



Te Rōpu āhuru riaka iwi ki Otautahi

2020 Annual Report

Keeping our community warm





CONTENTS

02	Chief Executive Review
03	Overview of towns and suburbs of CEA's 2020 customers
04	Highlights
06	Introduction
06	COVID-19
06	New premises
08	Warm homes for vulnerable households
08	The CEA-way
10	Subsidised insulation
11	Rental properties
11	Subsidised downlight replacements
11	Subsidised heating
12	Free energy advice
13	Story: A warmer home with lower bills
14	Free curtains
17	Story: No more runny noses
18	25 years of free recycled curtains
20	Our supporters
20	Funders in 2020
22	Community organisations
22	Volunteers
22	Our staff
24	Financials

Community Energy Action Charitable Trust
PO Box 13759
Christchurch 8141

Charity number: CC28706

CHIEF EXECUTIVE REVIEW

This has been yet another year of challenges for Community Energy Action (CEA) as it has been for many organisations across Aotearoa. The Covid pandemic had an impact on businesses as well as the community as a whole. However, despite this, the organisation worked hard towards returning a surplus at the end of 2020 as well as achieving one of the strategic goals, that CEA has been working towards over the past few years. It is critical we have these surpluses, as they enable the organisation to reinvest these funds into the community and to continue the work it was established to deliver.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees and myself I would like to thank the whole team for their efforts during the year.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all those who contributed financially and supported CEA installing insulation and heating into families' homes. This allowed CEA to be able to offer insulation free to those homeowners who qualified both in Canterbury and on the West Coast. There has been a phenomenal uptake, which has been fantastic. Had we not been able to offer this, we know many families would not have had warm and dry homes to live in.

A special thank you to the Government via the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority (EECA) for providing the funding for the Warmer Kiwi Homes project in Canterbury and on the West Coast, as well as our loyal funders who contributed their funding to align with it.

We have, in 2020, installed insulation in over a thousand homes, heating into nearly 50 homes and provided curtains to more than 400 houses, all of which help to keep out the cold.

We have also undertaken nearly 300 in-home energy assessments and have held over 30 education events, despite the difficulties during the year. Overall, we have improved the homes and lives of thousands of people.

We look to the future, continuing the direction provided by our three-year strategic plan to enable CEA to deliver many more warmer and drier homes as well as provide advice to the community at large to help us all become more energy efficient.

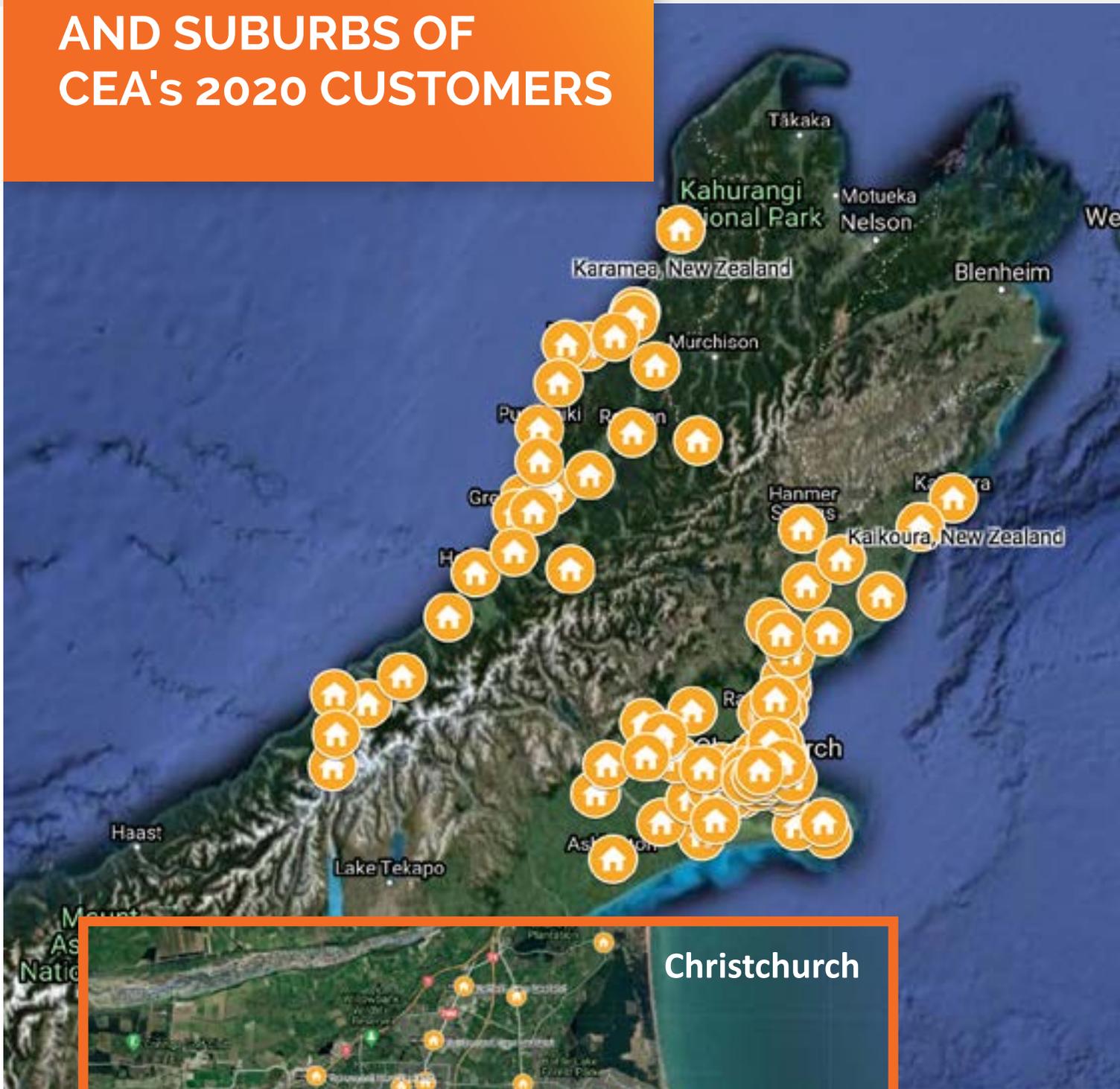
We also look forward to continuing to work with our partners, funders and sponsors, in achieving our combined goals in energy efficiency, improving our impacts on our environment to help combat climate change and working on efforts to reduce energy poverty. We continue to strive to increase turnover, lower our costs and improve our efficiency to ensure our organisation will remain sustainable into the future.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Caroline Shone', written in a cursive style.

