

Warmer Healthier Homes Nelson Tasman Marlborough Project

Marlborough District Council Long Term Plan 2021-2031 Submission



25 April 2021

Introduction and Request

Submission regarding the Marlborough District Council Long Term Plan 2021-31 Consultation Document, on behalf of the Warmer Healthier Homes Te Tau Ihu Charitable Trust insulation project.

This submission requests that Marlborough District Council continue to support the Warmer Healthier Homes Project (WHH) in two ways:

1. Provide ongoing financial support of \$30,000 per annum, committed for a further three-year term, and
2. Continue to provide access to key Marlborough District Council (“MDC”) staff including Dean Heiford and Merryl Hodgson who are assisting with access and penetration into the Marlborough region.

Marlborough District Council has previously provided \$189,000 over a four-year term and over the life of the programme MDC’s funding has assisted with the insulation of 646 homes in Marlborough.

Thanks to Marlborough District Council, and our other funding partners (e.g. Network Tasman, Nelson Marlborough DHB, Rātā Foundation), 646 qualifying families in Marlborough are now living in warmer, drier and more energy-efficient housing. The Project Steering Committee and Trustees would like to applaud Council for its ongoing support.

What do we do?

The Warmer Healthier Homes Nelson Tasman Marlborough Project was established in 2014. The goal is to support low income residents and those with compromised health to gain improved living environments, by retrofitting high-specification insulation into existing homes. Long-term, this improves the overall standard of the regions’ properties and supports a more productive community.

Our programme works alongside central government initiatives delivered via the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority (“EECA”) to provide ceiling and underfloor insulation for qualifying, low-income homeowners - for free. Work is completed to EECA installation guidelines by approved contractor, Absolute Energy.

Marlborough District Council funding of \$34,805 over the last seven months alone has helped to secure a further \$313,244 of government funding which would not have otherwise come into the region. Our data confirms that the low income homeowners we target are those unable to make even a small contribution for the insulation. Your funding bridges the gap. **This represents a 1,000% return on investment for Council funds.**

We invite Council to continue partnering with this highly successful project by funding \$30,000 per annum for the next three years (LTP years 1-3) towards the Warmer Healthier Homes insulation project in its 2021-31 Long Term Plan, in order to meet the identified need in the community.

The time is now

Looking at the data, we can foresee our insulation project approaching its completion, which is a fantastic result. Based on EECA data, the programme has around three years of work ahead to insulate all eligible homes we can identify. EECA data at February 2020 estimates there will be 390 qualifying homes remaining in Deprivation Areas 9 and 10, which, coupled with the current uptake by Community Service Card holders and endorsed Gold Card holders, indicates there are 500 homes to insulate in the region under current criteria. **Community funding required to deliver these insulations and attract a further \$1,350,000 of government funding is \$150,000 at current average insulation costs.**

What we have achieved, so far

As of 31 December 2020, our Warmer Healthier Homes project has insulated 2,328 homes across Te Tau Ihu, with 646 of these insulations in Marlborough. Total installations per stage in Marlborough:

Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4	Stage 5	Stage 6	YTD	Total
0	92	85	105	99	148	117	646

Note: Stages 1 and 2 were largely funded by the Rātā Foundation seed funding and homeowners.

These 646 homes represent Marlborough families who were living in cold and damp conditions and whose lives have been improved markedly. Our insulation programme ensures that a lack of household resources is not an impediment to achieving an energy-efficient home. The health benefits of houses being warm and dry include children being more likely to attend school and less likely to contract and spread illness. Less illness means less time off work for parents and caregivers which means a more productive and resilient community. The installation of insulation also means that less wood needs to be used in wood burners, helping to reduce air pollution from home heating over winter time. Overall, less illness reduces the strain on our health system and helps address the health inequities associated with poverty.

Recent research by Motu and Otago University evaluated the first 45,000 homes retrofitted with insulation under EECA's Warm Up NZ Programme and found a 6:1 benefit-to-cost ratio.¹ That means for every dollar spent on insulation, families and the wider community benefitted by \$6.

Key Benefits

Key benefits for Marlborough District Council by continuing to support this project are:

- **Partnership Approach:** Leverage additional funding and resources from project partners including EECA and Nelson Marlborough District Health Board.
- **Local Employment:** The project contractor employs local insulation assessors and installers and has a local base of operations.
- **Health and Economic Benefits:** Continue to achieve significant health benefits and economic benefits for Marlborough residents.
- **Climate Change Benefits:** Retrofitting insulation into existing homes enables these buildings to become more energy efficient.
- **Air Quality Benefits:** The installation of insulation into homes results in less wood needing to be used in wood burners, thereby reducing air pollution over winter months. Home heating is the main source of air pollution in the Tasman District.

Key Project Partners

Organisations who contribute to support the Warmer Healthier Homes project are:

Nelson City Council	Marlborough District Council	Rātā Foundation
Tasman District Council	Nelson Marlborough Health	Warmer Kiwi Homes/EECA
Network Tasman	Mainland Foundation	Nelson Tasman Housing Trust

¹ Fyfe, C., et al (2020) Association between home insulation and hospital admission rates: retrospective cohort study using linked data from a national intervention programme. BMJ 2020;371:m4571 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1136/bmj.m4571>

Governance and Financial Management

The Warmer Healthier Homes Te Tau Ihu Charitable Trust and administering Steering Committee have documents and procedures in place to ensure that the project is well governed, and project risk is minimised. The most important documents/procedures are as follows:

- Annual audited accounts provided to the Project Partners
- Six-monthly reporting to project partners on project outcomes and development
- Quality and audit procedures in place between Absolute Energy and EECA
- Health and Safety monitoring – regular documented H&S meeting monitoring between Absolute Energy and the Nelson Tasman Housing Trust administrator who reports to Steering Committee.
- Regular Steering Committee meetings, including reporting on health and safety, financial performance, installation numbers, auditing and accountability, funding.
- MoU in place between members of the WHH Steering Committee

What's next?

We kindly invite Marlborough District Council to continue working with us to insulate as many of these 500 homes as possible over the next three years and to continue what has been an extremely successful partnership.

Marlborough District Council has the stated desire to focus on the health and resilience of its community. WHH shares this goal. We want Marlborough homeowners to enjoy the long-lasting benefits that an insulated home provides. **MDC's Mission Statement refers to enabling social and economic development in balance with environmental and community needs.** These sentiments are the very reason that WHH was started in the first place and the reason why we continue to work so hard to deliver the practical outcomes that support these values. Warm, dry housing is a fundamental element in achieving this outcome.

Retrofitting a home with insulation is a relatively simple, inexpensive and effective way to improve the housing stock in the Nelson region. The impact of this improvement has a ripple effect of benefits into the community that will last for many years.

Thank you for your consideration.

Yours sincerely,



Leeson Baldey

Chairperson

On behalf of Warmer Healthier Homes Nelson Tasman Marlborough Project Steering Committee
and Warmer Healthier Homes Te Tau Ihu Charitable Trust

"This scheme is awesome and important. It made a huge difference to the health of my family, my daughter had suffered from many ear infections as a little tot and had 3 sets of grommets. A fully insulated home made a huge difference to our health and my ability to work more and take less sick leave"

– A Cuff