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Māori housing organisation partners with ANZ to provide affordable homes on Māori land

Māori housing organisation Ōwhata Kōhanga Rākau has signed a deed with ANZ New Zealand to provide lending for whānau to purchase affordable housing on Māori land.

Ōwhata Kōhanga Rākau (OKR) is developing a large-scale mixed-tenure housing village on whenua Māori at Ōwhata, in Rotorua.

The development will comprise social and affordable rentals, homes for kaumātua and affordable homes for sale using a unique shared ownership model. OKR aims to provide a sustainable and supportive community environment for whānau.

ANZ NZ has partnered with OKR to enable whānau to access finance to build leasehold homes, with OKR contributing a portion of the cost and becoming a co-owner on the leasehold title – ensuring that the homes remain affordable and accessible.

So far, ANZ has approved loans for four whānau in the development, which will have a total of 27 leasehold homes.

Jason Rogers, Ōwhata Kōhanga Rākau chairman, said the collaboration was “game-changing” for whānau.

“Some of the families that ANZ are providing mortgages to, they had basically given up on home ownership completely.

“This has given them hope and they're going to build an inheritance for their future, for their kids, for the families. It's transformational.”

To be part of the development, potential home buyers must have a connection to the whenua, which are ancestral lands of Ngāti Te Roro-o-te-Rangi.

Construction of the development of the shared-ownership homes will begin in October this year. Thirty-eight rental homes are already on the site and housing whānau with affordable rents.

TeRa Arthur, ANZ branch area manager, said the deed with Ōwhata Kōhanga Rākau was a significant step in ANZ's work to make it easier for Māori customers to access their collectively owned whenua for housing.

“The collaboration with OKR marks a milestone for ANZ in our affordable housing journey and represents a model we hope to replicate with other providers in the future,” Mr Arthur said.

Ōwhata Kōhanga Rākau is supported by the Tūāpapa Kura Kāinga – Ministry of Housing and Urban Development's progressive home ownership (PHO) fund, which helps providers deliver shared ownership, rent-to-buy, and leasehold arrangements. As an approved PHO provider, OKR will initially hold a 25% share in the home. Families will begin with a 75% share and progressively purchase OKR's portion over time until they achieve 100% home ownership.

- For more information on Ōwhata Kōhanga Rākau, click [here](#).
- For more information on the progressive home ownership fund, click [here](#)

ANZ research into Māori home ownership

The agreement with Ōwhata Kōhanga Rākau follows new research from ANZ that found making it easier to build on collectively owned land would improve the rates of home ownership for Māori.

ANZ's internal research report – Ko Tū, Ko Rongo – examines the barriers and challenges Māori face in their home ownership journeys and what role ANZ and the banking sector can play in improving outcomes.

Ko Tū, Ko Rongo is one of the first pieces of Māori-centred research undertaken at ANZ NZ, and is underpinned by kaupapa Māori methodologies and values.

The research found that building on collectively owned Māori land is essential to affordable housing provision.

However, the complexity of the process made it difficult for Māori to get access to their whenua and then to get finance to build on it.

Banks could help by changing their risk appetite and evolving their lending policies, the report said. Banks should offer home loan solutions for building on Māori land, and they should understand the end-to-end process – not just their specific part in providing finance.

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