Caroline Shone
2013 – present

OVERVIEW OF TOWNS AND SUBURBS OF CEA's 2020 CUSTOMERS

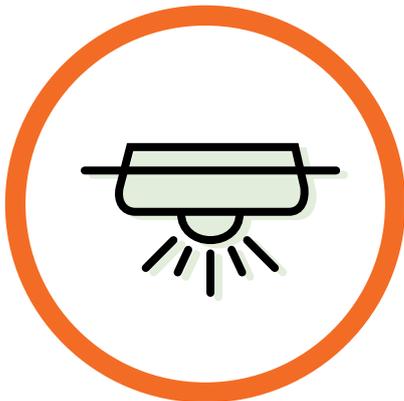
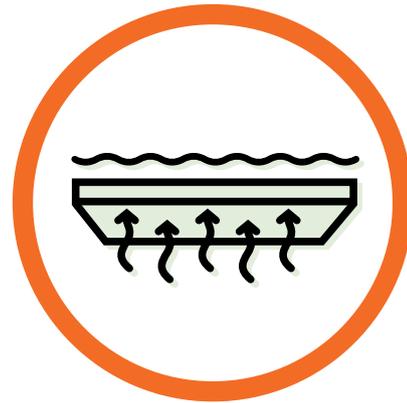


HIGHLIGHTS

Installed insulation
in **1,441** houses



Nearly **1200** homes
insulated with the
subsidies

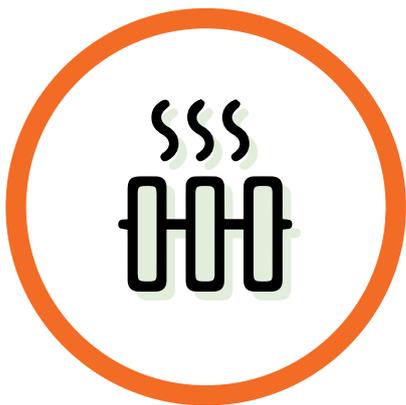


Downlights
replaced with
LED's in more
than **60** homes



Nearly **300** Home
Energy Checks
performed

Just under **40** households assisted with heating (loans or subsidy)



442 households assisted with free curtains



Community talks reaching more than **600** people



500 enquiries answered over the phone and via email

INTRODUCTION

COVID-19

Like many other organisations, CEA's services were heavily affected by COVID-19. All CEA services were fully closed from Tuesday 24 March and all through Alert Level 4.

A number of admin and finance staff worked from home during that period so that when restrictions lifted we could continue our valuable work. Having limited contact with customers due to work taking place under the floor and in the ceiling space, and with new H&S protocols and procedures put in place, the installing of insulation restarted at Alert Level 3, on 28 April, but only in Canterbury. This extended to the West Coast when restrictions lifted further in Alert Level 2.

