

*Your community,
your place.*

Play it safe against COVID-19

We're now into COVID-19 Alert Level 2, and I'm sure you're looking forward to some return to normality.

Although moving into Alert Level 2 means we can resume many of our everyday activities, we have to do so safely – the disease may be contained, but there's still a risk of community transmission. As the Prime Minister said, we'll need to be careful as we get back to a new, safer normal. We must continue to keep our distance when out and about in the community, keep our social gatherings small, wash our hands, keep a track of where we've been and – if we start to feel unwell – get tested immediately for the virus.

From the start of the lockdown, all our staff were deployed in ringing our tenants to make sure they were well, that they had support and that their needs were met (eg, that they had food supplies, etc). We were 'on the ground' the whole time, attending to multiple incidents and maintenance issues, delivering fridges, providing food parcels and mobile phones, attending medical events and addressing tenant concerns.

Our Community Managers will be visiting everyone soon. Whilst they won't generally be entering your unit, they'll still be able to have a chat and help with any further issues, requests or questions you might have.

I'd like to thank the Haumaru team for all their selfless efforts over the period and for making our tenants a priority, despite having their own family obligations and other stresses and strains to deal with. Thank you also to our tenants for your wonderful feedback - your kind thoughts and words have been much appreciated.

As everyone gets back to business, you'll notice a few more workers around the villages. The grass has now been cut at all the villages, and our schedule of planned maintenance is also getting back on track. All our contractors are fully compliant with the Ministry of Health's H&S protocols and precautions, and our staff also undergo a daily health screening check, so you can be reassured that we're doing everything to reduce any possible risk of the virus entering the villages.

I hope you enjoy this latest edition of our newsletter. Until next time, play it safe, keep your get-togethers small and stay healthy.



Gabby Clezy, Chief Executive Officer

Keeping warm and well in winter

In response to COVID-19, the Government has doubled the 2020 Winter Energy Payment which is now in place. If you receive NZ Super or Veteran's Pension, you're entitled to get this payment from 1 May until 1 October. It's paid automatically, so you don't need to apply. Couples will receive \$63.64 a week and single people will get \$40.91 a week.

The payment is made to help with the cost of keeping the home warm and dry over winter. Older people are at greater risk of hypothermia due to reduced activity and the effects of some medication, so keep your main living areas at a comfortable temperature between 18 and 22°C. Use a wall thermometer or a thermostat on your heater, and always regard heat as a health necessity and not as a luxury.

Don't let the flu get you down

Influenza is a significant public health issue in New Zealand, and every year it has a large impact on the population, with 10-20% of people infected.

It's important to have the vaccination each and every year – and before the start of winter. So if you haven't already had your flu shot, now's the time to get one, especially as it may well help in lessening the symptoms of COVID-19, should you develop the virus.

The vaccines are free for people aged 65 years or older. The more of us who are immunised, the less likely this serious disease will spread amongst our communities.

For more information, talk to your doctor, nurse or pharmacist, or call 0800 466 863, www.fightflu.co.nz/.

And remember: good hand hygiene and other infection control practices will also help to keep the bugs at bay. The most important ways to stop the spread of infections, including influenza and coronaviruses, are to:

- cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze
- put your used tissue in a lined rubbish bin or in a plastic bag
- wash and dry your hands often, especially after coughing or sneezing – use soap or hand gel
- stay at home if you're sick.

Rent Increase Freeze and Tenancy Terminations

The Government announced in March a freeze to residential rent increases and greater protections for tenants against having their tenancies terminated. This has been applied as law through the COVID-19 Response (Urgent Management Measures) Amendment Act 2020.

What it means for landlords and tenants

In the wake of COVID-19, it's more important than ever to ensure that tenancies are sustained, and that tenants don't have to face the prospect of homelessness during a global pandemic but can remain in their rental properties for the duration of this crisis. Please note, therefore:

- There's now a freeze on rent increases.
- A rent increase notice from a landlord will not have the effect of increasing a tenant's rent, unless the rent increase has already taken effect.
- Tenancies will not be terminated during the lockdown period, unless the parties agree, or in limited circumstances, regardless of when notice was provided.
- Tenants will still be able to terminate their tenancy as normal, if they wish.
- Tenants will have the ability to revoke termination notices they've already given, in case they need to stay in the tenancy during the lockdown period.

These measures took effect on 26 March 2020, and the rent increase freeze applies for an initial period of six months. The protections against terminations will apply for an initial period of three months.

At the end of both initial periods, the Government will evaluate whether they need to be extended.

Water restrictions now in force across Auckland

Stage one water restrictions came into effect across Auckland on Saturday, 16 May, meaning that no-one should be using outdoor hoses or water blasters.

Since the start of the year, the region has received significantly less rainfall than normal. The total volume of water stored in our dams has now dropped below 50% for the first time in more than 25 years, so we desperately need to preserve what's left.

Please use water wisely and reduce wastage of this precious resource. You can still water your garden using a watering can, or wash your car using a bucket of water – but please limit your water use and don't use a hose or water blaster. Due to the restrictions, Haumaru contractors won't be using outdoor hoses or water blasters unless it's for health, safety, emergency or biosecurity reasons.

One thing we do need to continue doing, however, is to keep washing our hands to combat COVID-19.

For tips on how to save water in the home and in the garden, visit www.watercare.co.nz/.

COVID-19: Staying safe and well when having work done at home

If you've requested a repair or need some maintenance done in your unit, which will involve a Haumaru staff member or a contractor coming into your home, this can be done safely and in a way that will minimise any possible exposure to the virus.

- Workers who go into people's homes or onto their property don't have to wear Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) like gloves and masks, although some may choose to wear them to feel safe.
- The best defence against COVID-19 is basic hygiene measures like thorough handwashing with soap and water, and sneezing and coughing into your elbow. Many workers will ask to wash their hands when they arrive.
- While a worker is in your house, you should stay two metres away from them where possible, which will help keep both them and you safe.
- Workers who are sick or are a close contact of a confirmed case will not be working, which will help keep everyone safe.
- You may choose to wipe down your surfaces with cleaning products as an extra safety step, after having someone working in your home.

Having work done or deliveries made are important parts of keeping everyone healthy, safe and well during our response to COVID-19, and it can be done safely.

The most important things you can do to stay safe at Alert Level 2 are:

- Keep at least a two metre distance from other people in public.
- If you're sick, stay home and don't socialize.
- If you have symptoms of cold or flu, call your doctor or Healthline and get tested.
- Wash your hands, always sneeze and cough into your elbow and regularly disinfect surfaces.
- If you've been told to self-isolate, you must do so immediately.
- Keep a track of where you've been and who you've seen.

As of 14 May, you can now reconnect with friends and family, but gatherings are limited to up to 10 people. You can go into the shops, and travel between regions. Venues such as museums, cinemas, libraries and markets are also open again.

Our Haumaru village halls will not be open for general use, due to the H&S compliance requirements at Alert Level 2. We do hope to open the library spaces in villages, with this facility available for limited periods and with strict COVID-19 controls in place.

For more information about the easing of restrictions under Alert Level 2, go to www.covid19.govt.nz.