision

The Green Party envisions a New Zealand in which:

- Everyone has access to a warm, dry, affordable and secure home that supports their wellbeing and enables them to be part of a connected community.
- Housing is recognised primarily as a social good and a basic right
- Our built environment is designed and constructed to interact positively with the natural world.
- Historic, cultural and natural heritage is cherished and protected.
- A collaborative and intergenerational approach to urban development is standard, including local and central government, communities, particularly mana whenua, that enables diverse communities to evolve.
- Cities and towns have a strong and thriving heart linked to a resilient web of community neighbourhoods, each with their own identity.

Key Principles

1. Housing is a social good and a basic right; all people should have access to secure, affordable, good quality housing.
2. Iwi and hapū land and culturally appropriate development rights under Te Tiriti o Waitangi must be recognised and supported by both local and central Government.
3. Urban and rural planning processes should be centred around the development of sustainable and inclusive communities
4. New housing developments should meet the diverse needs of the community and support local employment, recreation and educational opportunities, alongside high-quality public transport options, so that people can live, work and play locally.

5. New public housing should exemplify sustainable development and ensure sufficient housing for all.
6. Design, construction, maintenance, refurbishment and operation of the built environment should be undertaken to minimise lifecycle energy, emissions, water, resource use, and other environmental impacts.
7. Non-residential development (e.g. commercial, industrial, recreational) should be designed and constructed to be compatible with adjacent residential and natural areas and enhance the wellbeing of the community.
8. Natural hazard risks, including those worsened by climate change, should be avoided and mitigated as far as practicable through appropriate planning and construction techniques.

Specific Policy Points

1 Recognising Te Tiriti o Waitangi

Tangata whenua should have the right to live in their ancestral districts. Multiple land ownership still presents a major barrier to home ownership, particularly due to reduced availability of finance. Moreover, the Green Party recognises that under Te Tiriti o Waitangi the Crown has committed to work in partnership with Māori to uphold rangatiratanga by finding solutions to Māori housing needs.

Policy Positions

- 1.1. Ensure that tangata whenua have support from central and local government, to exercise their right to develop their own housing solutions, in both urban and rural areas.
- 1.2. Provide resources to enable hapū, iwi and other Māori organisations to lead the development of housing on communally owned land; including papakainga.
- 1.3. Support papakainga and local iwi and hapū third sector¹ housing, including provision of finance for housing on Māori land.
- 1.4. Ensure that any development on Crown Land takes account of iwi and hapū interests in and aspirations for that land by working in partnership with iwi and hapū to ensure Tiriti obligations are upheld.

1 *Third sector housing* – Housing provided by non-governmental organisations, as separate from that provided by central or local government or the private sector.

2 Sustainable Urban Development

The design of our towns and cities affects how we live, work and play. With smarter urban planning and building practices we can improve the liveability of our communities for all New Zealanders.

Building location, design, processes and materials have a major impact on the environment, on our transport options, and on our health and quality of life.

The population of Aotearoa New Zealand is growing, many of our cities and towns are facing infrastructure pressures, and significant investment is needed to respond effectively to climate change. How we plan for, design and carry out the necessary urban development will impact the wellbeing of Aotearoa New Zealand for generations to come.

A. Building Sustainable Cities and Towns

- 2.1. Strengthen the role of the government to facilitate sustainable communities, including through:
 - a) Developing a robust and comprehensive National Policy Statement on sustainable urban design.
 - b) Commissioning research, analysis, advice and reporting on the effects of central government policy on progress towards sustainable communities.
 - c) Providing technical assistance to local authorities on the development of sustainable cities and towns.
 - d) Developing national standards on climate change adaptation, such as managed retreat, for use by local government when planning development in both urban and rural areas (e.g. in floodplains and coastal areas).
- 2.2. Require an intergenerational resilience perspective to be taken on new developments by considering predicted changes to our climate and other local and global systems
- 2.3. Prioritise the redevelopment or refurbishment of previously developed land and enable sustainable intensification of urban areas (e.g. by supporting local government to upgrade infrastructure)
- 2.4. Safeguard high quality horticultural and agricultural land and elite soils, particularly that bordering urban areas, from intensive development (see our [Agriculture and Rural Affairs](#) policy)
- 2.5. Ensure an ecosystem approach is taken to urban development to minimise adverse impacts on our environment, including water catchments (see our [Environmental Protection](#) policy)

- 2.6. Ensure that urban development minimises car use and increases opportunities for active modes and public transport (see our [Transport](#) policy).
- 2.7. Work with Māori, local government, conservation organisations, and the community to protect, conserve and restore natural ecosystems in or near urban areas (see our [Conservation](#) policy).
- 2.8. Strengthen protection for historic heritage in urban areas and encourage greater awareness of the positive role of heritage in creating a durable urban identity. (see our [Arts, Culture and Heritage](#) policy).

