Te Hotonga Hapori

—— connecting communities ——

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- A research programme to enhance wellbeing in Aotearoa New Zealand -

AUT

Te Hotonga Hapori – Connecting Communities

Te Hotonga Hapori – Connecting Communities is a five-year research programme focused on understanding the relationship between urban redevelopment and community wellbeing.

Te Hotonga Hapori provides a unique opportunity to integrate wellbeing research into the planning and execution of urban redevelopment projects across Aotearoa. By prioritising outcomes that enhance community wellbeing, the programme aims to benefit communities throughout New Zealand and offer insights with global relevance. While the research focuses on housing and urban redevelopment in four Auckland communities, we believe the findings are applicable to redevelopment projects nationwide.

The programme comprises five interconnected projects, each contributing toward core objectives:

- To ensure that the stories, histories, and experiences that matter to communities are heard by those involved in designing and building neighbourhoods.

- To understand how people's movement and time use affect their daily wellbeing amid urban redevelopment.

- To examine the influence of contemporary home design on individual and whānau wellbeing.

- To evaluate the impact of urban redevelopment on the wellbeing of Kāinga Ora tenancy customers across New Zealand.

- To track population wellbeing indicators using anonymised, linked data from administrative and survey sources.

Our Funding

Te Hotonga Hapori is funded by an Endeavour Programme Grant from the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE). The Endeavour Fund supports excellent research with the potential to positively transform New Zealand's economy, environment and society. The fund uses an open, contestable mechanism to select excellent research proposals that will provide the highest potential impacts across a range of economic, environmental, and social objectives.

Your Role

Your participation in this roadshow is invaluable as we aim to integrate our findings into actionable guidelines, practices, and policies for fostering healthier and more connected communities across Aotearoa New Zealand. Together, let's ensure insights gathered over the five-year research programme are put to use to enhance the wellbeing of our communities and whānau.

Community Wellbeing and Lived Experiences

Project Objective: *To ensure the stories, histories and experiences people value within their communities are heard by those who design and build neighbourhoods.*

Lead Researchers: *Professor Erica Hinckson (AUT), Dr Vivienne Ivory (WSP)*

What is the purpose of this research project?

Community Wellbeing and Lived Experiences partners with communities to empower change in their neighbourhood. It is our first step towards understanding what, where, and how to invest in places for resident wellbeing.

What information did we collect?

The Community Science Aotearoa process gathered data from:

- *Community workshops – prioritised neighbourhood needs, issues, & aspirations*
- *Discovery walk data – spatially located images, wellbeing ratings, narratives, collective efficacy*
- *Advocacy presentations – residents empowered to connect with stakeholders for solutions and actions*
- *Stakeholder Wānanga - who attended, reflections, interpretations of initial data analysis; implications for redevelopment practices*

What have we learnt so far?

Emerging findings to date indicate;

- *Residents need and value local community amenities*
- *Residents expect that housing redevelopment will improve neighbourhoods beyond providing more housing*
- *The ability to move around their neighbourhood comfortably and safely was valued by residents but often hindered by poor or inadequate infrastructure*
- *Stakeholders and decision-makers value locally-generated scientific evidence – beyond anecdote*
- *While residents are optimistic for the future, living in areas with extensive redevelopment process underway is hard on those remaining*
- *The ability to move around their neighbourhood comfortably and safely was valued by residents but often hindered by poor or inadequate infrastructure*

What comes next?

Step 6 **Capture the ripple effects of advocacy [ongoing]**

Key questions to be answered through publications

- *How can residents be supported to continue advocating for their neighbourhood during and after redevelopment ?*
- *What amenities and environmental features are needed as part of redevelopment to support residents' wellbeing as an outcome of redevelopment?*
- *Could / should we scale up community advocacy process into redevelopment plans?*

Building Wellbeing in Your Community

Project Objective: To understand how people's use of time and the places they move through impacts their daily wellbeing in the context of major urban redevelopment.

Lead Researchers: : Professor Scott Duncan (AUT), Associate Professor Tom Stewart (AUT), Dr Conal Smith (Kōtātā Insight), Dr Anantha Narayanan (AUT)

What is the purpose of this research project?