As we had Covid 19 community cases in Canterbury, and the assessment of properties and providing curtains requires more contact with customers, these services were closed through Alert Level 4 to 2.

Even during Level 2 and 3, fewer customers could be processed due to COVID-19 screening and hygiene procedures to reduce the risk to the organisation. This further impacted on CEA's ability to operate efficiently.

After the lockdown, a pent-up demand increased the enquiries for assessments, insulation and curtains. Many households were financially impacted by COVID-19 and related redundancies meaning more households qualified for subsidised insulation.

The lockdown had come at a time in the autumn period when demand for warmer homes, insulation and curtains increased with winter approaching.

New premises

At the end of the year CEA moved premises to take advantage of an excess of commercial rental space and subsequent falling commercial rental prices.

The organisation was closed for a week just before Christmas while the Curtain Bank moved in to the office space within our insulation warehouse at Ferry Road. The move of a large quantity of curtains was challenging due to their weight and volume, but it was all successfully relocated.

The office moved from our location in Tuam Street to Riccarton. This was achieved with no disruption to the business.

There were a number of benefits to the move, involving much better parking for staff and customers at our new offices and a quieter work environment for office staff.

A customer display area as well as shop were retained within the office.



WARM HOMES FOR VULNERABLE HOUSEHOLDS

The CEA-way

CEA Charitable Trust is one of very few organisations around the country that look at homes as a whole (holistically) and take households' circumstances into account. This is achieved with professionalism, empathy and dignity.

Where we see a need, we try and meet that need. In individual cases we may apply our own discretionary funding or we find funding to meet a structural need. We don't just provide the government subsidies for insulation and heating. We also offer whole house energy checks, free curtains, and downlight replacement. For the few services that are not free, we can help with servicing finance. The result is a comprehensive warm home service to Canterbury's and the West Coast's most vulnerable households.

At CEA, customers are not treated as a number. We may be operating in an increasingly commercial environment, however we are still a charitable trust. We take our time to explain the process and what our customers need to do to access our services and subsidies. A lot of the time we are dealing with vulnerable customers that may need some extra care to be completely comfortable with what they are signing up for. It may require a bit more time but the result is customers that are extremely happy and they tell us that.



Hi there

Your company insulated our home in Waikuku recently. I would just like to say a huge thank you to you for giving us the opportunity to have our home insulated. You did a wonderful job and we much appreciate having been supported in making our home warmer and healthier for me and my family.

To have this done at no cost is such a blessing to us and we are extremely grateful for the funding and the service you provided us. What your company and those that are helping with funding are doing for the community is a great service and I would like to thank you all for helping our family at a time that we really needed some help. Thank you so very much. :)

Kim, Waikuku





CEA estimates that it insulated its 30,000th house in May 2020.



Hi

We had the good fortune to meet two of your employees — John and Aaron — who insulated the ceiling and underfloor of our house. They must be commended for their work ethic, they were excellent ambassadors for your company.

We were similarly impressed with your assessor Holly. Of the three companies we sought quotes from, she was the most thorough and efficient.

We are extremely grateful for the significant financial assistance that CEA provided - our house would have definitely remained uninsulated had we been charged the full price. Our house was the warmest it has ever been last year, and we cannot speak more highly of your personnel and services.

Jane and Stan, Sefton



Hi

Kindly pass on to all involved my immense gratitude at the gift of my new insulation. I cannot believe the instant difference it has made to the warmth and comfort of my home. I haven't even considered using my heat pump so far this year which is entirely credited to my revitalised cosy home.

Beverly, Wigram



On behalf of Mum (Stella) we want to say a big "Thank You" to the very professional job John and Aaron did installing the insulation in Mum's home on Friday – 26th June. They did such an amazing job, going the extra mile and even lagging the pipes, were really friendly and explaining to Mum, (who is nearly 94) the benefits the insulation will have in her home. We are extremely grateful for this opportunity and know, especially once the heat pump is installed, she will be enjoying a much warmer home.

Many Thanks.

Jim and Julie, Shirley



Subsidised insulation

In 2020 CEA continued its subsidised insulation service as a provider of the Warmer Kiwi Homes scheme. As a charity CEA was able to top up the 67% government subsidy to 92% with the assistance of our funders Orion in Mid Canterbury, MainPower in North Canterbury, West Coast Development Fund on the West Coast, the Rata Foundation and CEA's own funds.

The lockdown temporarily stopped all installs resulting in a decrease in the number of houses we were able to insulate in 2020.

