



Close to Home



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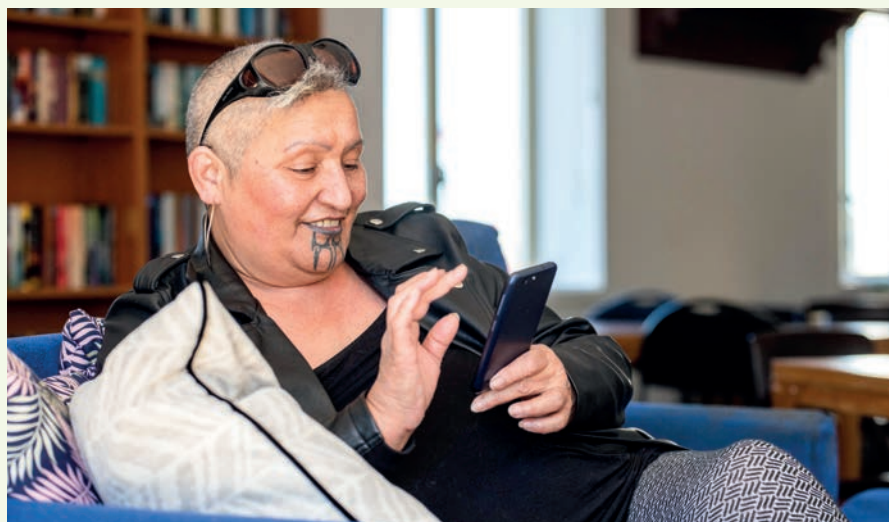
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My Kāinga Ora – Your tenancy information online for you



Kāinga Ora has launched a new customer account website for you called My Kāinga Ora. Like MyMSD, you can use this website from your mobile phone or laptop. It provides you with a variety of helpful functions that make managing your tenancy information easy, without having to contact us.

My Kāinga Ora is available online 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

My Kāinga Ora lets you check your account balances, see your maintenance jobs, see your upcoming appointments (such as annual inspection or tenancy manager visits) and update your personal details. In the near future you'll be able to request maintenance, see your letters and more.

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Your health and wellbeing are important



If you're worried about COVID-19, take a look at pages 2 and 3 of this issue of Close to Home to see how you can keep you and your whānau safe from COVID-19.

Looking out for others this winter



You may know people who need help with housing or other costs they're facing this winter.

If so, please encourage them to contact Work and Income on **0800 559 009** to see what support is available.

There's also a lot of information on the Work and Income website about the help available: **www.workandincome.govt.nz**





Information for you and your whānau



Find out more

You will know New Zealand is currently in a lockdown that took effect from midnight Wednesday 25 March and will run for four weeks at this stage.

It is important you and your whānau understand what this means.

The best information is on the COVID-19 website: <https://covid19.govt.nz/>

At Kāinga Ora, we are here to continue supporting you.

We will continue to carry out critical (essential) maintenance and repairs on our homes.

It's important you know that we will not be conducting face-to-face meetings or visits during the lockdown period. This is for your health and safety as well as our staff's health and safety.

Please also ensure you are aware of what essential services are available in your community. These will include supermarkets, petrol stations and health services.

If you want to find out more about COVID-19 (known as the coronavirus) you can visit the [Ministry of Health's website](#).

This website also has information in several languages other than English including Te Reo Māori, Fijian, Samoan and Tongan: <https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-information-other-languages>

Before visiting your doctor, you should first call Healthline on 0800 358 5453, your doctor or other healthcare provider if you are feeling unwell and want medical advice. Healthline is currently very busy so please be patient.

If you want general information on COVID-19 and not medical advice, you can contact the government helpline on 0800 779 997 between 8am and 1am seven days a week or visit <https://www.govt.nz/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/>



We are here to help

Even though our Kāinga Ora offices are now closed, we are still open for business and we are here to help you.

You can call our Customer Service Freephone: **0800 801 601** to speak to us. There is other information about how to get in touch in the **Contact Us** section of our website.

