

MEDIA RELEASE  
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## **WEL Energy Trust announces \$500,000 in grants to tackle Waikato housing need**

WEL Energy Trust has opened a second 'Vital Impact' grants round to address issues around the affordability, availability and quality of housing in the Waikato region.

The grants aim to address a recently identified need for over 7,500 houses in the greater Waikato, with 4,000 of these in Hamilton.

This need was highlighted in a recent [Waikato Plan stock-take report](#), where housing was determined as one of the biggest economic concerns for the regional community.

WEL Energy Trust Chair, Mark Ingle, says, “This funding builds on an earlier allocation in 2017 of \$400,000 for the same purpose.

“We want to encourage fresh thinking and to seed or contribute to a creative response to regional housing needs.

“A stable home, whether it is owned or rented, is a critical requirement for a flourishing family. The lack of housing, or poor-quality housing, impacts on the ability of individuals, families and the wider community to thrive.”

Ingle says the intention of the Vital Impact grants is to support a small number of initiatives that can work towards addressing the areas of concern.

In 2017, WEL Energy Trust identified housing need as a regional priority it would fund following the Vital Signs community engagement project, led by Momentum Waikato.

At that time, one Trust grant was provided to Habitat for Humanity Central North Island to investigate a Special Housing Area development in Hamilton to provide a mix of housing types and tenure models. A second grant went to Whaingaroa Raglan Housing Affordability Project to fund research into housing need in Raglan.

WEL Energy Trust will consider applications that included proposals for blended finance, where the grant could be combined with debt or equity investment for greater impact.

Collaborative applications are encouraged and organisations already receiving funding from WEL Energy Trust may also apply.

Expressions of Interest from eligible organisations can be made through the Trust’s website [www.welenergytrust.co.nz](http://www.welenergytrust.co.nz).

Following a review of initial applications, selected organisations will be invited to submit full applications.

*‘Here for the Community’*

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Expressions of Interest close **Friday 18 October 2019**. Successful recipients will be announced before 31 March 2020.

WEL Energy Trust distributes around \$4.5 million each year to nearly 250 organisations, projects or initiatives through various grants rounds. This Vital Impact grant of \$500,000 is included in this total.

Housing is listed as a priority for action towards the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal of [Sustainable Cities and Communities](#). WEL Energy Trust has included this goal in its [investment strategy](#), which specifically outlines the action of intending to promote innovative thinking and collaborative action to enhance access to affordable, quality housing, including social housing and rental accommodation.

-ENDS-

For enquiries about the grant process/applications, please call the Trust office on 07 838 0093.

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