

ISSUE 2 | MAY 2020

# CONTRACTOR CONNECT

## SPECIAL EDITION

### INSIDE

- How we have been operating with you as we move through Alert Levels
- Alert Level 3 - what has been happening in our customers' homes?
- Going above and beyond for our vulnerable customers

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



## FROM THE EDITOR

### **Kia ora koutou,**

I don't know about you, but the weeks seem to be going by quickly. When I last wrote my editorial for Contractor Connect we were in Alert Level 4 and about to move to Alert Level 3. Now, New Zealand is in Alert Level 2.

Under Alert Levels 3 and 2, most repairs can be completed with health safety checks and final consent from the customer to proceed, both before the job and on arrival at the property.

I would like to start by thanking you all again for going above and beyond under Alert Level 3. This has been a mammoth task for everyone and there have been some great suggestions from PBMCs that have made a real difference to the way we work. To help take the pressure off families who have had their children at home over the past few weeks and ensure our tradies can carry out extended works on site while minimising the risk of breaching bubbles, a suggestion to use portaloos for tradies helped to manage some of the new challenges we face in a COVID-19 environment.

It has also been a phenomenal, joint effort to restart non-essential and emergency repairs that were put on hold during Alert Level 4. Where do I begin? We worked together to get hundreds of sites up and running again, arranging scaffolding and appointments with customers to complete the work. The empathy shown to our customers has been appreciated as not everyone is comfortable with work being undertaken in their home at this time. Our empathy and kindness towards our customers and their individual circumstances is the cornerstone of Te Mahi Ngātahi, our next national maintenance contract which starts on 1 July 2020.

Caring for our customers has been part of our collective response to COVID-19 and it's reassuring that we are already seeing the results of our combined efforts. The great feedback continues to come in and we will share some of these stories in this edition. Customers in Dunedin, Gisborne and Northland have also shared their positive customer experiences with local community newspapers.

As the famous poet Maya Angelou said: "People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel". With all the great feedback we are receiving from customers about what you are doing when working in our homes, it certainly feels like the latter.

I said this in our last newsletter and I will say it again - thank you for your commitment, hard work and willingness to work in partnership with Kāinga Ora to ensure our customers are at the centre of everything we do during these very different times for all New Zealanders.

He waka eke noa

*We are all in this together*

**Angela Pearce**

**National Maintenance & Upgrade Manager**

# HOW WE HAVE BEEN OPERATING WITH YOU, AS WE MOVE THROUGH ALERT LEVELS

| We are now operating in Alert Level 2.

We are continuing to work 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 some contracting teams continuing to work remotely
- Weekly Zoom update meetings with head contractors and key members of their teams
- Information released to contractors on changes to current processes with changing alert levels
- Reinforcement of Ministry of Health, health and safety guidance about carrying out repairs in customers' homes
- Completing maintenance work placed on hold under Alert Level 4 where only emergency and essential repairs were able to be undertaken.

Together, between 23 March and 13 May 2020 (Alert Levels 4 and 3), we completed 39,435 work orders.

## Alert Level 3 – what has been happening in our customers' homes?

### New fence makes a difference

In this special edition, we have more great stories about how tradies have gone above and beyond to get the job done putting the customer at the heart of everything we do.

Recently a priority job came in for a new fence.

Secure fencing was critical because our customer suffers from severe anxiety, made worse by random people cutting across and entering her property. The customer was also in hospital with her release contingent upon a new fence being built at her home.

A request was received on Wednesday afternoon. The same afternoon a scoper was onsite at the home doing a measure up for a new fence. The scope of works was submitted and approved on Thursday and Spencer Henshaw had a fencing crew onsite the following Monday morning to start work on the fence.

This is a great example of a customer centric response that will provide a safe home for a vulnerable customer.



The new fence ready for the customer to return home



## Going above and beyond for our vulnerable customers

Our next story is about the great work done by subbie cleaning crew Property-care-Cleaners at a central Auckland block of flats.

This feedback was received through wellbeing calls our staff have been making to customers. Since Alert Level 4, Kāinga Ora has made wellbeing calls to thousands of customers. Through these calls, we have been able to identify how to best support our customers and show them we care.

Through these wellbeing calls, elderly customers at this central Auckland apartment complex told us they were very impressed and grateful with the cleaners' efforts and confirmed that all areas; from door knobs, floors, walls, stairwells and hand rails had been thoroughly disinfected and sanitized daily. These efforts by Property-care-Cleaners provided much welcome reassurance to our customers that every effort was being made to mitigate the potential risks of a COVID-19 infection and keep them safe.



Our Dunedin customer Ms Nelio with her baby daughter

**"Everyone has treated me with respect and kindness, which has been really nice"**

This is what a Dunedin customer told The Star Dunedin about our response to a recent plumbing issue at her Kāinga Ora home.

Below is an excerpt from The Star Dunedin story told in the words of our customer, Ms Nelio.

### The Star Dunedin May 7 2020

*"Ms Nelio called Kainga Ora, formerly known as Housing New Zealand, for help.*

*She was impressed when a plumber arrived just two hours later to assess the problem and clear away the mess.*

*With tree roots suspected to be causing the blockage, further investigation has been necessary and a second plumber visited last week to run a camera down the drain.*

*"It looks as though more work will be needed, but in the meantime the problem is fixed, which is a great relief with a newborn baby in the house," Ms Nelio said.*

*"Getting help quickly was so helpful, when I was racing against time to get everything set up before my baby arrived.*

*"And everyone has treated me with respect and kindness, which has been really nice"*



The cleaning work undertaken by Property-care-Cleaners

## Other updates

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

Our next Maintenance Partners are now recruiting staff and on-boarding tradies and securing office premises in their regions.

Both Maintenance Partners and Kāinga Ora are continuing with planning and developing alternative materials and mediums to deliver training and inductions to staff and tradies in response to COVID-19.

We recently held our first induction for our new Maintenance Partners via Zoom. While none of us would have expected this to be the mode of delivery three months ago, it went well and when we are able, a face-to-face meet and greet will be held.

Also underway are new operational guidelines to be released to support Te Mahi Ngātahi and our aspirations to deliver a world class maintenance service.

### Other Kāinga Ora news

Under Alert Level 2, Kāinga Ora area offices reopened on 18 May 2020 and are operating on reduced hours. Before visiting an office, customers are asked to phone our Customer Support Centre to make an appointment first.

Our Tenancy Managers have also been contacting all of our customers to check in and see how they are. To date our Tenancy Managers have attempted more than 55,000 wellbeing calls to customers. We are continuing to adapt and change the way we work to support our customers the best way we can.