Building Wellbeing in Your Community explores how urban redevelopment impacts people's movement patterns and overall wellbeing. By using innovative technologies, the project aims to gain deeper insights into how people's time use—especially their movement within and interaction with their local environment—affects their wellbeing. This research can inform urban planning and redevelopment strategies that better support healthy and thriving communities.

What information did we collect?

The following data were collected over a 7-day period and repeated 12 months later;

- Subjective wellbeing - Te Hotonga Hapori wellbeing survey
- Ecological Momentary Wellbeing (EMA) – Te Hotonga Hapori wellbeing app
- Physical activity information – wrist worn accelerometer
- Movement around the neighbourhood – waist worn GPS unit

What have we learnt so far?

Emerging findings from Phase 1 indicate that;

- Physical activity and sleep patterns were associated with momentary wellbeing
  - More sedentary time was associated with higher anxiousness and lower happiness
  - More physical activity was associated with higher happiness and lower tiredness
- Momentary wellbeing varied by social context (who people were with) and by activity (i.e., work, traveling).
- Features of the urban environment affect people's experienced wellbeing in meaningful ways and that we can quantify this impact. Preliminary results suggest that:
  - Experienced happiness was higher in open spaces, sport settings, and neighbourhood centres
  - Experienced happiness was lower in business zones and on transport routes

What comes next?

- Phase 2 data collection completed (April 2025)
- Comparison between phases during development
- Exploring our data with more detailed maps of the urban area
- A Key Findings report for our participants
- Dissemination of wellbeing outcomes insights to stakeholders e.g. presentations, roadshow events, and smaller focused discussions
- Publications

Building for Wellbeing

Project Objective: : To explore how the condition of homes and neighbourhood redevelopment affects individual and whānau wellbeing.

Lead Researchers: Dr Casimir MacGregor, Principal Social Scientist (BRANZ), Suzanne Jones, Research Scientist (BRANZ), Amy Knight, Social Scientist (BRANZ)

Contact: buildingforwellbeing@branz.co.nz

What is the purpose of this research project?

Building for Wellbeing examines how people's wellbeing is connected to the physical condition of their home and ongoing urban development in their immediate neighbourhood. The research will provide insights into the impact of urban development especially how construction companies, developers and local government can lessen the impact of their activities on communities and ensure urban redevelopment is done in a way that prioritises community and individual wellbeing.

What information did we collect?

Participants contribute data in two ways for this project:

Occupant Wellbeing Survey: This self-completed survey gathers residents' insights on how their home environment impacts their overall wellbeing. It includes questions on maintaining a warm, healthy home and captures specific behaviours related to home upkeep. Additionally, the survey asks about the perceived impacts of nearby urban redevelopment, providing valuable insights into how changes in the neighbourhood influence residents' experiences and quality of life.

House Condition Survey: A visual audit that records details such as the building materials used, ventilation, and weather tightness. This data helps assess the quality and condition of the living environment.

The Building for Wellbeing study uses a similar survey design and methodology to the BRANZ 2018/19 Pilot Housing Survey (PHS), and other BRANZ House Condition Surveys. This allows us to draw comparisons between PHS house condition data, the General Social Survey wellbeing data, and our own research findings.

What have we learnt so far?

We are currently recruiting participants and collecting data, with a positive response so far. We aim to complete data collection by March 2025, while data collation and analysis are ongoing.

What comes next?

- Release of a summary report for our participants in mid-2025
- Analysis of both Occupant Wellbeing and House Condition survey data will continue throughout 2025. We will look at, among other things, relationships between wellbeing and house condition variables, comparisons with findings from the other Te Hotonga Hapori projects, and comparisons with other BRANZ house condition surveys
- Dissemination of wellbeing outcomes insights to stakeholders e.g. presentations, roadshow events, and smaller focused discussions
- Guidance on best practice urban regeneration (with AUT and Kāinga Ora)
- Industry resource for the construction sector to assist with enhancing wellbeing by reducing their impact on the community
- A wellbeing design guide for architectural designers and architects
- Other publications through to early 2026

Wellbeing in Kāinga Ora Communities

Project Objective: *To evaluate the impact of urban redevelopment on the personal wellbeing of Kāinga Ora tenancy customers across Aotearoa New Zealand.*

Lead Researchers: *Dr Conal Smith (Kōtāta Insight), Associate Professor Lisa Mackay (AUT)*

What is the purpose of this research project?

