

The crisis of housing affordability: Kindness to people *and* environmental resilience?

Michael John Webster* and Dushko Bogunovich**

*School of Counselling, Human Services and Social Work, The University of Auckland
m.webster@auckland.ac.nz

** School of Architecture and Planning, The University of Auckland
dushko@me.com

ABSTRACT. Cities in Aotearoa New Zealand face simultaneous crises: housing affordability and the climate emergency. Both issues are two sides of a single metaphorical coin. Humans depend on safe environments, but the unaffordable housing crisis has resulted in families living in cars, garages or within a single room contributing to preventable illnesses (Hipkins, 2018). The authors—a social work academic, and an urban planner—argue that to be kind to people, we must equally be kind to the environment. Affordable housing is critical to human wellbeing but so is environmental security. Urban planning for affordable and resilient communities able to adapt to the climate emergency is needed. To be kind to the environment is to express kindness to people as an ethical commitment. By exercising *manaakitanga* (kindness) we recognise the *mana* (dignity) of others by acting with respect, kindness and compassion; and by *aroa* (compassion, love, empathy) our responsibility for people's wellbeing.

Keywords: Kindness; human wellbeing; environmental resilience

1. Introduction

Dwellings where people live and the environments where communities of people are situated intersect at the foundation of human existence. The great German philosopher of existentialism and phenomenology, Martin Heidegger, illustrated this intersection: ‘the *manner in which we dwell* is the *manner in which we exist* on earth’ (Heidegger, 2001, p.2). This paper has been written from those two perspectives represented by the authors, an urban planner and a social work academic. Dushko Bogunovich—an urban planner and adjunct professor—is critically concerned with the possibility of catastrophic climate change unless the Sustainable Development Goals [SDGs] set out in the United Nations Agenda for Sustainable Development (United Nations General Assembly [UNGA], 2015) are implemented. In this paper, he will focus on SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities. Bogunovich's perspective draws from the climate crisis both globally and in Aotearoa New Zealand. He will explore urban planning for resilient communities premised on the understanding that housing affordability is important, but, in the long term, means little without environmental security. Michael

Webster—a registered social worker, researcher and teacher—brings a focus onto the human right to affordable housing set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights [UDHR] (UNGA, 1949). The authors note that in Aotearoa New Zealand, “crisis” is applied to both housing affordability and the climate emergency. Both issues demand equal attention because they are two sides of a single metaphorical coin. Humans depend on safe environments, but the unaffordable housing crisis has resulted in homelessness: ‘severe housing deprivation’ (Johnson et al., 2018, p.35). Families are domiciled in vehicles or garages with consequent ill-health (Hipkins, 2018). The Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers [ANZASW] has called public attention to the housing crisis contributing to ‘families / whānau hav[ing] to choose between heating and eating, or paying rent and going to see a doctor’ (ANZASW, 2019a) because of rental levels.

The purpose of this paper is to harmonise a response to these two crises. Its scope is determined by interdisciplinary collaboration and systems thinking, described as the ability to construct ‘a shared understanding of complex problems’ (Senge, Hamilton & Kania, 2015, p.28). Systems thinking creates ‘reflection and generative conversations’ which transcend our inbuilt limiting mental models by listening to alternative views. Such processes move us from ‘problem solving to co-creating the future’ (Senge et al., 2015, p.29). The systems to be explored are those already noted: environmental security set out in the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals and human rights described in the UDHR, both of which have been ratified by Aotearoa New Zealand.

The purpose and scope of the article is further underpinned by the authors’ commitment to the cultural and political value of kindness applied to people’s need for affordable shelter, not in isolation but within a safe climate and a healthy and secure physical environment. The question immediately arises: What is meant by “kindness” in these two policy domains? The authors propose that kindness is a cultural belief which should be a ‘basic, taken-for-granted value’ often stated but not always practised (Schein & Schein, 2016, pp.18, 20).

The political application of kindness by the Prime Minister of New Zealand has become part of the national discourse. On her Labour Party webpage, the Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern states: ‘If I could distil it down into one concept that we are pursuing in New Zealand it is this: Kindness’ (Ardern, n.d.). The value of kindness was applied in the Labour-led government’s

first Wellbeing Budget in 2018 (Dalziel et al., 2018), which this paper will discuss later. Kindness is also integral to social work ethics, to which we now turn.

Conceptualising kindness is set out in two principles in social work's Code of Ethics (ANZASW, 2019b): *Manaakitanga* and *Aroha*. *Manaakitanga* is translated as 'hospitality, kindness, generosity, support'; *aroha* as 'affection, sympathy, charity, compassion, love, empathy' (Moorfield, 2011). By exercising *manaakitanga* social workers recognise the dignity (*mana*) of others by acting with respect, kindness and compassion; and by *aroha* their responsibility for people's wellbeing. Applied to housing affordability, these two principles may be integrated in the following statement: *Social workers ensure that human dignity is honoured by decent, affordable accommodation as an expression of kindness based on a commitment to people's wellbeing.*

Such ecological thinking is a core social work practice model (Green & McDermott, 2010) and is described as the points where people interact with their environments (Sewpaul & Jones, 2005.) But to be kind to people, we must also be kind to the environment. The Oxford English Reference Dictionary identifies the origin of 'kind' as the old English *gecynde*, meaning 'natural' (Pearsall & Trumble, 1996, p. 782). To be kind is, or should be, part of our natural humanity. When kindness is embedded as a taken-for-granted value it will influence beliefs and behaviours in professional cultures. This value will be further explored in the context of kindness to the environment expressed in *te ao Māori* (the Māori world/worldview) as *kaitiakitanga*, the stewardship of *te whenua me to taiao*, the land and environment, and all within, upon and above.

The global context of this paper has already been set out as the UN's SDGs and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UNGA, 1949), instruments to which New Zealand has committed (Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade [MFAT], n.d.). The UN declaration 'Transforming our world: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development' (UNGA, 2015) began as Agenda 21 in the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) (the Rio 'Earth Summit'). These instruments apply environmental sustainability to urban planning by ensuring that we take account of the impact of cities on global climate (Ministry for the Environment, [MfE] 1993; 2016; 2018). Global concerns over climate change have been applied to Aotearoa New Zealand for 30 years by centre-left and centre-right governments. An increased focus on environmental security has been evident since the election

of the Labour-led governments in 2017 and 2020. In a 2018 speech, the environment minister David Parker unambiguously stated that ‘Climate change is the greatest environmental challenge facing the world [and] we [must] urgently reduce our emissions of greenhouse gases’ (Parker, D., 2018). The global has indeed become local.