Th visit of Minister Megan Woods

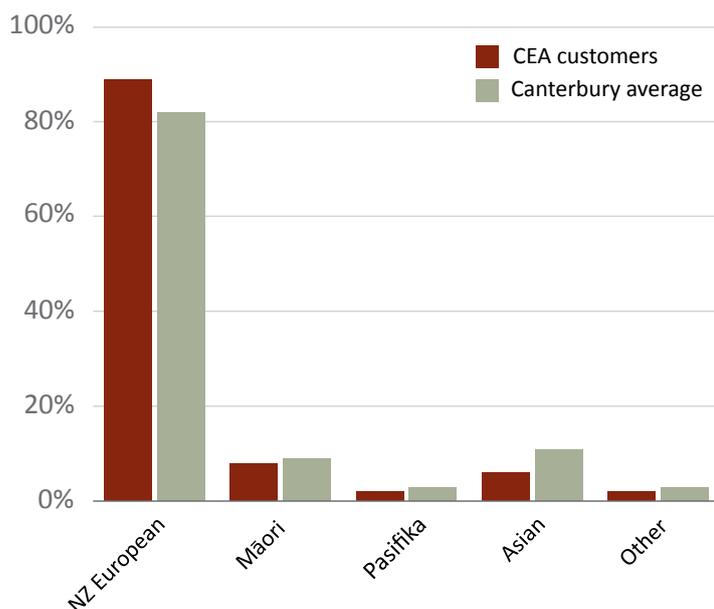
Shortly after the lockdown ended, CEA welcomed Minister Megan Woods to its warehouse where she announced an increase in the government subsidies to 90%. With the funding from other parties, it meant CEA was able to provide free insulation to qualifying homeowners.

Reaching vulnerable households

In the households we helped, we reached a diverse range of ethnicities which closely mirrored Canterbury Ethnicity figures (Statistics New Zealand Consensus 2018).

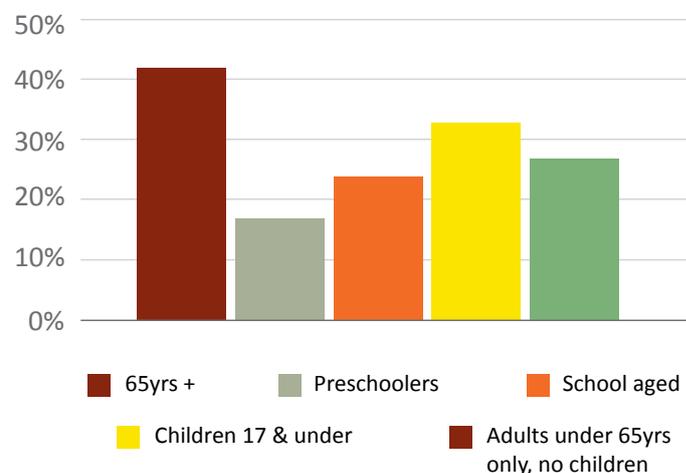


Ethnicities



Nearly half of all households had older household members (over 65 years). A third had children under 18 years.

Age





Megan Woods with CEA staff

Rental properties

Some of the most vulnerable households live in rental accommodation. New rental laws require insulation in rental properties and certificates of adequacy of insulation so tenants can be assured the home they are looking to rent is warm and affordable to heat. CEA provided both insulation for rental properties (at a cost to the owner) and rental certificates for insulation.

Subsidised downlight replacements

Ceiling downlights were popular in new homes in the eighties and nineties. They were modern looking and inexpensive, but also required large gaps in insulation around their transformers in the ceiling cavity due to fire risk. The gaps around the downlight transformers greatly reduces the effectiveness of insulation.

Generous funding from the Christchurch City Council through the Christchurch Agency for Energy (CAfE) meant CEA was able to offer a subsidy to replace these downlights. LED lights, for many low income customers before insulation, was installed so the whole ceiling could be insulated without having to leave gaps.

In 61 properties downlights were replaced of which 48 were at a subsidised rate.

Subsidised heating

In 2020 CEA offered generous subsidies for logburners through the Warmer Kiwi Homes programme and we also provided subsidies for heat pumps with funding from the Hyman Marks Trust. We also administered a loan scheme for logburners and heat pumps from Environment Canterbury. The scheme was available to most ratepayers with participants paying back the loan through their rates.

- 38** households were assisted with heating

- 26** households received assistance with a logburner

- 7** received a loan for a logburner

- 25** received funding through the Warmer Kiwi Homes

- 12** received assistance with a heat pump

- 9** received a loan for a heat pump

- 4** received funding for a heat pump through the Hyman Marks Trust

Free energy advice

CEA has been running an energy advice service since 2009. It provides independent information to householders that is not tied to a certain product, service or company.

In-home energy advice

Mostly this advice is given through Home Energy Checks (HEC) for existing homes, in-home energy advice tailored to the house and the householder. It is unique in the way that it takes a holistic approach, looking at everything that uses energy or affects energy use. It includes both energy efficiency improvements and behavioural aspects of household energy use and also looks at costs versus benefits, giving householders a clear priority list of what to spend their money on. The Christchurch City Council has funded HECs for their ratepayers meaning we have been able to provide free HECs for all homeowners in Christchurch.

