

19 August 2022

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Thank you for your email of 31 May 2022 to Kāinga Ora - Homes and Communities requesting the following information about the new homes we are building in New Plymouth:

'Could you please let me know what percentage of the new builds planned for New Plymouth are accessible? If they are not why are they not accessible, and what you are doing to make housing for people with physical disability.'

Kāinga Ora has considered your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA), and I apologise for the delay in responding to you.

Kāinga Ora has a nationwide target that at least 15 percent of new builds meet full universal design. Universally designed homes are considered more liveable for all people, regardless of age, disability or other factors, and are, or can be made to be, fit-for-purpose for most customers. Universal design both supports customers to live well and independently in their homes, and reduces barriers for visitors with accessibility needs. Where new builds do not meet full universal design standards, our Accessibility Policy requires that they include as many universal design features as possible.

Kāinga Ora currently has two new homes under construction in New Plymouth, with a further 14 projects, consisting of 60 homes, in the design stage. I can confirm that the two homes under construction have full universal design. At this stage the remaining 60 homes have not been briefed for full universal design. However, Kāinga Ora is seeking to increase the number of new builds that are accessible, so this may change as these homes move through the design and construction process.

In the case of some new builds, full universal design may not be achievable due to site issues that limit accessibility. In this situation Kāinga Ora will, as described above, incorporate as many universal design features as is practical.

It is also worth noting that Kāinga Ora meets the individual needs of our customers by carrying out modifications of our existing properties. At May 2022, around 5,670 Kāinga Ora homes around the country had undergone modifications to make them more accessible. This work ranges from adding handrails or modified door latches to ramps, wet areas, lifts, widened doorways, or special smoke alarms for members of the deaf community.

Where minor work is needed to support the needs of our customers, Kāinga Ora carries out this work itself. Significant structural work, such as installing wet area bathrooms or widening hallways, is undertaken by Te Whatu Ora (Health New Zealand) or ACC and their respective occupational therapists. They may also fund this work and find the relevant people to carry out the modifications. Kāinga Ora is working with ACC and Te Whatu Ora to identify ways it can improve this process for public housing customers.

Kāinga Ora is committed to increasing the accessibility of public housing through our Accessibility Policy, which was first released in 2019 and is currently undergoing a refresh. You can find our Accessibility Policy, and information about the work Kāinga Ora is doing to improve the accessibility of our homes, on our website: <https://kaingaora.govt.nz/about-us/accessibility-at-kainga-ora/>

I trust this information is helpful. Please note that Kāinga Ora proactively releases its responses to official information requests where possible. Our response to your request may be published at <https://kaingaora.govt.nz/publications/official-information-requests/>, with your personal information removed.

Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Rachel Kelly". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rachel Kelly
Manager Government Relations