Wellbeing in Kāinga Ora Communities *evaluates the wellbeing of Kāinga Ora tenancy customers across Aotearoa New Zealand and examines the impact of their living environment on their wellbeing, particularly in communities undergoing significant housing redevelopment.*

What information did we collect?

Specifically developed for the Te Hotonga Hapori programme, the Survey includes up to four wellbeing measures for each domain of Treasury's Living Standard Framework, some additional community wellbeing outcome indicators, along with core demographic measures. Once the survey concepts were identified, candidate measures were identified from relevant national questionnaires, such as Te Kupenga, the General Social Survey, the NZ Health Survey, and the Census.

What have we learnt so far?

We looked at how Kāinga Ora tenancy customers are doing across the 12 wellbeing domains of the Living Standards Framework (LSF) from the perspective of multi-dimensional poverty:

- *There are large differences in the proportion of Kāinga Ora tenancy customers with poor outcomes across the different LSF domains ranging from 8% in the leisure and play to 80% in the income consumption and wealth domain*
- *Just over two thirds of our sample (68%) experienced multi-dimensional disadvantage*
- *Multi-dimensional disadvantage was highest between the ages of 25 and 54 (73% to 74%) and lowest for those under 25 (65%) and 65 or older (51%)*

We looked at how neighbourhood characteristics were associated with multi-dimensional disadvantage and found that:

- *Neighbourhood characteristics including a sense of community, suitable outdoor spaces, and a neighbourhood that was pleasant to walk in are associated with lower levels of multi-dimensional poverty as is satisfactory access to public transport*
- *Length of time lived in the neighbourhood and characteristics of the person's dwelling had no significant association with multi-dimensional poverty*

What comes next?

- *Analysis of survey data will continue, examining temporal changes over the three years, and relationships between wellbeing variables*
- *A Key Findings report for our participants*
- *Dissemination of wellbeing outcomes insights to stakeholders e.g. presentations, roadshow events, and smaller focused discussions*
- *Publications*

Tracking Indicators of National Wellbeing

Project Objective: To track indicators of population wellbeing using anonymised linked administrative and survey data.

Lead Researchers: : Professor Gail Pacheco (AUT), Dr Lisa Meehan (AUT), Dr Thomas Schober (AUT)

What is the purpose of this research project?

What is the impact of urban regeneration on wellbeing? This research analyses various wellbeing outcome indicators for individuals and communities living in areas undergoing urban regeneration. These indicators include educational attainment, employment, earnings, benefit receipt, health, crime and safety. The insights gained will help to better understand how these factors influence overall wellbeing and inform housing policies to improve community outcomes.

What data did we use?

We used data from Stats NZ's Integrated Data Infrastructure (IDI) to track population wellbeing trends over time. This anonymised linked data allows us to identify individuals living in areas where Kāinga Ora developments are taking place and measure the outcomes of these individuals and communities using population-wide information from a variety of administrative sources, including Ministry of Education school and tertiary data, Inland Revenue data on employment, income and welfare benefits, Ministry of Health data on healthcare services and Police data on victimisation and offending. The IDI also includes survey data that allows us to measure people's self-reported life satisfaction.

What have we learnt so far?

Emerging findings to date indicate;

- Overall, living in an area where Kāinga Ora developments are taking place has little to no short-run impact on education, employment and earnings, health or justice outcomes

- This lack of a short-run impact applies to various sub-groups, including those living in social housing, long-term residents, those who have recently moved into the area, and those who have moved out of the area

- There are no short-run impacts on non-social housing residents living in areas with Kāinga Ora developments with respect to thefts, assaults, robberies and mental healthcare service utilisation.

- Early results suggest that residents in areas undergoing development report lower life satisfaction in the short term, possibly due to disruptions caused by construction activities

What comes next?