The authors note that since the enactment of the Resource Management Act [RMA] of 1991 the issue of cost has become a factor in both the human need for decent housing and environmental concerns. Article 25 of the UDHR states that ‘everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself [sic] and of his [sic] family, including *food, clothing, housing and medical care*’ (UNGA, 1949, p. 2, emphasis added). This statement in the UDHR informs social work’s commitment to the human right to affordable housing as the ethical base for the current paper. This commitment is also unequivocally set out by the Human Rights Commission [HRC]: ‘The human right to adequate housing is binding legal obligation of the State of New Zealand’ (HRC, 2017, p. 1).

Environmental concerns are centre stage in the United Nations SDGs (UNGA, 2015) as already noted. Environmental cost factors are explicitly identified in the seminal 1992 Rio Earth Summit Declaration and are enshrined in the RMA. Rio Declaration objectives challenge the notion that the environment is a ‘free good’, calling instead for ‘*prices [that] will appropriately reflect the relative scarcity of resources*’ (Ministry for the Environment, [MfE] 1993, p. 5, emphasis added). The purpose of this approach is to place ‘environment and development at the centre of economic and political decision making’ (MfE, 1993, pp. 5, 6, 7) and finds expression in the RMA section 7 which requires that in the management of natural resources ‘all persons shall have particular regard to the *finite characteristics* of those resources’ (RMA, 1991, emphasis added.) Treasury (2017) unequivocally states that applying environmental concerns into city planning regimes has impacted housing costs:

Policy decisions have caused housing prices to rise. A 2017 study by Superu estimated that the costs of the urban planning system and infrastructure provision in Auckland were \$530,000 for an average home (Treasury, 2017, p.22, emphasis added).

The issues arising from housing and environmental costs are explored in this paper.

Structure of this paper

Section one, the introduction, served to set out the purpose and scope of this article, and offer some initial reflections on how the authors conceptualise kindness to people and equally to the environment. Environmental issues illustrate ‘global to local’ thinking which originated a century ago in an early town planning text by Patrick Geddes (1915/1998).

We develop these themes in sections two through five. Section two explores the social work perspective: human rights, social justice and housing affordability. We unpack the notion of kindness to people expressed in the first Wellbeing Budget which applied wellbeing economics (Dalziel & Saunders, 2014; Dalziel et al., 2018) and the stance taken by social work’s ‘Global Challenge number 5: Create Social Responses to a Changing Environment’ (Kemp & Palinkas, 2016). This section will also offer an overview of housing unaffordability since 1990 and describe the problem.

Section three addresses environmental resilience viewed from a global stance: the sustainability of civilisation, of the human species, and ultimately of life on earth. This grand theme encompasses climate, biodiversity, sustainability and/or mitigation of climate change (UNGA, 2015). With respect to the urban environment, these themes are discussed in the context of the United Nations’ SDG Goal number 11, calling for ‘inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities and human settlements’ (UNGA, 2015, pp. 21–22), applied to Aotearoa New Zealand. Planning for cities in a manner that accommodates their inevitable expansion is introduced through the work of Shlomo Angel (Angel et al., 2011) and one of the co-authors, Dushko Bogunovich (Tadi & Bogunovich, 2017; Scott et al., 2019). This section will also offer perspectives on the interrelated themes of human wellbeing, environmental security and resilience, and housing affordability.

In section four, the authors define kindness in the two fields. Affordable housing is kindness to people. Community resilience is kindness to people expressed through kindness to the environment. By applying systems thinking, we respond to the question expressed in the title of this article: is kindness in both fields achievable? We also draw on studies which explore therapeutic benefits of natural environments in urban settings for diverse population groups (e.g., Hartig et al., 2014). These studies suggest that green environments may have beneficial effects, for example, on the mental health of segments of the population, and thus carry important implications for city planning.

Translated to the language of ‘kindness’, this shows that being kind to fellow human beings—particularly by making sure everybody has a home—goes beyond providing subsidised public housing. It includes being ‘kind to nature’ too.

Finally, section five concludes the paper by a summative statement intended to capture the idea of kindness in both fields. The outcomes will be equity and inclusivity expressed by affordable housing; environmental sustainability; and community resilience.

2. Human rights, social justice and housing affordability: The social work perspective

In addition to its commitment to manaakitanga, kindness, noted in the Introduction to this paper, social work’s Code of Ethics is equally informed by human rights and social justice (ANZASW, 2019b). The Code adopts the Global Definition of Social Work (International Federation of Social Workers [IFSW], 2014) in applying those values as defining elements of social work in Aotearoa:

Social work promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people. *Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities are central to social work* [which] engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhance wellbeing (IFSW, 2014, emphasis added).

The Code of Ethics (ANZASW, 2019) describes social justice as the profession’s requirement to ‘inform society at large about the injustices in its midst, and to engage in action to change the structures of society that create and perpetuate injustice’ (2019, p.7).

Kindness: Wellbeing economics and the wellbeing budgets

Housing affordability falls within two interrelated disciplines: economics and urban planning. Both are significantly influenced by government policies. In recent years, these policies have focused attention on wellbeing economics and the work of the economists Paul Dalziel, Caroline Saunders and Joe Saunders (Dalziel & Saunders, 2014; Dalziel et al., 2018). Drawing on the Economics Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen’s (1999) capabilities thinking, Dalziel et al. (2018, p. 171) propose that ‘the primary purpose of economics is to contribute to enhanced wellbeing of persons.’ A review of Sen’s (1999) text that captures its underlying philosophy comments that ‘unlike most Nobel Prize-winning economists, Sen has focused on the wellbeing

of those at the bottom of society’ (Longworth, March 28, 1999). The idea that economics should primarily contribute to people’s wellbeing and that it should focus on the most marginalised populations creates a strong synergy with social work.