We know this can be a difficult time. If you need to talk to anyone about how you're feeling, help is available through the National Telehealth Service. Call or text for free to 1737 or visit: <https://www.1737.org.nz/>



Visiting your home

We will continue to resolve all urgent repairs that are needed to your home. If we have a repairs visit organised with you and you or someone in your home is unwell, has been diagnosed with COVID-19 or is experiencing any symptoms, please let us know when you contact us on 0800 801 601.

Our contractors will call to make an appointment with you prior to visiting (unless they are considered emergency repairs) and will re-check with you to ensure your situation has not changed. Emergency repairs will be responded to in four hours.

All non-urgent repairs will be put on hold. We will resolve non-urgent repairs when the Government changes the alert level for your region to either a 1 or a 2. If your non-urgent repair becomes critical during the Alert Level 4 period, please let us know and we will arrange to resolve it. If you have any questions about this, please call our Customer Service Freephone.



Financial support

If you've been affected by COVID-19 Work and Income may be able to provide financial support.

To find out what help may be available you can visit the **Ministry of Social Development website** or call the Work and Income helpline on 0800 779 997 (8am–1am, 7 days a week) and please let us know your circumstances.



Look after yourself and others

There are some simple steps to help stop the spread of COVID-19.

- Avoid close contact with people with cold or flu-like illnesses.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with disposable tissues or clothing.
- Stay home if you're unwell.
- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with water and soap and dry them thoroughly:
 - before eating or handling food
 - after using the toilet
 - after coughing, sneezing, blowing your nose or wiping children's noses
 - after caring for sick people.



Free health advice

If you need advice about influenza, immunisation or any other concerns about your or your family's health, call Healthline on 0800 611 116. Healthline operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week – all calls are taken by a registered nurse.



You can tell us about any dishonesty or fraud concerns in confidence. Call anytime on 0800 8355 469.

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My Kāinga Ora – Your tenancy information online for you

Adam and Ewa, tenants of Dixon Street Apartments, have been involved in the customer group sessions that helped shape My Kāinga Ora. “The app is really self-explanatory. If you can think of a question, you can most likely find the answer on the app,” Adam says. “It is usable by all, even those with language barriers, the elderly, and those who aren’t technically minded. It’s so effortless.”

Adam recently used My Kāinga Ora to find he had been overpaying on a maintenance job and was able to claim back the money just in time for Christmas. “It was like a mini Lotto win, and I would never have known without checking the app,” Adam says.

“It makes us feel really looked after and provides more independence,” fellow Dixon Street tenant Ewa says. “It puts me in the driver’s seat of my tenancy, and it empowers me.”

You can get My Kāinga Ora by registering online at www.kaingaora.govt.nz/mykaingaora. Chat to your tenancy manager about it or call the Customer Support Centre on 0800 801 601 (Mon-Fri 8am to 6pm).



Stay well this winter – get your flu shot

It’s more important than ever to keep your family/whānau well this winter by getting an influenza immunisation or ‘flu shot’.

It’s free for many people who are at greater risk of complications from influenza.

Health experts are advising people, especially those with underlying medical conditions, to get immunised against influenza.

“Influenza vaccine does not protect against coronavirus (COVID-19) infections; however, it will help prevent influenza, a serious illness that causes hundreds of deaths each winter in New Zealand,” says Immunisation Advisory Centre Director Dr Nikki Turner.

An annual flu shot, even if it does not fully prevent flu every time, can still reduce the severity of the infection.*

This year’s influenza immunisation programme started early from **16 March** for eligible patients and healthcare workers only.

Influenza immunisation is **free** from general practices or participating pharmacies for eligible patients – pregnant women, anyone aged 65 and over, and those under 65 with heart or respiratory disease, severe asthma, diabetes, cancer and other serious medical conditions – from **16 March to 31 December**.

Call your general practice or pharmacy to find out how to access your flu vaccine.

If you’re not eligible for free immunisation, you can purchase a flu shot from your general practice or a participating pharmacy from **13 April**.

