

June 2022

Energy Hardship Expert Panel – Letter from the Chair

I hope you are all keeping safe and well. It's been a challenging year for everyone with Covid and rising cost of living.

I want to provide you with an update on the Energy Hardship Expert Panel's (the Panel) mahi over the last 6 months. We've been working hard alongside many of you, and I would like to thank you for your contributions and interest.

The 5 members of the Panel were appointed in September 2021 and we spent our first months considering the latest information and insights to better understand energy hardship in Aotearoa. The information-gathering included, but was not limited to:

- the Electricity Price Review findings and recommendations,
- insights and advice from the Energy Hardship Reference Group and small group forums
- MBIE's work to develop a definition and measures for energy hardship
- key papers and reports.

We've developed an outcomes framework that places children, whānau and their wellbeing, at the centre of our mahi. Our aspirational outcomes include:

- Households can access and afford the energy needed to live in a safe and healthy home, and can reach out and receive the support required.
- Households should be supported to make the best decisions about their energy needs and be able to engage confidently with energy companies.
- There should be suitable energy protections in place for people living in sub-standard homes or who are vulnerable or medically dependent.

[Outcomes framework](#)

The framework also describes our understanding of the current energy hardship landscape that people are facing in Aotearoa.

This framework underpins our collaborative approach and the content of our work programme over the next 12 months. It is a living document that we will revisit as our work progresses.

It is essential to the Panel to work within core values and tikanga that guide us as we travel through the challenges and opportunities – our framework includes 7 foundation principles we developed through te ao Māori lens.

It's also essential to us that we are engaged in a collaborative process. After listening, researching, talking and testing our ideas with others, we developed 5 kete, baskets, each containing a list of issues or underlying drivers of energy hardship. We look forward to refining the kete as our work progresses and using them to focus our work and as a guide for future discussions.

[The 5 Kete](#)

Our conversations and research have provided us with key insights about the state of play in Aotearoa – we've set out some of these in our framework. The insights gained to date, and others we gather as we progress our mahi, will help us as we turn our attention to developing ideas for how to address the issues identified.

Engagement is at the heart of our work. As you can see from our high-level roadmap, engagement feeds into every stage of our work, taking several forms along the way, whether by tapping into expertise of a few or seeking views from the wider community.

[High-level roadmap](#)

I'm looking forward to collaborating with others through workshops and other means over the next few months. These discussions, along with further research and analysis, will help us mature and develop our understanding of the problem and consider possible solutions, and feed into our discussion paper that will go out for public consultation later this year. We will draw on this consultation to develop final recommendations for Minister of Energy and Resources Megan Woods and her Ministerial colleagues around mid-2023.

We value receiving feedback from everyone in Aotearoa, and I'm keen to hear your views. Please feel free to contact me through energymarkets@mbie.govt.nz.

Keri Brown

Chair, Energy Hardship Expert Panel



Photo: The Panel at work, from left to right, Helen Leahy, Kay Brereton, Keri Brown, Kevin Angland, Amanda-Lanuola Dunlop