Wellbeing economics underpinned the New Zealand Treasury’s (2019) development of the Living Standards Framework (LSF) comprising Four Capitals: natural; human; social; and financial and physical (The Treasury, 2019, p.4). The entire focus of the Four Capitals of the LSF is ‘to achieve higher living standards to support *intergenerational wellbeing*’ (The Treasury, 2019, p.4, emphasis added). Indicators for the housing wellbeing domain are measured by household crowding and housing costs (The Treasury, 2019, p.12). Statistics measuring household crowding and housing costs go to the heart of social work concerns. Household crowding is the location of the attention drawn by the Hon Chris Hipkins to ‘the unaffordable housing crisis’ cited earlier (Hipkins, 2018). It is noteworthy that the Treasury has adopted the commonly accepted yardstick of housing costs as not exceeding 30% of household income thus informing Government policy. This can be alternatively rendered as rent or mortgage payments for a dwelling costing a household little more than three times their income. The reality is far removed from that aspirational goal. The economists Shamubeel and Selena Eaquab (2015) note that until the late 1980s, ‘house prices were the equivalent of three years or fewer of annual household income’ (2015, p.16). The contrast between the late 1980s and 2015, when Shamubeel and Selena Eaquab were writing, is stark. By 2015, median housing costs in Auckland Tāmaki Makaurau were 9.6 times the household income (Parker, 2015): over three times the Treasury’s objective.

This ‘stark contrast’ is accentuated to an even greater extent among Māori and Pacific peoples. A government-commissioned ‘Stocktake of New Zealand’s housing’ (Johnson, Howden-Chapman, & Eaquab, 2018) told the story using hard data and social deprivation. Māori home ownership in 2013 stood at 28% and for Pacific peoples 19%, compared with 57% for Europeans. Despite the availability of multiple-owned land—much very desirable and close to major centres—Māori encounter ‘complicated and disconnected processes for getting the necessary approvals and funding’ from local government and state lenders (Auditor-General, 2011, p.10). The ongoing nature of these institutional obstacles is apparent: seven years after the Auditor-General’s investigation, the stocktake report by Johnson et al. (2018) revealed no improvement. When forced into the private rental market, Māori and Pasifika:

Generally pay a much higher proportion of their disposable household income on housing than owner-occupiers or social housing tenants. Because rising housing costs are increasingly impoverishing low-income households, one response to these costs is household crowding, which adds to the serious risks of infectious diseases and hospitalisation, and another is increased rates of homelessness. Concerted effective policy action is needed to increase home ownership and rental security for Māori and Pacific households (Johnson et al., 2018, p.5).

These tangible issues are coupled with immensely significant cultural affinities to the land. The Auditor-General Lyn Provost quoted a Māori participant in her overview:

Throughout the audit, people we met reinforced to us the *primary importance of land to cultural and social identity and its status as a taonga tuku iho* [treasured heritage] to be safeguarded for future generations. In their words:

... it feels awesome to be on my land. The land of my ancestors. For the land and culture is not ours to sell, pollute, or desecrate. It is our children's inheritance and our future generations' ... (Auditor-General, 2011, p.10, emphasis added).

For social workers, the ethical commitment to *tūrangawaewae*, a place where one has a right to stand, where one has rights of residence (ANZASW, 2019b, p. 15), is intrinsic to their practice with Māori and Pasifika peoples. Connection to the land as a *taonga tuku iho*—a treasure to be passed on—expresses the deep commitment by Māori to *kaitiakitanga*, stewardship of the land (Moorfield, 2011). Social work's ethical values of *manaakitanga* and the recognition of the dignity (*mana*) of others by acting with respect and kindness recognises that stewardship. By exercising social work's ethical commitment to *aroha*—compassion and empathy, the profession demonstrates its responsibility for people's environmental wellbeing.

Equally, there is a strong school of economic theory which argues the purpose of economics is also environmental: taking into account ecological services and costs and thus recognising the loss of and therefore the need to protect and increase natural capital resources (Costanza et al., 2015; Hawken et al., 2010; Stern, 2009; 2015). Natural capital is described by Treasury (2019, p.4) as 'all aspects of the natural environment that support life and human activity

includ[ing] land, soil, water, plants and animals, minerals and energy resources'. Full treatment of these themes awaits a future paper.

The question for social workers coming out of these commitments to housing wellbeing may be phrased: Is the provision of household wellbeing an expression of kindness? Statistics provide the hard data giving the evidence of societal injustices and the ethical call to inform society of those injustices. But a crisis depicted by statistics does not convey the human factor.

Homelessness as the extreme end of the housing crisis was evident well before the election of the Labour-led government in 2017. The kindness question is appropriately considered in that context. Figure 1 is a frame taken from an Al Jazeera report ('Homeless in New Zealand') aired in August 2016. When her rented house was sold, this Pasifika woman was forced to move into a car with her three children and elderly mother. The emotional state of this mother is portrayed in the frame. If the provision of adequate accommodation at least contributes to wellbeing, the authors of this paper propose that it is a kind act.

Figure 1

Homeless in New Zealand - thousands living in garages and cars. (Al Jazeera, 2016)



That said, social work is not confined to issues of housing affordability. We now consider the profession's response to environmental concerns which are of equal significance in this paper.

Responding to environmental changes: Social work's 'Grand Challenge' number 5

Social work and urban planning intersect in the fifth of twelve Grand Challenges faced by global social work initiated in the United States in 2013 (Sherraden et al., 2014). The fifth Grand Challenge, Create Social Responses to a Changing Environment, was introduced in 2015 (Kemp et al., 2016). One of three 'critical areas' recommended by these authors for the fifth Grand Challenge calls for the strengthen[ing] of urban resilience policies in order to engage marginalised communities in adaptation planning regarding climate change. Because 66% of the world's population will live in cities by 2050, there is a critical need for equitable, inclusive, and culturally responsive policies addressing the linked challenges of climate change and urbanization (Kemp et al., 2016, pp. 1–2).

By virtue of the global nature of social work, actions recommended by Kemp and colleagues are eminently applicable to Aotearoa New Zealand. Advocacy represents a core social work ethical value and practice initiative (ANZASW, 2019b, pp. 10, 12, 13) and includes 'cross-organisation collaborative approaches' (2019b, p. 13). Advocacy suggested by Kemp et al. (2016, p. 2) include efforts to foster urban resilience by ensuring 'safe, secure and affordable housing'; but the authors of the current paper propose that this is not possible without developing new, decentralised and locally controlled types of urban infrastructure. Kemp et al. suggest that 'social workers should be included in adaptation planning teams [because of their ability to] bridge communities, disciplines, and sectors' (2016, p. 2).