- The analysis of the short-run impact using administrative data on education, employment and earnings, health or crime outcomes is largely completed

- Continue analysis of the impact on self-reported life satisfaction

- A Key Findings report for our participants

- Dissemination of wellbeing outcomes insights to stakeholders e.g. presentations, roadshow events, and smaller focused discussions

- Publications

Te Hotonga Hapori Team

Professor Scott Duncan

Scott is a Professor of Population Health in the School of Sport and Recreation at AUT. His research centres on creating environments that allow people of all ages to live healthy, active lives. As Director of Te Hotonga Hapori, his role is to liaise with our key partners and collaborators while providing strategic direction and oversight across all aspects of the programme.

Julia McPhee

Julia is a Research Project Manager and Research Advisor in AUT's School of Sport and Recreation. She has a background in research management with specific expertise working with Government funding bodies. Julia's expertise and leadership are key to the success of the Te Hotonga Hapori programme, ensuring processes and tasks align with both research objectives and funding requirements.

Professor Tania Ka'ai

Tania is the Associate Dean Māori at AUT's Te Ara Auaha, Director of Te Ipukarea Research Institute, and Te Whare Rongomaurikura, Centre for Language Revitalisation. Her research focuses on Māori and Pacific language revitalisation and the validation of mātauranga Māori in academia. As an Associate Investigator on Te Hotonga Hapori, she also provides cultural guidance to the research team.

Professor Erica Hinckson

Erica's research focuses on the impact of the built environment on physical activity and wellbeing. Using an evidence-based citizen science and community-based participatory research approach, she seeks to empower communities to address inequities in their neighbourhoods for improved wellbeing. She leads one of the three projects of Te Hotonga Hapori-Connecting Communities research programme focusing on community wellbeing and lived experiences.

Associate Professor Tom Stewart

Tom is a Senior Research Fellow and Statistics Advisor at the AUT Human Potential Centre. His work is focused on how the environment is related to behaviour and health, and how optimising these environments can produce better health and wellbeing outcomes. As part of this work, Tom provides consultation on research design analysis methods.

Associate Professor Lisa Mackay

Lisa is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Sport and Recreation at AUT University. She applies a wellbeing approach to her teaching and research which is centred on enabling people and communities to lead healthy, active lives. Her role in Te Hotonga Hapori is to gather insights on what matters most to the wellbeing of individuals and their communities.

Dr Vivienne Ivory

Vivienne is a Technical Principal, Social Science, Resilience and Public Health at WSP's Research & Innovation Centre in Petone. She takes a systems approach to investigating mobility and liveable environments, and understanding how neighbourhood infrastructure can create healthy, equitable living environments. She contributes expertise in public health, stakeholder engagement, and qualitative research methods to Te Hotonga Hapori programme.

Dr Conal Smith

Conal is a Wellington-based economist with interests spanning the economics of well-being, valuing intangible costs and benefits, social capital and trust, the behavioural drivers of economic outcomes, and social policy more generally. Conal has worked on the policy applications of well-being measures in New Zealand, the OECD, and the developing world. In 2014 he co-taught the first formal course in wellbeing economics at Sciences Po in Paris. Conal is currently a member of the World Wellbeing Panel and has worked as a senior economist at the OECD as well as in managerial and senior policy roles in a range of different New Zealand government agencies.

Professor Dan Exeter

Dan is a Professor of Population Health at the University of Auckland, specialising in health geography and spatial epidemiology. His research uses big data to address inequities in health and social outcomes. Dan developed the NZ Index of Multiple Deprivation to understand area-level deprivation drivers and provides geospatial expertise for measuring neighbourhood wellbeing in Te Hotonga Hapori.

Dr Casimir MacGregor

Casimir is Principal Social Scientist and Programme Leader of the Transition to a Zero Carbon Built Environment research programme at BRANZ. His research is focused enabling innovation, systems and behaviour change within the construction sector to address wellbeing and climate change. He has served on a number of expert advisory groups, such as the Construction Sector Accord's Construction Sector Environment Roadmap for Action and UNESCO-UNEVOC's BILT programme on construction and vocational education.