In 2020 we provided 276 HECs, the large majority of which were free.

Group education

CEA also provides education to groups on request. This varies from community groups to groups of professionals (e.g. nurses or social workers).

CEA provided 33 educational energy sessions in 2020, reaching an estimated 660 people.

Phone and email advice

Individuals, notably those not qualifying for a free HEC, can call the energy advice service and get advice over the phone.

An estimated 500 enquiries were received over the phone, via email or through social media.



Dyanne and Opal showing their reduced power bill.

STORY: A WARMER HOME WITH LOWER BILLS

"I used to pay \$78 a fortnight on smoothpay, now I am paying only \$49 and I am still in credit over \$400!" Dyanne enthusiastically shows the impact on her power bill since CEA insulated her Kaiapoi home. And it is not just the bill that has changed. "The house is much warmer," she says.

Dyanne lives alone with a few furry and feathery friends, and the cold also affected her relationships with other people.

"People knew my house was cold. They always came with lots of clothes on. I didn't put the heat pump on because it was too expensive. I couldn't heat the house."

If her granddaughter was staying with her, the little girl would always get sick after a few days. But last time she said when waking up: "Grandma, it was nice and warm."

Her daughter who lives next door used to say: "I am going back to my own warm house now.' She stays much longer now!' Dyanne says with a smile.

Dyanne bought the Kaiapoi house after selling her earthquake-damaged home in Christchurch at a loss. "This was all I could afford. I love Kaiapoi though."

She shares the house with border collie Opal, black cat Lucky and Dasher, the budgie.

Her daughter had heating installed with the Warmer Kiwi Homes subsidy and told her to investigate. "I said to her, I don't qualify." But her daughter insisted:

"Mum, you do! Let me apply for you." And she did. A few days later an email from CEA confirmed Dyanne's eligibility.

"I couldn't believe I qualified! I was so wrapped. It felt I had won the Lotto!"

The CEA assessor had a look in the ceiling and told her only part of the lounge was insulated and there was nothing in other parts of the house. And measuring up insulation wasn't all he did. The heat pump was not installed in the most ideal place and as a result the appliance struggled to heat the place properly and for the heat to reach the dining and kitchen area of the open plan house.

"He made a couple of tweaks and said it would make a lot of difference. And it did!" Finally the heat pump was able to warm up the whole open plan area. And with the house now properly insulated, running the heat pump was affordable.

"I am not scared to use the heat pump anymore!" Dyanne laughs.

"I get sick with bronchitis every year. I still got bronchitis last winter but now I can get up and have the heat pump on. Before, I needed to stay in bed all day to keep warm.

Dyanne is still working but only a few years away from retirement. "When I retire and am home every day, it will make a huge difference!"

"It's the best thing my daughter ever 'forced' me into!"



I am not scared to use the heat pump anymore!

Dyanne laughs.



Free curtains

CEA has been providing free recycled curtains through its Curtain Bank since 1995. Donated curtains are fit to size and lined where necessary so they can keep homes warmer by reducing heat loss through windows. Every year hundreds of households get curtains through the Curtain Bank.

COVID-19

The time lost during the lockdown and the undiminished demand, forced the Curtain Bank to think creatively to get curtains to people in need, fast. The application process was amended and new ways of distributing curtains added: Instead of receiving customers to choose their own curtains, applicants were asked for preferences and Curtain Bank staff would choose for them. This reduced contact time and sped up the process so more customers could be assisted.

Market days

To assist more households, new initiatives were set up: CEA gave curtains away at a student health expo. The give-away was promoted through student social media pages and students were asked to bring measurements. Curtains were offered on an as-is-where-is basis with no relining or fitting to size. The student expo give-away was a great success and student drop-in days were organised where students could come in without appointment to choose curtains (again on an as-is-where-is basis). Then in summer outside 'Market Days' in the Tuam Street car park were organised for the general public where again curtains were given away on an 'as-is-where-is' basis (donations were encouraged).

Pop-up shop at Riverside

In January and February Riverside management offered the Curtain Bank a space in the new popular shopping area. The Curtain Bank used the amazing opportunity to promote the Curtain Bank to a new audience. Fabric unsuitable to be used as curtains was given away with a lot of generous donations collected. Fundraising products such as shopping bags, which were made by volunteers from curtain off-cuts were also sold at the pop-up shop.





Fundraising products

Curtain Bank volunteers regularly turn surplus fabric into products to sell as a fundraiser. Shopping bags and door sausages are just some of the examples of the products made. Some of the volunteers took fabric home during the lockdown and were very busy sewing at home!