The authors propose that social work's fifth Grand Challenge offers a pathway by which their two disciplines, urban planning and social work, can be practically applied in Aotearoa New Zealand. The work described by Kemp and colleagues provides the necessary interdisciplinary concepts for this paper and future action (Bronstein, 2003).

3. Environmental Resilience

The housing affordability crisis in New Zealand has been mainly debated as an economic, social and an urban and architectural design issue. Rarely has it been related to the ongoing environmental crisis, manifested principally in the changing climate and loss of biodiversity and natural habitat. Indeed, the link is not obvious. The acute urgency of the housing crisis somehow seems to exclude the bigger picture of global physical processes and the more long-term orientation of environmental policy. We will however argue here that without long-term

security, affordability means little, and that the concepts of ‘wellbeing’ and ‘kindness’ are equally relevant in the areas of environmental, and housing policy.

Housing is fundamentally an urban phenomenon. In a physical sense, housing is what cities are made of more than of anything else. The five principal land-use categories in urban geography urban planning are ‘residential’, ‘commercial/industrial’, ‘institutional/public’, ‘recreational’ and ‘transport/infrastructure’. This is based on the conventional view of cities being comprised of areas where we ‘live, work, shop and play’ and technical systems which connect and support them (Angel et al., 2011). The category ‘residential’ takes by far more land than other activities. In most cities, housing occupies about 60 to 70% of all urban land, while the rest is shared among the other four uses (see, e.g., Auckland Council, 2021). Clearly, the housing stock and land are the place where most major urban issues manifest themselves.

Arguably, the biggest global ‘urban issue’ today is the role of cities in the ongoing global environmental challenge. In this ominous process, cities have a triple role. They are the principal aggregate cause of global warming because they consume about three quarters of all resources and generate about three quarters of all waste; they are the principal victims of the consequence of global warming through storms, floods, droughts, sea level rise; they harbour the greatest potential to solve this grave situation: reducing the rate and volume of their metabolism lies at the heart of most mitigation and adaptation measures (United Nations, 2021a,b,c).

This overview—even so short—demonstrates the crucial role cities have to play in the battle to save humanity from an environmental catastrophe. Looking closer at the cities, it is clear that the urban housing complex is the main tool in that battle. How we plan, design, build and use our dwellings determines the consumption of planetary resources and the generation of waste, especially greenhouse gases (GHG) expected to be assimilated by the five planetary ‘sinks’: the biosphere, pedosphere, lithosphere, hydrosphere and atmosphere (refer to the glossary at the end of this article for definitions of these terms). As noted earlier, the urban dimension of the global environmental crisis was recognised in the UN’s Sustainable Development Agenda as early as in 1992, at the Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit (UNCED, 1992). Later, in October 2015, it was formalised into the 17 Sustainable Development Goals [SDGs], of which the SDG 11 is about cities. (UNGA, 2015; United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2021).

Of the 17 Goals, this paper focuses on SDG 11: Cities, which defines its mission with four critical attributes: ‘Make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable’ (United Nations, 2021c). ‘Resilient’ and ‘sustainable’ refer to climate adaptation and climate mitigation, respectively.

In addition to the UNDP and the Sustainable Development Goals, the role of cities in the climate crisis is explored by the UN Environment Programme [UNEP] (UNEP, 2021) and UN-Habitat (UN Habitat, 2012-2021). UNEP and Habitat also focus on the role of cities in the climate crisis. UNEP argues the case for ‘[making] cities an integral part of the solution in fighting climate change’ (UNEP, 2021); UN-Habitat is now promoting its flagship programme ‘Climate Action 4 Cities’ (UN Habitat, 2012–2021). The UN-Habitat initiative was the principal backer of the New Urban Agenda declaration adopted at the Habitat III conference in October 2016 (Habitat III, 2017).

It is important to note that in these documents the words ‘sustainability’ and ‘resilience’ almost always occur together. This shows that the understanding at the UN level is that we already live in a warmer world and climate change consequences are already affecting cities. Consequently, no matter what mitigation measures we undertake from now on, a certain ‘amount’ of changed climate is inevitable, as is becoming increasingly obvious from the ever more frequent extreme weather events worldwide. Therefore, adaptation measures are now imperative. This poses the question: How much climate change is inevitable from now on? This is a difficult forecast to make and scientists differ on answers. Current credible opinions range from ‘moderately optimistic’ (‘we can still avoid the worst consequences if we act immediately and severely reduce the emissions’) to ‘extremely pessimistic’ (‘we passed a number of tipping points and no matter what we do now catastrophic impacts are inevitable, and will come soon’) (UNGA, 2015). Sadly, the absence of urgent and radical action from key governments even five years after the famous Paris Agreement tell us that the ‘pessimists’ are more realistic and may eventually win the argument.

We should also heed the ancient rule of good strategic planning—the precautionary principle [PP]— and plan for the worst and hope for the best. Gollier and Treich (2013) suggest that the ‘basic meaning of the PP is clear: [it] rejects the claim that uncertainty justifies inaction, and its ambition is to empower policymakers to take anticipatory action even under scientific

uncertainty’ (Gollier & Treich, 2013, p.332). These authors note that in the environmental context, principle 15 of the Rio Declaration applies the PP in this statement:

Where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty shall not be used as a reason for postponing cost-effective measures to prevent environmental degradation (UNCED, 1992, p.6).

In other words, in urban planning—housing included—we should now plan, design and build buildings and infrastructure as if catastrophic climate change consequences are inevitable. This means housing should be not only affordable, it should be also resilient to the vagaries of the climate which are inevitable on a planet two—perhaps even three—degrees warmer.

The authors propose that it is in this context that current mainstream urban planning and design thinking in Aotearoa New Zealand needs debate and correction of some of its tenets. Arguably, ‘urban sprawl’ concerns are pre-eminent in that current thinking. Haaland and van den Bosch (2015) define ‘sprawl’ as ‘urban development with low-density housing, both residential and commercial, segregated land-use, high level of automobile use combined with lack of public transport, which is in high demand for land’ (2015, p. 760). Sprawl is mainly seen as a consequence of residential development, is considered to be wasteful of farmland and energy, and a source of growing transport emissions. In terms of sustainability, it would be better indeed to have more compact development. But the problem is that if we create higher density development, the risk of some disaster or crisis grows too, as denser development means more people exposed to impact and more people dependent on vulnerable urban infrastructure (Desai, 2020). As we move to the paradigm of ‘resilient urbanism’ by promoting cities which can withstand future, climate-induced disasters and crises (Habitat III, 2017, p. 21) the authors of this paper propose that low density is preferable as it contains all sorts of possibilities for decentralised, localised infrastructure and general self-sufficiency in vital services and resources. Rooftop solar energy, rainwater collection and dry sanitation are among the most obvious alternatives to centralised services.