Now is the best time to get your annual flu shot so you’re protected before flu season strikes.

Influenza is not the same as a cold. It is a more serious disease that can also make other existing medical conditions worse.

The most important ways to stop the spread of infections, including influenza and coronaviruses, are to:

- wash your hands regularly with soap and water, or cleanse with hand sanitiser
- stay at home if you’re sick
- cough or sneeze into a tissue or your elbow, dispose of the tissue in a bin and then wash your hands
- clean surfaces regularly.

Check www.fightflu.co.nz to find out whether you qualify for free flu immunisation or call 0800 IMMUNE (0800 466 863). For more information on COVID-19 go to www.health.govt.nz

The influenza vaccine is a prescription medicine. Talk to your doctor, nurse, midwifery nurse or pharmacist about the benefits and possible risks.

* According to the study ‘Influenza vaccine effectiveness in reducing severe outcomes over six influenza seasons, a case-case analysis, Spain, 2010/11 to 2015/16’, which was published online in Eurosurveillance.



If you need help with keeping warm

If you need bedding, blankets, curtains and heaters but can't afford to pay for them, help might be available through an **Advance or Recoverable Assistance Payment** (which you'll need to pay back) or a **Special Needs Grant**.

And if you need help paying your power bills, you may be able to get an **Advance or Recoverable Assistance Payment** (which you'll need to pay back).



If you need help with health costs

Getting a **Community Services Card** means you'll pay less for some health services simply by showing your card.

You may also be able to get a **Disability Allowance, Special Needs Grant or Temporary Additional Support**.

Check www.workandincome.govt.nz for more information.

Working together to help you live well in your home

Mel, a tenancy manager for Kāinga Ora, knows it's not always easy being a tenant. There's rent to pay on time, along with paying other bills, looking after your home and so on. That's why we enjoy talking with tenants to help understand what's needed to live well in your home. While we can't solve everything, we may be able to point you in the right direction to get more help. The following stories are a great example from a tenant showing how conversations can achieve great results.

From bankruptcy to camping inside a home

"I had no power for a few weeks and no furniture, no phone, no internet but I was just happy we had a home. I couldn't get any power under my name because I was bankrupt; no one would let me connect with them. Me and my daughters had to camp on the ground of our living room – we got camp lights and thought it was great to have our own place but I didn't have anything else.

A simple conversation turned our life around

"My tenancy manager explained to me that I could go to this power

company to get connected and also told me where I could go to get help with furniture. They also helped me work out a plan with my rent debt. I wasn't sure what Kāinga Ora could do, I just thought it was up to me. My tenancy manager at Kāinga Ora helped me and has been amazing helping me and my family. This is the first time we have had our own roof over our head and food in our cupboards in the last two years. We are just really grateful. It all turned around when my tenancy manager just said g'day and had a chat. It's been really lovely to have someone come and check in. Despite the downs in life – we are really happy."



Extra help to keep families warm and healthy

You may be able to get some extra help from Work and Income if your children are unwell or you can't keep warm in your home.

Some types of help are only for people on a benefit, and others are for people on a low income. You can find more information on the Work and Income website www.workandincome.govt.nz or by calling them on 0800 559 009.

Winter Energy Payment

The Winter Energy Payment is an extra payment to help with the cost of heating your home over the winter months. The Government has doubled the Winter Energy Payment for 2020 in response to COVID-19.

You don't need to apply – if you're eligible, you'll get the Winter Energy Payment automatically along with your other regular payments from Work and Income.

8 litres of
moisture
**builds up in
Kiwi homes
each day.**

Simple activities like cooking, showering and hanging your washing inside can cause this build-up of unhealthy moisture. The good news is that it's easy to get rid of.

**A dry home
is easier
to heat.**

The more moisture there is in the air, the harder and more expensive it is to heat.

For a dry and healthy home this winter follow these three easy steps: ↓



WIPE

any moisture or drips off your windows and walls.



OPEN

windows in the mornings and while you shower or take a bath.