Fabric for schools

Excess fabric was also donated to schools and preschools for sewing and art classes. Schools are very grateful as fabric is a great expense to them.

Facemasks

Cloth facemasks made by the volunteers were very successful for a short while. It hit an unexpected snag when Facebook shut down advertising for facemasks due to overpricing of homemade masks overseas.

Bunting for Riverside

CEA's Curtain Bank also received an order for bunting from Riverside market to celebrate their one year anniversary.



Curtain Bank in numbers

Due to Covid-19 related closures, a lower number of Curtain Bank customers were assisted than the previous year.



442

households assisted through 'usual' Curtain Bank process (curtains fitted and lined)

1,154

people benefitted (approximately)



12,296.22m²

curtain fabric handed out (approximately)

2,011

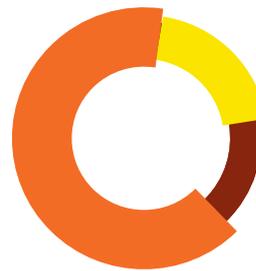
windows covered



Curtain Bank customer profile

Income

The Curtain Bank removed the requirement for a Community Services Card (CSC) some years ago, recognising that many households who do not qualify for a CSC still need help. 'In need of good curtains' and 'not being able to afford them', are the only (self-assessed) criteria. Despite this, the large majority of customers can be considered low income.

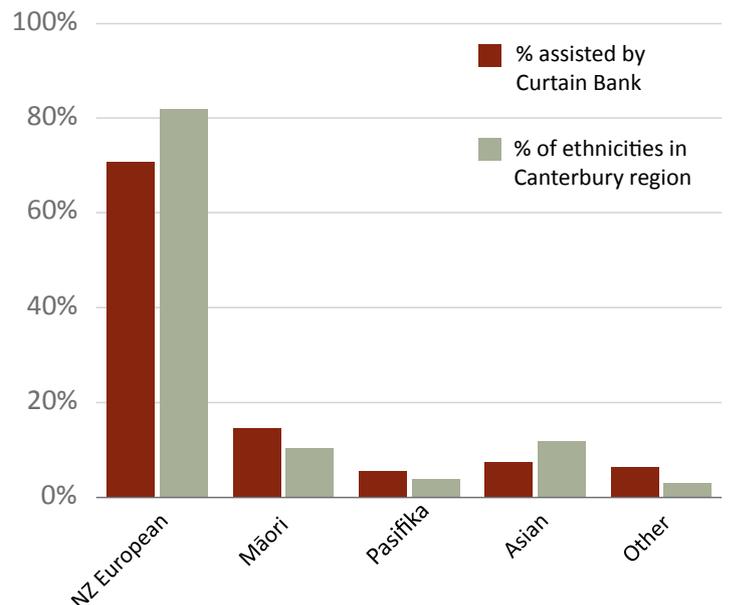


- 65% Low income
- 20% Not low income
- 15% Unknown

Ethnicity

The Curtain Bank is very capable of reaching disadvantaged ethnic groups such as Māori and Pasifika. The Curtain Bank assisted relatively more Māori, Pasifika and people from other ethnicities. As these groups are more likely to live in poverty, they are more likely to be in need of the Curtain Bank.

Ethnicities





Sherona showcasing the pink curtains from CEA's Curtain Bank, now in her daughters room.

STORY: No more runny noses

Old venetian blinds on single glazed windows are hardly a recommended option when it comes to preventing heat loss through windows. But it was exactly what was in the Aranui house that Sherona rents from her parents to live in with her three young children.

“Insulation is all about trapping air and with all the gaps between the slats, Venetian blinds do a terrible job in trapping air between the glass and the window covering,” one of CEA’s energy advisers says.

Sherona looked at buying curtains but quickly realised that was beyond her means when she saw the prices. “No way I could afford curtains.”

Until she heard about the Curtain Bank.

She is not sure whether she heard about the Curtain Bank through Te Puawaitanga, a Maori Well Child provider, or through one of the parenting Facebook pages. She does remember what she thought when she heard about the Curtain Bank: “This is great!”

“Applying for the curtains was easy,” she comments. “The only difficult part was deciding on the curtains. There were so many to choose from!”

Sherona has noticed the difference in warmth. “Our fire is amazing but with the curtains, I noticed the heat stays much longer in the house when I let it die down in the evening. And in the morning we are not wearing our dressing gowns anymore before the fire is going!”

The curtains also make her feel better about living in the house. “I like closing the curtains not just the blinds. It makes it more cosy.”

Pretty pink curtains for the girls, curtains with trucks and cars for her son and rich red curtains for mum certainly give the house a cheery, homely feel.

But probably the best thing to come from the curtains are the health benefits.