Following this reasoning, we may yet recognise urban sprawl as an opportunity rather than a problem. It is an opportunity to design resilient housing, defined as residential units with their own infrastructure and local sources of vital resources such as food, water, fuel and power

(Habitat III, 2017, p. 21). Recently, there have been calls for an alternative, open-minded approach to the design and planning of peri-urban areas in Auckland as a reasonable compromise with the relentless pressure for urban expansion after decades of an ineffective containment policy (Silva, 2019).

But there is yet another opportunity here. Lower density/low rise housing also means cheaper construction, and more peripheral land is in greater supply and thus of lower price. Together with fewer city planning constraints typical of peri-urban and semi-rural areas, it turns out that such housing is potentially more affordable, on top of being more climate-resilient.

It is in this sense—achieving both price affordability and environmental resilience in lower density—that the housing and urban development overall agenda might go hand in hand as New Zealand prepares to face the coming climate emergency on its own terms while also battling an acute housing price inflation. It is hard to imagine anything as more contributing to the notion of ‘wellbeing’ than affordable and climate-proof housing being built inside an overall climate-resilient model of low-density urban development.

We have not been kind to the planet. The consequence of that now is that metaphorically the planet is becoming “unkind” to us, although in fact our actions are the causation. The poorer among us, who already struggle to acquire any housing, will be punished disproportionately. The only way to be kind to them is for of all us to become kinder to the planet and slow down our consumption and our emissions generation, in some hope that the worst type of climate change can be avoided. But since it is becoming clear that some degree of bad climate will affect us no matter what we do now, the last kind thing we can do is enable all of us access to affordable and climate-ready housing.

Planning for cities

The work of Shlomo Angel (Angel et al., 1993; Angel et al., 2011) and one of the co-authors, Dushko Bogunovich (Tadi & Bogunovich, 2017; Scott et al., 2019; Bogunovich & Bradbury, 2012) offer an appropriate connecting theme to summarise this section of the paper. That ‘connecting theme’ brings together human wellbeing, environmental security and resilience, and housing affordability. In earlier comments, we noted that the maligned ‘urban sprawl’ offers in fact a creative solution to the simultaneous call for kindness to the environment and to people. Consistent with our observations, Angel and collaborators propose that:

The prevailing urban planning paradigm now guiding the expansion of cities and metropolitan areas is premised on the containment of urban sprawl, but containment is not appropriate in rapidly urbanizing countries where most growth is now taking place. Our analysis suggests a different paradigm—the making room paradigm—as a more realistic strategy for cities and metropolitan regions that need to prepare for their inevitable expansion (Angel et al., 2011, p.2).

While New Zealand is not a ‘rapidly urbanising country,’ it does have a high degree of urbanisation: 86.62% in 2019 (O’Neill, 2021). Its biggest metropolitan area—Greater Auckland—is growing rapidly; but it is subject to the ‘compact city planning model’, supported by specific lines of containment, the so-called ‘Metropolitan Urban Limits’ (Bogunovich & Bradbury, 2012, pp. 5–6; Silva 2019). This approach requires that the city’s expansion is contained and that building density is increased via 5-6 storey apartment, terraced housing and office blocks. Its advocates believe that benefits to be gained include ‘more efficient use of public transport, lessen[ing] dependency on the car, with the associated benefits of less pollution and an increase in pedestrian and cyclist activity ... lower energy consumption, a better social mix and tighter community life’ (Bogunovich & Bradbury, 2012, pp. 5–6).

Bogunovich and Bradbury (2012) list several reasons informing their assessment of the current planning model for Auckland as ‘inappropriate and ineffective’ (p.6). These include technology, the mass and inexpensive use of cars, the geographical location of the city, urban resilience and sustainability, and the ‘liveability/lifestyle factor’ (Bogunovich & Bradbury, 2012, p.6). These two urban planners propose that further uptake of information, environmental and transport technologies will further strengthen ‘decentralisation and mobility’; that cars have shaped Auckland’s growth (‘the horse has well and truly bolted’) and will continue to do so; that high density cities create ‘dangerous’ dependence on outside resources provisioned by centralised, vulnerable infrastructure; and that Auckland should embrace a ‘close connection to its extraordinary natural landscape’ as appealing to its current and future populations (Bogunovich & Bradbury, 2012, p.6).

Having said that, they also acknowledge the need and capacity for some degree of intensification of the existing city fabric. But contrary to the Unitary Plan’s vision that this is almost evenly distributed across the city, they suggest that most of the intensification takes

place in a single, central corridor of the city—the ‘spine’—with excellent rapid transit and motorway links.

They sum up their proposal for a ‘linear growth’ city-region as enabling access to both the ‘green’ and ‘blue arcadia’: green being such features as the Waitakere (and other) Ranges, and blue being the foreshore and water surrounding the city. The current paper suggests that Bogunovich and Bradbury’s (2012) summative statement captures the wellbeing of both the environment and people:

The resulting concept is a combination of the water city and the linear city. The duality is deliberate and fortunate – the two ideas highlight the dialectic of contemporary life where the rationality of work and production opposes the hedonism of free time and consumption. More importantly, the two herald the new culture of urban living – the reconciliation of the work-play dichotomy and the meeting of economy and lifestyle. The water city symbolises the attraction of the beach and the waterside living; it embodies the philosophy of a good life between nature and the city (Bogunovich & Bradbury, 2012, p. 7).

Their schematic depiction graphically illustrates the words (figure 2). Article word limits prevent a detailed description of this proposal; but for the purposes of this paper we believe that this conceptual strategy of Auckland’s future growth argues that most intensification should take place in a single central corridor of heavy transport and other infrastructure, while east and west of it low density development can proceed, but structured around local suburban and peri-urban hubs. The ‘plans or building sites already in place’ are inefficient because they cause conflicts with local communities, burden local infrastructure, and they still end up relying on individual transport.

