

16 October 2018

To: Environment and Community Committee, Auckland Council

cc: Sophie Heighway, Sustainability Initiatives Manager, Infrastructure and Environmental Services

From: Māngere-Ōtāhuhu Local Board

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**Subject:** Feedback on the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment's *Healthy Homes Standards* discussion document

The Māngere-Ōtāhuhu Local Board provides the following comments and feedback to the discussion document:

### General feedback

1. The health and wellbeing of local communities is of priority to the Māngere-Ōtāhuhu Local Board as stated in the board's Local Board Plan (2017) outcome, "A place where everyone thrives and belongs". The board notes the significant negative impact of cold and damp homes on local communities in Māngere-Ōtāhuhu, where more than 50 per cent of people are living in rental accommodation. The detrimental effects of substandard housing put local communities at high risk of negative social outcomes. The demographic make-up of Māngere-Ōtāhuhu area is predominantly Pacific (60 per cent) and Māori (16 per cent). Further, 45 per cent of the local population are under 24 years of age. Our communities are at high risk of poor health and wellbeing. The opportunities of improving and advancing the vulnerable tamariki (children) and families are compromised. They are living with the combined effects of low-income, employment and low home ownership.
2. The board supports the overall purpose, intent and outcomes of the discussion document. It notes that the document presents five standards for feedback - for the areas of heating, insulation, ventilation, draught-stopping and moisture ingress and drainage.
3. It supports all measures to address rental properties which have poor insulation, inadequate heating drainage and ventilation, moisture ingress or poor draught stopping.
4. The board supports, in principle, the submission from Auckland Council on the Healthy Homes Standards.

### Specific feedback

#### 1. Heating:

- The board recommends option two, that landlord must provide heating in living room and bedrooms. Housing affordability is a huge challenge for local communities. Local communities, made up of Māori and Pacific peoples have larger families and are frequently living in overcrowded conditions. Tenants with access to heating in bedrooms would especially benefit, particularly children and elderly and those with disabilities or illnesses that spend a large amount of time in the bedroom.
- Heating devices – option one, board support option one to achieve an indoor temperature of at least 18°C

#### 2. Insulation:

The board recommends option three, requiring rental properties to have the same level of insulation as houses built in New Zealand since 2008. The board is of the view that a fair and reasonable balance is needed to ensure rentals are suitably insulated, and costs incurred are

on landlord / property owners. The board agrees that landlords should show compliance with the insulation standard by retaining particular records, and all records be submitted to Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) to ensure compliancy.

3. The board is of the view that essential standards of requirements must be included for addressing **ventilation, moisture ingress, drainage and draught stopping** for rental accommodation.
  - Recommends option three and require landlords to provide extractor fans in both rooms used for cooking and bathing

#### **4. Implementation and enforcement of Healthy Homes standards**

The board is of the view that a single compliance date of July 2022 for all landlords to meet all standards is the preferred approach. This would give landlords four years to meet the standards while ensuring tenants experience health benefits sooner.

The board notes its concern that in the absence of active enforcement the standards will not be effective. The Māngere-Ōtāhuhu Local Board supports council's draft submission that the enforcement powers of central or local government are strengthened to ensure that healthy homes standards are met by all landlords in a timely fashion. The discussion document does not cover options for meeting the burden of funding enforcement. Central government has a At present these are not the responsibility of local government and local boards.

#### **5. Other comments:**

The local board supports Auckland Council's draft submission on information storage and a system of 'Warrant of Fitness' to record quality of rental properties. This would allow for a clear source of information on standards of a property for prospective tenants.

The board continues to advocate on the need for closer and frequent monitoring of quality of boarding houses. Recent pilot studies show very poor, substandard quality of boarding houses in the local area. Applying a 'Warrant of Fitness' approach to ensure oversight of healthy homes standards is strongly recommended.

The board recommends that along with legislative measures, public education, incentives and local targeted programmes have the potential to influence behaviour change. The Māngere-Ōtāhuhu Local Board has funded from its local budget the 'Healthy Rentals' programme to advice and educate tenants on home insulation. With greater public awareness about standards the demand may increase. A more strategic approach with additional central government funding is called for to ensure effective implementation.

Walter Togramua  
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Māngere-Ōtāhuhu Local Board