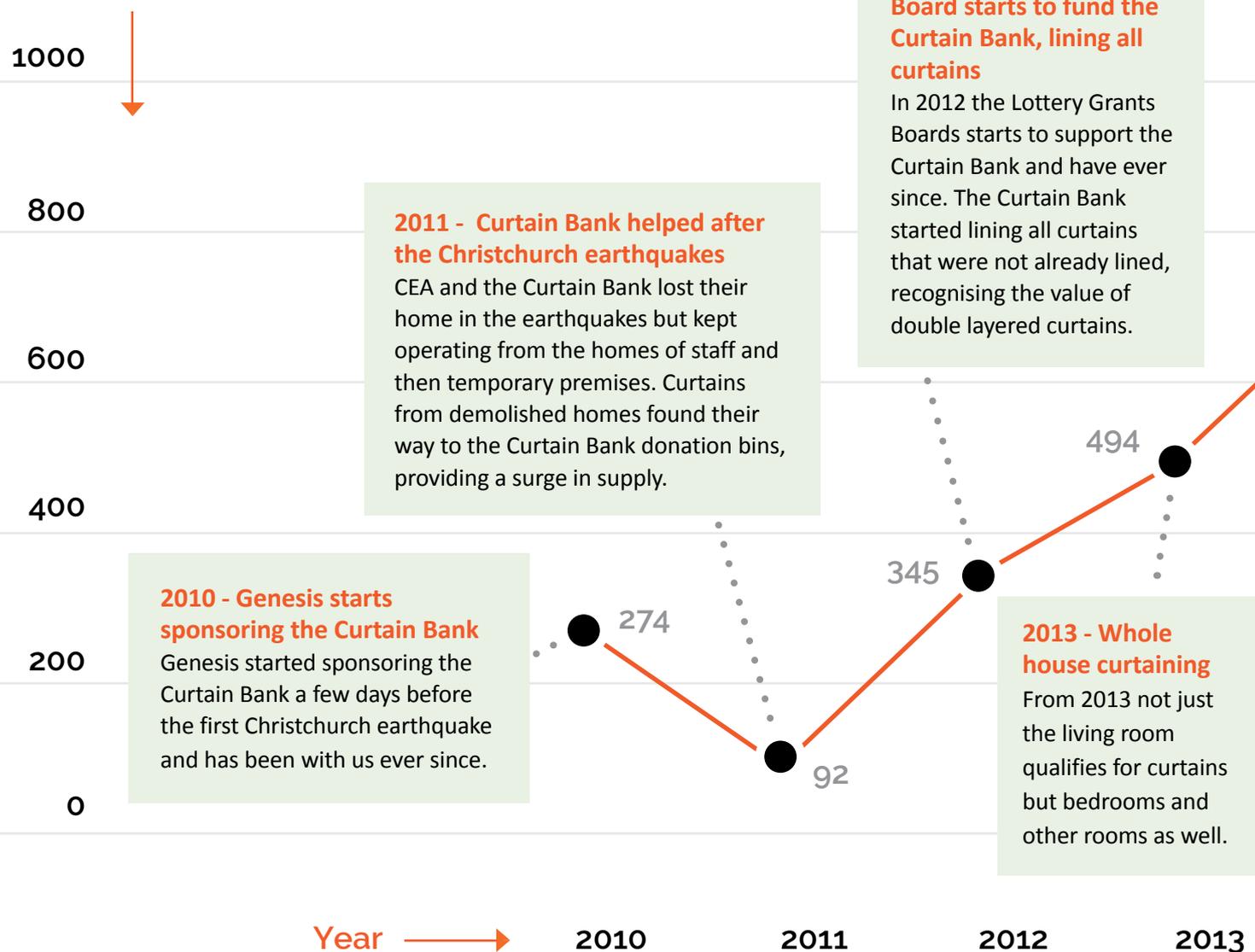
“My son who has just turned three, was always sick with a runny nose and coughs. Last winter he had only one.”