B. Sustainable Buildings

The Green Party believes it is vital for the Government to play a role in setting standards and promoting sustainable building design and construction.

Policy Positions

- 2.9. Develop a sustainable building strategy, which provides guidance and sets standards for building materials and performance based on life cycle analysis.
- 2.10. Work collaboratively, with affected parties such as iwi, community and disability organisations, Civil Defence and the building industry, to revise the New Zealand Building Code to ensure that developers contribute to more inclusive, socially and ecologically responsible urban development. The code should support best practice accessibility and universal design standards for new buildings, and high minimum standards for sustainable material use and energy performance for new buildings, and ensuring the building industry are trained to apply these standards.
- 2.11. Work collaboratively with local government and industry stakeholders to reverse the trend towards larger homes, and to ensure that covenants do not preclude the building of small or prefabricated homes, or use of low impact construction methods.
- 2.12. Provide education on and promotion of sustainable building practices, including training for architects and builders, demonstration projects, and information targeted at home buyers.
- 2.13. Ensure building work carried out by central and local government sets a high standard for others to follow, creating sustainable, intelligent, people-oriented and climate-friendly buildings."
- 2.14. Support the development of community design centres to provide design and engineering advice.

- 2.15. Support and expand programmes to make existing buildings more energy and water efficient.
- 2.16. Encourage the installation of solar panels on commercial and residential buildings, especially those currently using fossil fuels for energy (see our [Energy](#) policy).

C. Ensuring Community Participation in Local Decision-making

Decisions about building and housing development ought to involve the meaningful participation of the local community. Community involvement can improve social cohesion, and ensure a commitment to sustainability.

Policy Positions

- 2.17. Support the formation of regional building and housing forums with representatives from community based, housing, and disability organisations, local government, private sector, building industry, consumer groups, and tenants' groups as a means of jointly developing, implementing and monitoring building policy at the local level.
- 2.18. Provide for community consultation in the planning and design building of new housing developments.

3 Housing as a Public Good and Basic Right

A. Ensuring Housing Affordability

Aotearoa New Zealand has relatively unaffordable housing, compared to other industrialised countries. The Green Party believes that all people should be able to live in appropriate and sustainable housing for a cost of no more than 30% of their income unless they freely choose otherwise. To make housing affordable, the growing gap between incomes and house prices, and both the demand and the supply side of housing, must be addressed.

Policy Positions

- 3.1. Introduce measures to fairly tax housing and land wealth, such as a capital gains tax on all but the family home, to restrain house prices by limiting speculative investment in property (see our [Economic](#) policy).
- 3.2. Limit residential land sales to New Zealand citizens and permanent residents (see our [Trade and Foreign Investment](#) policy).
- 3.3. Identify ways to lower the costs of house construction in New Zealand. Building costs in New Zealand have increased markedly, due to increases in

the price of materials, changes in building specifications, and increased compliance costs.

- 3.4. Work with the building industry to improve productivity in the building sector.
- 3.5. Enable households to save a deposit, and to obtain and service a mortgage, by:
 - a) Legislating to increase relevant rates of income for all low income New Zealanders including through annual adjustments in the minimum wage and a universal child payment (see our [Workforce](#) and [Children's](#) policies).
 - b) Changing income support systems so that savings towards a home mortgage deposit are not treated as assets for benefit abatement (see our [Income Support](#) policy).
 - c) Increasing the availability of low interest finance for households seeking home ownership, including through shared equity and supported savings.

B. Regulating Private Renting

The Green Party believes that renters should have access to affordable and secure rental accommodation that meets their housing needs.

Policy Positions

- 3.6. Legislate to ensure secure and affordable long-term rental accommodation (e.g. ending no-cause terminations, prohibiting rental bidding, and regulating rental increases).
- 3.7. Support independent tenancy support services, and ensure Government provides accessible information about the rights and responsibilities of tenants.
- 3.8. Ensure legislation provides fairness and clear processes for both tenants and landlords.
- 3.9. Introduce a 'Warrant of Fitness' scheme for residential rental properties that includes insulation, clean heating, weather-tightness, energy efficiency and basic service standards.
- 3.10. Provide sufficient resourcing for Government enforcement of rental standards and ensure that the Tenancy Tribunal can deliver fair processes for both tenants and landlords.

C. Providing Social Housing

The Green Party believes that central and local government must ensure that all New Zealanders have adequate housing. Social housing, which includes state housing, local government housing, and community sector housing, can provide sufficient secure and affordable rental accommodation to large numbers of people.