Dr Lisa Meehan

Lisa is an applied economist with extensive experience spanning academia, the OECD, the NZ public sector and economic consulting. She has a wealth of experience using integrated data to examine labour market, firm performance, education, health and justice issues. She has led and/or been a team member of several successful funded research projects for Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment, Ministry of Health, Ministry for Women and the Retirement Commission, among others.

Professor Albert Refiti

Albert a Professor in the School of Art and Design at AUT. His research is in Pacific spatial and architectural environments and their transformations in the diaspora. As an Associate Investigator in the Te Hotonga Hapori team and a Principle Investigator for two Marsden funded projects on Pacific spaces and buildings, Albert brings knowledge of Pacific and Māori concepts of space and their evolution and transformations over the last 50 years in urban developments.

Dr Thomas Schober

Thomas is a Senior Research Fellow at the New Zealand Policy Research Institute at AUT. Before joining AUT in 2021, he worked for the Department of Economics at the Johannes Kepler University Linz, Austria. In his research, he uses administrative data to study topics in health, family, and labour economics.

Dr Anantha Narayanan

Ananth's research centres on exploring 'big data' using advanced data science methodologies. Recently graduating with a PhD exploring 'big data' using advanced data science methodologies, his role is to explore, model and predict population-wellbeing outcomes using machine-learning techniques and administrative data from Statistics NZ Integrated Database Infrastructure.

Megan Somerville-Ryan

Megan is a Research Evaluation Advisor and has been on secondment to AUT from Kāinga Ora where she has worked for the past eight years in both housing strategy and evaluation and research. ⊠Megan's role in Te Hotonga Hapori – connecting communities involved relationship management, oversight and coordination of information sharing and community collaborations, between the two organisations.

Damian Powley

Damian is a Principal Landscape Architect at Isthmus with extensive experience in leading community driven projects both for Local Government and private practice. With 18 years delivering all sorts of community infrastructure - from walkways and community centres to city-wide and regional planning - Damian invites community in to the design process and brings this approach to the Te Hotonga Hapori framework.

Haylea Muir

Haylea is a Principal Landscape Architect and Urban Designer at Isthmus. She specialises in leading large scale residential masterplans, suburban regeneration projects and writing urban design guidelines. Alongside this work in the housing sector, she has also had a major role in the delivery of parks and streetscapes, open space network planning, play strategies, and several award-winning playgrounds.

Te Hotonga Hapori PhD Students

Linda Kirkpatrick

Linda is a researcher at the New Zealand Policy Research Institute and a PhD candidate at AUT. Her research is focused on econometrics, using 'big data' to provide data-driven evidence to support policies and research findings. As a PhD candidate in Te Hotonga Hapori, her role is to examine the wellbeing impacts of urban regeneration using administrative data from Statistics NZ Integrated Database Infrastructure.

Tuputau Lelaulu

Tau is a PhD student in the School of Design & Creative Technologies at AUT. Tuputau Lelaulu has ancestry connecting to Vaovai and Gataivai in Samoa. His PhD MAUMOANA re-examines the potential of developing specific regional identity through the creation of a regenerative design and development guide and methodology for Moana built environments.

Mehdi Barati

Mehdi is a PhD student at the AUT Human Potential Centre. His PhD project partly linked with Te Hotonga Hapori, where he is exploring how the built environment is related to travel mode choice, travel behaviour, and physical activity patterns.

Lana Chisholm

Lana is a PhD student in the School of Sport and Recreation at AUT. Her research centres on youth wellbeing in regenerating neighbourhoods. As a research associate with Te Hotonga Hapori she is supporting Project 1, exploring lived experiences in regenerating communities.

Raymond Sagapolutele

Raymond Sagapolutele is an Aotearoan-born Samoan artist and academic. Raymond's PhD expands on his master's research, drawing on the role of the ma'umaga (taro plantation) as a vital part of the social framework of the Samoan village workforce on a larger scale and for Samoan families on a macro level; the research examines the context of ma'umaga in Samoa and how that can be replicated in the urban setting of Tamaki Makaurau, Aotearoa.

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Find out more

If you would like to find out more
about Te Hotonga Hapori or contact the team

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