4. The Challenge: Kindness to People and Environment

The introduction to this paper drew attention to systems leadership thinking, described as a ‘shared understanding of complex problems’ (Senge et al., 2015, p.28). Systems thinking is the lens through which social work engages with the challenge posed by a commitment to be kind to both people and environment. The authors have argued that human wellbeing is inextricably connected to environmental wellbeing; that addressing housing affordability as an expression

of kindness to marginalised populations is meaningless without an equal commitment to environmental security. We proposed that both issues ‘are two sides of a single metaphorical coin’. Those two coin faces may be brought together by ecological systems thinking which replaces adversarial positionalities by mutual dependence seeking common ground for desired outcomes. Systems thinking is particularly applicable to the outcome sought by the focus in this paper on the UN’s SDG 11 designed to ‘make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable’ (UN, 2021).

The authors propose that the roots of systems leadership are found in appreciative enquiry which fosters dialogue and a ‘capacity [to] generate fresh alternatives for social action’ (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 2013, p.22; and see Woods & Lythberg, this volume). Systems thinking could easily occupy an entire paper. For the purposes of this article, the overview offered above is intended to provide an underpinning conceptualisation of how two disciplines—urban planning and social work—can equally contribute to a desired outcome: a commitment to be kind to people via kindness to the environment. It is not a sequentially ordered ‘how to’ process guide but a means by which the practitioners of those disciplines are enabled to perceive each other’s perspectives. Positionalities are set aside in favour of advancing that desired outcome. The tangible product of consciously adopting systems thinking in the context of this paper will be to facilitate the therapeutic benefits to city dwellers of natural environments. In words already quoted, those benefits are expressed by ‘the water city [which] symbolises the attraction of the beach and the waterside living [thus] embod[ying] the philosophy of a *good life between nature and the city*’ (Bogunovich & Bradbury, 2012, p. 7, emphasis added).

The benefits of applying kindness to the natural environments are multiple. They start with the health and quality of life benefits from living close to nature, as expressed in the ‘linear city-region’ vision for Auckland by Bogunovich & Bradbury (2012) depicted in figure 2. The benefits further extend to the ability of a dispersed regional-scale city to use local natural resources and thus reduce consumption of resources hauled from far away. This helps reduce GHG emissions. Finally, the low-density regional city which relies on local resources is less dependent on supply lines always functioning. This means less vulnerability and more resilience, an aspect of security which is becoming ever more important as we head into the uncertain times of climate change.

Figure 2 The linear city and the water city, forming a 'necklace' of town centres. (Source: Bogunovich & Bradley, 2012, p. 8)



The 'good life': Benefits of a green environment for city dwellers

We draw this section of the paper to an appropriate conclusion by refocusing on the UN's SDG 11. A literature demonstrating 'the health benefits of contact with nature' (Hartig et al., 2014, p. 207) is growing exponentially. Although in process of definitive formulation, the notion of kindness to people as an outcome of kindness to the environment has high relevance to urban planning (Hartig et al., 2014). A Google Scholar search using the terms suggested by Hartig and his colleagues ('greenspace and health') (2014, p. 209) reveals no less than 17,100 references in the academic literature from 2014 to the present. Direct links have been identified between the provision of 'urban green space' as 'beneficial to health' (Jennings et al., 2017, p.73), although these authors propose caution as risk factors are unclear. The specific benefits of green space are listed as 'opportunities for physical activity, improved mental restoration and cognitive abilities, and positive social outcomes such as reduced crime' (Jennings et al., 2017, p.73). Jennings and colleagues also connect green spaces and social justice:

Limited access to urban green spaces and their respective health benefits involve issues of environmental and social justice (Jennings et al. 2012). Specifically, social justice perspectives seek to illuminate limited access to urban green space that arises from historical discrimination and/or exclusionary policy or management regimes and the absence of policy to rectify unjust conditions. (Jennings et al., 2017, p.71).

These observations create clear synergies between urban planning designed to enable access to green spaces and the seminal commitment to social justice as a core value of social work (Marsh, 2005). The authors of the current paper argue that even this limited exploration of green spaces and consequential health benefits to urban communities makes some critical connections that we have proposed: the benefits of an intersection between urban economics, city planning and human and environmental wellbeing.

We propose that kindness to the environment will indeed result in health and social benefits to city dwellers, particularly disadvantaged communities. The two disciplines represented by the authors have contributed to an integrated pathway which helps to realise the objectives of the UN's SDG 11: 'cities [which are] inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable' (UN, 2021). Thus spatial city planning and intentional policies designed to free up the release of land for building will combine the best of both worlds: a solid contribution to housing affordability while prioritising those sustainable objectives. A 'necklace' of town centres, or 'mini-hubs',

make up local communities, which have almost all their vital services provided locally and are relatively self-sufficient in emergencies compared with the current ‘compact city planning model’ noted earlier. Rain water collection and waste disposal systems are an example of these local services. Plus, people in them know each other better—because they share—and are therefore more likely to help each other and stick together in hard times.

The benefits of a green environment for urban dwellers are not limited to the healing effect of nature: what the authors describe as ‘liveability.’ ‘Sustainability’ and ‘resilience’ are equally identified by SDG 11 whose purpose, as already noted, is to ‘make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable’ (UN, 2021). Sustainability, or climate mitigation, is to be achieved by reducing consumption and emissions: rain water collection and localised waste disposal have already been identified as examples. Resilience, or climate adaptation, is to prepare for the inevitable increase of global temperatures by increasing local self-sufficiency.

5. A summative statement: Kindness as an ethical commitment

This paper was written in the uncertain times engendered by COVID-19 lockdowns and other pandemic responses. Although the pandemic is not explored in the article, the authors draw attention to the widely reported departure of some residents, workers and businesses from the bigger and more central urban areas in many countries, in reaction to the perceived greater risk of infection in denser, or more crowded, places. For example, Desai’s (2020) examination of high urban population densities and what he describes as their ‘vulnerabilities during a pandemic’ (Desai, 2020, p.2). The connection between this observation and the themes of the current paper are expressed by Desai in stark language:

The rapid spread of the COVID-19 virus and the high death rates seen in hyperdense megacities across the world should be a *wakeup call for urban planners, designers, policymakers and administrators to reconsider the long-held belief that denser cities are indeed better cities*. It is time to rethink how the overall ‘sustainability’ quotient of densities becomes not just counterproductive but also life-threatening in the face of biological disasters of the scale and magnitude of COVID-19 (Desai, 2020, p. 2, emphasis added).

