

ISSUE 1 | APRIL 2020

CONTRACTOR CONNECT

COVID - 19 SPECIAL

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A Kāinga Ora quarterly update for its head contractors and their subbies



FROM THE EDITOR

Kia ora koutou,

When we started work on our next Contractor Connect, we decided to include a snapshot of the past six years, with a focus on some of the significant events we have managed together like the West Coast floods and Auckland storm in 2018. Just as we were about to finalise this edition, our world was overtaken with the news that New Zealand would enter an Alert Level 4 lockdown as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

This has meant some major changes for everyone including what to include in this Special COVID-19 edition of Contractor Connect.

Under Alert Level 4, only essential and emergency repairs can be undertaken in Kāinga Ora homes and only with stringent health and safety requirements being met. This includes physical distancing of 2 metres at all times and health and safety checks with customers prior to and upon arrival at a home.

While there were some teething issues early on, it has been wonderful to see how everyone (well, almost everyone), has adapted to these changes, including booking appointments with customers before attending repairs and walking customers through what will happen when a tradie is on site.

A positive coming from these changes over the past few weeks is that many new practices e.g. appointment scheduling with customers is part of our new way of working from 1 July 2020.

So well done everyone for being willing to change and adapt, to make it as smooth as it can be. These changes to the way we work will ensure we can continue to carry essential and safe repairs for our most vulnerable customers.

As I write this, we are now working with our head contractors to plan and get ready to deliver more services under Alert Level 3 including looking at what this will mean for Kāinga Ora, the people living in our homes and you, our Maintenance and Trade Partners.

More work to create stimulus for the future

I am also able to share with you that further planning is under way to look at how we ramp up the work we do in our customers' homes. This will provide more work to ensure our customers are, warm, dry and healthy during winter.

More on this will be shared in the coming weeks, but at this stage, I can assure you Kāinga Ora is committed to ramping up this work as soon as we are able to.

Even though this is a shortened special edition of Contractor Connect, we have still included some great trade stories about going above and beyond in a COVID-19 environment.

Finally, on behalf of Kāinga Ora, I would like to thank each and every one of you for your continued commitment, hard work and willingness to work with us to ensure our homes remain safe for our customers during these very different times for all New Zealanders.

Please remember to be kind, be patient, and to look after one another.

He waka eke noa

We are all in this together

Angela Pearce

National Maintenance & Upgrade Manager

HOW WE HAVE BEEN OPERATING WITH YOU, UNDER ALERT LEVEL 4

By the time you read this, we would have been working in an Alert Level 4 environment for four weeks. We are now planning for an Alert Level 3.

From day one, we have been working closely with all our head contractors to ensure everyone understands the 'new normal' working environment and what has changed. This has included:

- All Kāinga Ora and contracting teams working remotely
- Twice weekly Zoom update meetings with head contractors and key members of their teams
- Information to our contractors on changes to current processes
- Written answers provided to questions raised in meetings
- Reinforcing Ministry of Health guidance about how to carry out essential and emergency repairs in customers' homes
- New script messaging for the Customer Support Centre, our Tenancy Managers, head contractors and tradies to ensure any health risks are identified prior to entering a Kāinga Ora home.

Going above and beyond – Emergency repairs in Level 4

For privacy reasons, no name or location is included in this story. However, we want to share this fantastic example of a tradie going above and beyond to carry out an emergency repair on a customer's toilet during Alert Level 4.

Our Customer Support Centre received a call from a Kāinga Ora customer who advised they were infected with COVID-19 and in self isolation. The customer required emergency repairs to a toilet as soon as possible.

As it transpired, it was not a simple repair job as it required a mini excavator to be brought onto the property to clear the drain. The gully trap also needed to be cleared.

Our trade worker had completed all the necessary health and safety checks prior to arriving on site, asked our customer the questions again through a window at a distance of 2 metres, and was able to fix the toilet by working outside the home.

This is a great example of trade worker doing what it takes to keep our customers safe in their homes, so we'd like to thank this tradie - you know who you are!



Team Leader Trish Muir from Dunedin Housing Maintenance Contractors on the phone during Alert Level 4

Making a difference for our vulnerable customers

We continue to hear amazing stories about how people are working together, and solving problems and finding solutions during Alert Level 4. Here are a couple of great examples about problematic television aerials.

In Invercargill, an elderly couple in their 90s lost television reception after a Sky dish aerial was knocked over.

We don't usually do these jobs but Muir Electrical, a Dunedin Housing Maintenance subbie, was happy to go around and look at the issue. A special bracket was required to secure the aerial and our subbie just happened to have one in his van. He then secured the aerial for our very grateful customers. This is an exemplary response to a situation and one we want to continue to replicate through our new ways of working.

In Auckland, our Customer Support Centre received a call from a very distraught elderly customer, living in a 24-unit pensioner housing complex in an inner city suburb.

The customer called to advise the communal television aerial wasn't working at the complex, and for some customers, it was their only source of news and essential to their overall wellbeing.

The Tenancy Manager contacted the Maintenance Supervisor to arrange for the broken aerial to be fixed. Once the repairs had been carried out, the customer called back to thank Kāinga Ora for the wonderful service they received.

Great team work and working with compassion really goes a long way for our most vulnerable customers.

Other updates

Te Mahi Ngātahi – Kāinga Ora's next National Maintenance Contract

Maintenance Partners are continuing to prepare for Go Live on 1 July 2020. While this is likely to mean virtual on-boarding and training, planning is well in hand to make this happen. Mark Bulder, Kāinga Ora Transition Manager Maintenance 2020, will continue working closely with our next Maintenance Partners as we approach 1 July.

Current Performance Based Maintenance Contract (PBMC)

Our maintenance teams are working closely with all head contractors to ensure all work let under the current PBMC contract is completed by 30 June 2020. Prior to 30 June, we will move into a level of activity freeze so we can ensure a smooth move into the new contract. More details will be released in the upcoming week by Kāinga Ora's Exit Manager, Linda Davey.

Kāinga Ora - National Product Suppliers to be announced

Kāinga Ora has recently completed procurement for our next National Supply Agreements for the supply of product. We expect to be able to confirm the names of our National Suppliers, and actions that will be required, to our Maintenance Partners within the next few weeks.