Policy Positions

- 3.11. Ensure that Kāinga Ora – Homes and Communities has resources to increase its rate of acquisition and building of public houses to meet current and projected need, as well as maintaining and upgrading existing houses.
- 3.12. Require Kāinga Ora – Homes and Communities to fulfil its responsibilities as a landlord to both its tenants and their neighbours.
- 3.13. Ensure that new public housing is designed in collaboration with local communities, uses universal design principles and sustainable and intelligent building practices, and is integrated sensitively within the community near facilities and services that meet the needs of whānau/families.
- 3.14. Manage local authority land holdings to maintain an adequate supply of land for government, local government and third sector housing.
- 3.15. Encourage local government to rebuild their public housing stock and provide local solutions to social housing demand.
- 3.16. Establish a cap on rents at 25% of income for low income social housing tenants.
- 3.17. Establish 'community houses' in larger social housing developments to provide a facility for community and social services.
- 3.18. Give priority for social housing to people who are living in extremely substandard or overcrowded accommodation and those at high risk of extremely poor outcomes from a lack of sufficient housing.
- 3.19. Create purpose-built, rent-assisted living units for older people in all areas (including rural) so that ageing at home becomes a viable reality.

D. Expanding the Third (Community Housing) Sector

Community-based housing can provide flexibility and mix of housing options to better meet the needs of our diverse society. Third sector organisations act in a way that benefits the physical environment and helps to build stronger communities.

Policy Positions

- 3.20. Create a legislative and regulatory environment that actively encourages third sector involvement in the provision of diverse, secure and affordable housing, particularly in areas of high need.
- 3.21. Provide funding to assist third sector housing organisations.
- 3.22. Ensure that community based housing organisations that obtain government funding have robust allocation criteria and procedures, housing quality (including environmental and social sustainability), and rental and affordability policies.
- 3.23. Ensure urban planning provides for not-for-profit retirement villages and rest homes within reach of public spaces and facilities (including community gardens and natural areas), to provide alternatives to the 'branded' rest homes.
- 3.24. Remove legal and institutional barriers to the development of a range of affordable and appropriate housing tenures and styles (e.g. community land trusts, co-operative housing, eco-villages, self-built housing, sweat equity housing, shared housing ownership, tiny homes, and papakainga housing).
- 3.25. Review and address legal and financing barriers to diverse models of non-profit housing provision

E. Supported Housing for Those in Need

Our society needs safe accommodation and support for its most vulnerable members, for instance those experiencing mental illness, disabled people, victims of domestic violence, and the homeless. People will at times need safe places to go to and may not be in a position to pay.

Policy Positions

- 3.26. Work with local authorities, NGOs, social health and housing agencies, and community groups to provide specialised housing that meets particular needs.
- 3.27. Provide matched funding for local authorities that take active measures to support social housing or low income retrofitting programmes.
- 3.28. Work with local authorities to require financial contributions for large developments to help build affordable housing for low income households.
- 3.29. Urgently address the current shortfall of secure, affordable and appropriate housing and support where there is severe, systemic shortfall, such as those living with, and recovering from, mental illness and addictions, and those recently released from prison.

F. Addressing Homelessness

Homelessness in urban, provincial and rural New Zealand is a much larger problem than is commonly acknowledged. In most cases, affected people experience disconnection from their whānau, hapū and/or iwi (social supports, friends and family).

Policy Positions

- 3.30. Regularly monitor and report on homelessness statistics, issues and trends.
- 3.31. Ensure that Government agencies work together to adopt best practice in working with and supporting homeless people in New Zealand, including linking with relevant areas of the third sector.
- 3.32. Increase resourcing for programmes which prioritise providing housing for those living homeless, such as Housing First.
- 3.33. Work to address the complex root causes of homelessness through a range of policies (see our [Economic](#), [Health](#), and [Income Support](#) policies, for example)

4 Housing as Key Infrastructure

As housing needs change over time, it is crucial that housing policy and provision is based on the latest and best possible information and is recognised as part of the nation's key infrastructure.

Policy Positions

- 4.1. Make use of existing surveys based on census information and demographic statistics to establish and maintain an overview of housing need.
- 4.2. Carry out further research at the local and regional levels, including a national housing needs assessment for every district at least once every five years.
- 4.3. Support the provision and maintenance of rural housing in areas of special need.
- 4.4. Include housing in the National Infrastructure Development Plan.

5 Strengthening the Housing Workforce

Policy Positions

- 5.1. Ensure an adequate number and quality of trained builders and other trades and craftspeople in the building industry (see our [Workforce](#) policy).

- 5.2. Develop on-the-job apprenticeships and training programmes within *Kāinga Ora – Homes and Communities*.
- 5.3. Link the expansion of *Kāinga Ora – Homes and Communities'* building and acquisition programmes to local employment and apprenticeship schemes.

6 Addressing Home Building Defects

Over recent decades New Zealand has seen a significant increase in home building defects and, in particular, water tight problems. The Supreme Court, Law Commission and Local Government New Zealand have all recommended that this situation be addressed by a government backed insurance scheme covering latent defects in homes. To address this situation the Green Party will investigate:

- 6.1. Establishing a government home-building insurance scheme to provide cover for homeowners in instances where the builder fails to rectify defects.
- 6.2. Creating a statutory tribunal to hear and make decisions on building disputes.