



FACT SHEET

30 May 2025

E kāinga toku – I have a home

What is the Government doing?

The Government is concerned that the cost of borrowing is unaffordable for families seeking to build their first home. It is creating a special financial package, to help them with the cost of their home loan.

This initiative is called *E kāinga toku – I have a home*. The government will provide a cash grant to help people building their first home.

How much is the grant?

The grant will be set at \$13,800 per recipient. This will be paid in five equal annual amounts (\$2,760 a year for five years). It will be paid directly to their loan facility, to help offset their borrowing costs.

Benefits of the scheme

The scheme aims to help more families build their first home, by reducing their borrowing costs.

The core principles of the scheme are to support the **creation of new residential homes that the borrowers will live in**.

The Ministry of Finance and Economic Management (MFEM) estimates that around 20 borrowers a year could qualify for the grant. Based on this number, the government has set a fiscal cap for the scheme equivalent to 20 recipients per year, for five years (100 total recipients). This is to manage the costs to taxpayers, and ensure the scheme is affordable.

If fully-subscribed, the policy could expand the stock of housing by up to 2-3% over five years.

Who can apply?

Applicants must meet certain eligibility criteria, including limits on the size of the loan and of the house being built. These criteria are in addition to banks' usual commercial lending criteria, checks and requirements.

The key requirements for the borrower are:

- Must usually reside in the Cook Islands – this includes Cook Islanders who live here or are returning from overseas to live here, and those who have Cook Islands permanent resident status.
- Must have leasehold access to land, and the legal right to build on this land.
- Have an approved mortgage of no more than \$300,000 from a licensed Cook Islands bank.
- The house must be the first home that the borrower has owned in the Cook Islands.
- Be creating a new, modest single dwelling they will live in as their primary residence for at least five years. This may include:
 - renovating a derelict, unoccupied family home to make it livable
 - building a new residential home, of no more than 100m² in internal walled floor area
 - converting an existing non-residential building into a dwelling.
- The policy will not apply to local or overseas investors seeking to rent out the property, or use it for short-term accommodation.

When it starts

The funding for this initiative starts in the 2025/26 financial year. MFEM expects to open the first funding round from July 2025. It will publicly announce when people can start submitting their applications.

Applicants must have a mortgage that has been approved after 1 July 2025.

How do I apply?

If you meet the eligibility criteria, you will need to complete an application form. The form will be available for download on the MFEM website, and hard copies will be available from the MFEM offices (Economic Planning Division). Complete and send this form back to MFEM, with all the required documentation.

Applications will be processed and approved in the order in which they are received by MFEM, until the annual funding cap is reached each year. MFEM will assess each application against the eligibility criteria and make a recommendation to the Grant Committee. This Committee will make final recommendations, which will be approved by the Financial Secretary. MFEM will then let you know if your application has been approved

Fiscal cost

The total fiscal costs of the scheme will be capped. The cost to government is \$632,000 over the next four years. Because each grant runs for five years, if there are five funding rounds, the whole scheme involves nine years of fiscal costs.

Lead agency

The scheme will be administered by MFEM.

For further information contact

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