HANG

washing outside to dry, if you can. Or in a room with a door closed and windows open.

Follow these simple things to make it easier and cheaper to heat your home: ↓



OPEN

curtains during the day to let warmth in and close them in the evening to keep the warmth in.



STOP

cold air getting into your home by stopping draughts around doors and windows.



HEAT your home using thermostats and timers so your heaters only come on when you need them and automatically turn off when the right temperature is reached.



Stakeholder Relationship Manager Josh with local Wellington City Councillor Fleur Fitzsimons.

Celebrating our tamariki on Te Rā o Ngā Tamariki – Children’s Day

In Berhampore, Wellington they celebrated Te Rā o Ngā Tamariki – Children’s Day at the beginning of March.

Kāinga Ora’s Community Coordinator at the Berhampore Centennial Flats, Merio, together with Stakeholder Relationship Manager Josh, promoted the local event to families in the area.

Rebecca, a Kāinga Ora tenant, and her children had lots of fun enjoying activities including a bike rodeo, bouncy castle and henna painting. There was lots of kai for the children too.

“It was an awesome community event,” says Josh, who went along with his whānau. “It’s a great way for us to connect with those working in the community, on a day filled with whānau and fun.”



Next year Children’s Day is 7 March 2021 – mark it in your calendar!

Communities and whānau are the key

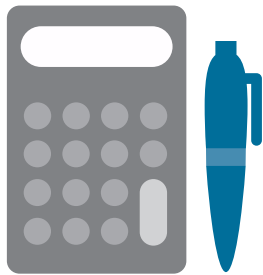


The importance of whānau and community is what drives Te Ariki Pihama in his new role as Chief Advisor Māori at Kāinga Ora – Homes and Communities.

Te Ariki (Ngāti Māhanga, Ngāti Ruanui) heads up our new Māori Capability Programme, which has been set up to protect and support Māori interests and aspirations – a big part of the role Kāinga Ora has in its communities across the country.

Te Ariki was a tenancy manager with the organisation – a role that enabled him to meet and work with a wide range of customers.

He sees his new role as an enormous privilege and says this focus is beneficial for tenants and the wider community.



Get some free budget advice

There are lots of organisations around the country that can give you and your whānau free budgeting advice. The advice is completely confidential.

Most of these organisations are part of the Federation of Family Budgeting Services.

You can find one close to you. Just go to familybudgeting.org.nz, email them at adviser@familybudgeting.org.nz or call freephone **0508 283 438** – your call will be answered by a budget adviser Monday to Friday, from 8am to 4.30pm.



Driveway safety reminder

Safekids Aotearoa suggests three things you can do to make driveways and other places safer for children:

- **Check** for children before driving off
- **Supervise** children around vehicles – always
- **Separate** play areas from driveways.



We want to hear from you if something is not right

It's important that you're able to live well in your home, so if something is not right we want to hear from you.

Step 1: If you're dissatisfied with something, contact us and we'll make sure we record your complaint the first time, so you don't have to repeat the story if you contact us again.

Step 2: If you're not happy with the way we've sorted out your complaint, you can contact us again and ask us to have another look at it.

Step 3: If you're still not happy with a complaint decision, you can ask us to refer your complaint to the Office of the Complaints Commissioner for an independent review of the decision.

Even if you don't need us to respond on something, we would still like your feedback on what is working

well, or what isn't, so we can keep improving our service to you.

It's easy to contact us with a complaint, or to ask for a decision to be reviewed, and give more general feedback. Use what works best for you:

- Call us free on 0800 801 601 from 8am to 6pm, Monday to Friday and 24/7 for urgent calls
- Talk to your tenancy manager
- Call into your local office between 9am and 4pm Monday to Friday
- Email: enquiries1@kaingaora.govt.nz
- Use the feedback form on our website: <https://kaingaora.govt.nz/contact-us/feedback-form/> – or click on 'Contact Us'
- Write to us:
 - Kāinga Ora, National Office,
 - PO Box 2628, Wellington 6140

Thanks to:



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