

Energy Hardship Expert Panel – Letter from the Chair

June 2023

Tēnā koutou katoa

We're just a couple of weeks away from submitting our final report that outlines our proposed strategies for government to reduce energy hardship. And so it's a good time to reflect on the Panel's work and express our appreciation for those who contributed and shared their knowledge and views.



Helen Leahy, Kay Brereton, Dr Amanda-Lanuola, Kevin England and I were appointed to the Energy Hardship Expert Panel in September 2021. Our term ends 30 June 2023 with our final report being submitted to the Energy and Resources Minister.

The Panel's mandate was to consider and recommend policy priorities and actions to alleviate energy hardship in Aotearoa.

Our mahi began amid a busy period. We were in the middle of the Covid-19 pandemic, and there were many groups and organisations already working with people in energy hardship. We experienced the borders reopening, cyclones, other weather events and the costs of basic living rising.

As an independent panel, we spent time understanding the landscape and specific factors contributing to energy hardship in Aotearoa and grouped the issues and possible strategies into several kete. We've been busy meeting with people at every stage of our work.

We connected with people across the country both in person and online. We've spoken with iwi Māori organisations and community groups who are working directly with people. We've spoken with the energy sector, businesses and community groups, attended conferences and heard from experts in energy hardship.

Most importantly, we listened to the voices of people experiencing energy hardship and we are so grateful for their bravery, fortitude and honesty.

As a result of this mahi, we released a discussion paper, which formed the basis of wider engagement, and our final report will be completed soon. While energy hardship is comprehensive and complex, we have worked fiercely to uphold the integrity of the range of voices we have heard, and we will be looking forward to see what change occurs as a result of this work.

This experience has been thoroughly challenging for each of us; the issues have been complex and often inter-connected with other social determinants of change. We thank you for your passionate and well-considered contribution and support since we began our work nearly two years ago.

Ngā mihi nui

Keri Brown

Energy Hardship Expert Panel Chair

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Left to right: Kevin Angland, Kay Brereton, Keri Brown (Chair), Helen Leahy, Dr Amanda-Lanuola Dunlop.