Based on such observations and actual recent demographic data which show that an ‘urban exodus’ is in process, we propose that COVID-19 is arguably another potential driver of urban decentralisation and lower urban density. This adds yet another reason to argue that lower urban densities carry some benefits, and that ‘urban sprawl’ is not all about negative outcomes. We have shown here that more land supply at the urban periphery in principle brings the price of developable land down, a key factor in affordable housing. We have also demonstrated multiple environmental benefits from more dispersed development. They range from more space for living nature in the city—which in close contact supports human physical and mental health—to more reliance on green infrastructure instead of carbon-intensive technical solutions, and to more reliance on local resources. The latter, as a form of resource self-sufficiency, beefs up the resilience of a community in the face of future adverse climate-related events and situations.

In summary, lower urban densities coupled with more dispersed urban form and more polycentric urban structure, can satisfy three criteria of good urban development in the 21st century:

- housing affordability (equity and inclusivity);
- environmental sustainability (climate and biodiversity loss mitigation); and
- community resilience (greater security by relying on local resources).

Translated to the language of ‘kindness’, this shows that being kind to fellow human beings—particularly by making sure everybody has a home—goes beyond providing subsidised public housing. It includes being ‘kind to nature’ too. Only then we can count on ‘nature’s kindness’ to us. In the city environment, this means protecting the nature, living close to it, reducing emissions and harvesting local natural resources.

Glossary

Term	Meaning
Biosphere	<p>The biosphere is made up of the parts of Earth where life exists. The biosphere extends from the deepest root systems of trees to the dark environment of ocean trenches, to lush rain forests and high mountaintops.</p> <p>(Source: National Geographic Resource Library biosphere National Geographic Society)</p>
Pedosphere	<p>The pedosphere (from Greek <i>πέδον</i> <i>pedon</i> 'ground' or 'earth' and <i>σφαῖρα</i> <i>sphaira</i> 'sphere') is the outermost layer of the Earth that is composed of soil and subject to soil formation processes. It exists at the interface of the lithosphere, atmosphere, hydrosphere and biosphere.</p> <p>(Source: Wikipedia https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pedosphere)</p>
Lithosphere	<p>The lithosphere is the solid, outer part of the Earth, including the brittle upper portion of the mantle and the crust.</p> <p>(Source: National Geographic Resource Library https://www.nationalgeographic.org/encyclopedia/lithosphere)</p>
Hydrosphere	<p>A hydrosphere is the total amount of water on a planet. The hydrosphere includes water that is on the surface of the planet, underground, and in the air.</p> <p>(Source: National Geographic Resource Library hydrosphere National Geographic Society)</p>
Atmosphere	<p>We live at the bottom of an invisible ocean called the atmosphere, a layer of gases surrounding our planet. Nitrogen and oxygen account for 99 percent of the gases in dry air, with argon, carbon dioxide, helium, neon, and other gases making up minute portions.</p> <p>(Source: National Geographic Resource Library https://www.nationalgeographic.org/encyclopedia/atmosphere/)</p>

REFERENCES

- Al Jazeera (2016). 'Homeless in New Zealand - thousands living in garages and cars'. Al Jazeera, retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=TZ_Fopka524
- Angel, S., Mayo, S. K., & Stephens, W. L. (1993). The housing indicators program: A report on progress and plans for the future. *Netherlands Journal of Housing and the Built Environment*, 8(1), 13-48. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.auckland.ac.nz/10.1007/BF02503146>
- Angel, S., Parent, J., Civco, D. L., & Blei, A. M. (2011). *Making Room for a Planet of Cities*. Lincoln Institute of Land Policy. Retrieved from <https://www.lincolninst.edu/publications/policy-focus-reports/making-room-planet-cities>
- Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers. (2019a). ANZASW response to the 2019 budget [Press release]. Retrieved from <https://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/PO1905/S00544/anzasw-response-to-the-2019-budget.htm>
- Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers. (2019b). *Code of Ethics*: Author.
- Ardern, J. (n.d.) *Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern*. <https://www.labour.org.nz/jacindaardern>
- Attwood, M., Pedler, M., Pritchard, S., & Wilkinson, D. (2003). *Leading change: A guide to whole systems working*: Policy Press.
- Auckland Council. (2021). *Auckland's capacity for growth*. Retrieved from <https://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/plans-projects-policies-reports-bylaws/our-plans-strategies/auckland-plan/development-strategy/Pages/aucklands-capacity-for-growth.aspx>
- Auditor-General. (2011). *Government planning and support for housing on Māori land*: Auditor-General. Retrieved from <https://oag.parliament.nz/2011/housing-on-maori-land/docs/housing-on-maori-land.pdf>
- Bogunovich, D., & Bradbury, M. (2012). Auckland 2040: A resilient urban region on the water. *Planning Quarterly*, 184, 4-8.
- Bronstein, L. R. (2003). A Model for Interdisciplinary Collaboration. *Social Work*, 48(3), 297-306. 10.1093/sw/48.3.297
- Cooperrider, D. L., & Srivastva, S. (2013). Appreciative inquiry in organizational life. In D. L. Cooperrider, Zandee, D. P., Godwin, L. N., Avital, M., & Boland, B. (Eds.), *Advances in Appreciative Inquiry, Volume 4 : Organizational Generativity : The Appreciative Inquiry Summit and a Scholarship of Transformation* (pp. 3-67): Emerald Insight.

