

MEDIA RELEASE

The BRANZ logo consists of a red square with a white triangle pointing to the right, positioned above the word "BRANZ" in white, uppercase, sans-serif font.

2 August, 2022

For immediate release

Kiwi households better placed to meet energy needs thanks to in-home energy advice

Kiwi households at risk of energy hardship are getting personalised, in-home advice to help them stay warm, dry and healthy, thanks to a successful home energy management programme supported by BRANZ.

Healthy Homes: making energy work for whānau is professional development for social workers, health workers, and other trusted advisors who work with householders in the home.

The course, which is funded by the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority and the Building Research Levy, seeks to address the significant rate of energy hardship in Aotearoa New Zealand.

In 2018-19 more than 130,000 Kiwi households could not afford to meet their energy needs. The current cost-of-living crisis has put many more at risk, particularly as energy costs increase in the winter months.

BRANZ Senior Research Scientist Vicki White says the causes of energy hardship are complex and interrelated.

“Many of these factors are beyond the control of those not able to meet their energy needs. This course focuses on what whānau can control, which has helped it to make an impact.”

Since it began last year *Healthy Homes: making energy work for whānau* has trained 96 professionals, from 28 different community organisations working with whānau across nine regions.

Delivered by the Home Performance Advisor Training programme (HPA), the course equips professionals, who have existing relationships with householders, with the knowledge to help whānau help themselves.

The course was co-designed by people from the communities it seeks to serve, which has been critical to its success, says Home Performance Advisor Co-manager Vicki Cowan.

“Listening to these communities helped us design materials that are easily delivered to and by people from the communities in need.

“We also recognise that trusted advisors visiting whānau for other reasons, such as giving health and well-being support, don’t have a lot of time to spare during their visits.

“With this in mind the course focuses on making changes that are low effort but can potentially make a significant impact. The course also helps trainees find and connect with services like curtain banks, and financial mentors in their community so they are joined up to better support whānau,” she says.

The course includes the context of energy use in Aotearoa, what a healthy home looks like, how household energy works, and how to support whānau to make energy work for them.

[Find out more about Healthy Homes Training.](#)

About BRANZ

A multi-faceted, science-led organisation, BRANZ uses independent research, systems knowledge and its broad networks to identify practical solutions that improve New Zealand's building system performance. BRANZ is driven by the knowledge that to thrive as a society, New Zealanders need a built environment that is safe, healthy and performs well.

About Home Performance Advisor

The HPA is a long-standing BRANZ partner that helps BRANZ deliver on its Warmer, Drier, Healthier Homes Programme, which seeks to ensure research findings are acted upon in this country's homes. It grew out of a collaboration between Beacon Pathway, Community Energy Network (CEN), and Toimata Foundation. These three organisations had the vision of building a network of informed, independent home performance advisors.

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