- Costanza, R., Cumberland, J. H., Daly, H. E., Goodland, R. J. A., Norgaard, R. B., Kubiszewski, I., & Franco, C. (2015). *An introduction to ecological economics* (2nd ed.): CRC Press.
- Desai, D. D. (2020). Urban Densities and the Covid-19 Pandemic: Upending the Sustainability Myth of Global Megacities. *ORF Occasional Paper*, 244, 1 - 38. Retrieved from <https://www.orfonline.org/research/urban-densities-and-the-covid-19-pandemic-upending-the-sustainability-myth-of-global-megacities-65606/>
- Eaqub, S., & Eaqub, S. (2015). *Generation rent: Rethinking New Zealand's priorities*. Bridget Williams Books.
- Geddes, P. (1915/1998). *Cities in evolution*: Routledge/Thoemmes Press 1998.
- Gollier, C., & Treich, N. (2013). Option value and precaution. In J. F. Shogren (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of energy, natural resource, and environmental economics* (pp. 332 - 338): Elsevier.
- Green, D., & McDermott, F. (2010). Social work from inside and between complex systems: Perspectives on person-in-environment for today's social work. *British Journal of Social Work*, 40(8), 2414-2430. 10.1093/bjsw/bcq056
- Haaland, C., & van den Bosch, C. K. (2015). Challenges and strategies for urban green-space planning in cities undergoing densification: A review. *Urban Forestry & Urban Greening*, 14(4), 760-771. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ufug.2015.07.009>
- Habitat III. (2017). *New Urban Agenda*. Retrieved from <https://habitat3.org/wp-content/uploads/NUA-English.pdf>
- Hartig, T., Mitchell, R., Vries, S. d., & Frumkin, H. (2014). Nature and Health. *Annual Review of Public Health*, 35(1), 207-228. 10.1146/annurev-publhealth-032013-182443
- Hawken, P., Lovins, A. B., & Lovins, L. H. (2010). *Natural capitalism: The next industrial revolution* (2nd ed.): Earthscan.
- Heidegger, M. (2001). *Poetry, language, thought* (1st ed.): Perennial Classics.
- Hipkins, C. (2018, October 2), Speech to the PPTA Conference [Press release]. Retrieved from <https://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/PA1810/S00019/hon-chris-hipkins-speech-to-the-ppta-conference.htm>
- Human Rights Commission Te Kāhu Tika Tangata. (2017). *The human right to adequate housing in New Zealand*: Human Rights Commission. Retrieved from https://www.hrc.co.nz/files/4215/1363/5639/2017_07_25_-_Right_to_housing_flyer_-_updated.pdf
- International Federation of Social Workers. (2014). *Global definition of the social work profession*: Author.

- Jennings, V., Floyd, M. F., Shanahan, D., Coutts, C., & Sinykin, A. (2017). Emerging issues in urban ecology: Implications for research, social justice, human health, and well-being. *Population and Environment*, 39(1), 69-86. 10.1007/s11111-017-0276-0
- Johnson, A., Howden-Chapman, P., & Eaqub, S. (2018). *A Stocktake of New Zealand's Housing*: New Zealand Government. Retrieved from <https://www.beehive.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2018-02/A%20Stocktake%20Of%20New%20Zealand's%20Housing.pdf>
- Kemp, S. P., Mason, L. R., Palinkas, L. A., Rechkemmer, A., & Teixeira, S. (2016). *Policy Recommendations for Meeting the Grand Challenge to Create Social Responses to a Changing Environment*: American Academy of Social Work & Social Welfare.
- Longworth, R. C. (March 28, 1999). Amartya Sen, Chicago Tribune. Retrieved from <https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/ct-xpm-1999-03-28-9903280117-story.html>
- Marsh, J. C. (2005). Social Justice: Social Work's Organising Value. *Social Work*, 50(4), 293-294
- Ministry for the Environment & Local Government Association. (1993). Making connections: An overview of Agenda 21: Author
- Ministry for the Environment and Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment (2016). Recommendations and decisions report on the Policy Statement on Urban Development Capacity: Author.
- Ministry for the Environment (2018). National Policy Statement on Urban Development Capacity: Summary evaluation report of Housing and Business Development Capacity Assessments for high-growth urban areas: Author.
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. (nd). Sustainable Development Goals. Retrieved from <https://www.mfat.govt.nz/en/peace-rights-and-security/work-with-the-un-and-other-partners/new-zealand-and-the-sustainable-development-goals-sdgs/>
- Moorfield, J. C. (2011). *Te aka : Māori-English, English-Māori dictionary and index* (New expanded ed.): Pearson.
- O'Neill, A. (2021). New Zealand: Urbanization from 2009 to 2019. Retrieved June 16, 2021, from Statista <https://www.statista.com/statistics/455899/urbanization-in-new-zealand/#:~:text=Urbanization%20in%20New%20Zealand%202019.%20This%20statistic%20shows,total%20population%20lived%20in%20urban%20areas%20and%20cities>
- Parker C. (2015). *Housing supply, choice and affordability: Trends, economic drivers, and possible policy interventions*: Auckland City Council.
- Resource Management Act 1991. <https://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/1991/0069/latest/DLM230265.html>.

- Silva, C. (2019). Auckland's Urban Sprawl, Policy Ambiguities and the Peri-Urbanisation to Pukekohe. *Urban Science*, 3(1), 1-20. 10.3390/urbansci3010001. <https://www.mdpi.com/2413-8851/3/1/1>
- Scott, D., Bogunovich, D., & Bradbury, M. (2019). Designing Aotearoa New Zealand with nature: landscape regeneration of Western Waiheke Island. *Socio-Ecological Practice Research*, 1(3), 265-281. 10.1007/s42532-019-00034-2
- Sherraden, M., Barth, R. P., Brekke, J., Fraser, M., Mandersheid, R., & Padgett, D. (2014). *Social is fundamental: Introduction and context for Grand Challenges for social work*. American Academy of Social Work and Social Welfare.
- Stern, N. H. (2009). *A blueprint for a safer planet: How to manage climate change and create a new era of progress and prosperity*: Bodley Head.
- Stern, N. H. (2015). *Why Are We Waiting?: The Logic, Urgency, and Promise of Tackling Climate Change*. Retrieved from <https://www-jstor-org.ezproxy.auckland.ac.nz/stable/j.ctt17kk7g6>
- The Treasury. (2019). *Our country, our future, our people. The Living Standards Framework: Dashboard Update*: Author. Retrieved from <https://www.treasury.govt.nz/publications/tp/living-standards-framework-dashboard-update>
- United Nations General Assembly. (2015). *Transforming our world: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. United Nations General Assembly. Retrieved from <https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda>
- United Nations Development Programme. (2021a). *The Sustainable Development Goals in action*. Retrieved from <http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sustainable-development-goals.html>
- United Nations Environment Programme. (2021b). *Cities and climate change*. Retrieved from <https://www.unep.org/explore-topics/resource-efficiency/what-we-do/cities/cities-and-climate-change>
- United Nations. (2021c). *Sustainable Development Goals. Goal 11: Make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable*. Retrieved from [Cities – United Nations Sustainable Development](https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/cities/)
- UN Habitat. (2012-2021). *Climate Action 4 Cities*. Retrieved from <https://unhabitat.org/climate-action>
- Williams, J. H. (2016). Grand Challenges for Social Work: Research, Practice, and Education. *Social Work Research*, 40(2), 67-70. 10.1093/swr/svw007