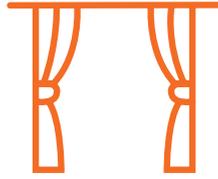


25 years of free recycled curtains

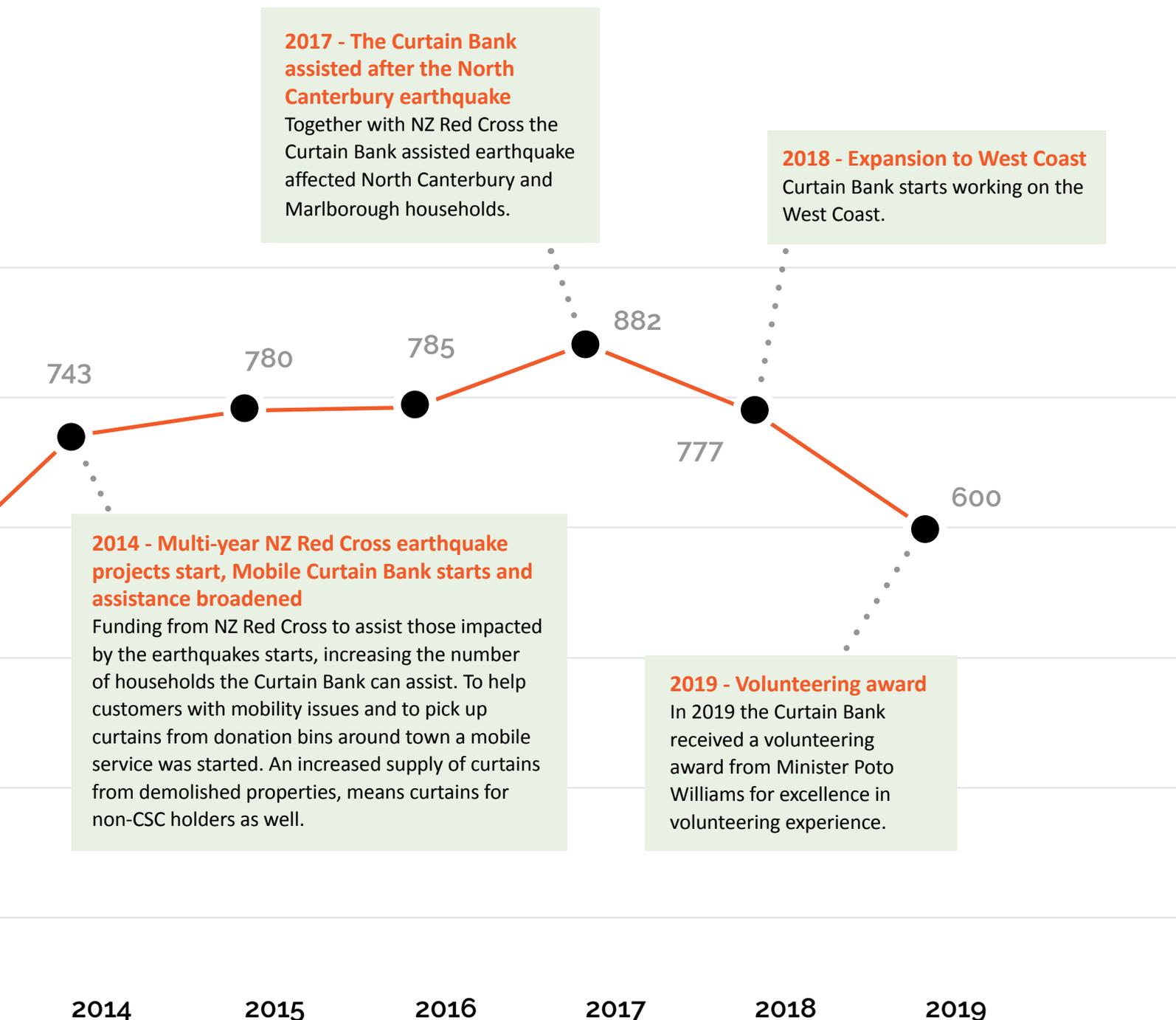
- **1995 - Curtain Bank starts**
With the help of an EECA grant, CEA started New Zealand's first Curtain Bank with 150 sets of curtains.
- **2006 - Assisting to set up another Curtain Bank**
The Curtain Bank was such a success that in 2006 Curtain Bank staff helped to set up a Curtain Bank in Huntly.

Number of households who received curtains





6,000 households assisted with curtains since 2010



OUR SUPPORTERS

CEA was one of New Zealand's first charities dedicated to energy efficiency and warm, healthy homes.

Its effectiveness and the dedication of those involved with the charity, meant it gained support from around the region. Many of its sponsors that have been involved with CEA from the beginning are still supporting us today.



Funders in 2020

- Since 1995 ● Orion
EECA
- Since 2001 ● CCC (including CAFÉ)
- Since 2004 ● Environment Canterbury
MainPower
- Since 2010 ● Genesis
- Since 2012 ● Lottery Grants Board
- Since 2015 ● The Rata Foundation
- Since 2016 ● Hyman Marks Trust
- Since 2019 ● Christchurch Casino
- Since 2020 ● Development West Coast



Celebrating 25 years of support from Orion

The first support that CEA received from Orion was very practical: in 1995 Orion offered CEA accommodation in its building. It would keep doing so for fourteen years, until CEA outgrew the space when the nationwide insulation scheme began in 2009. The accommodation at Orion came with phone, power, internet, etc. At its ten year anniversary Orion gifted CEA a van. When the earthquakes damaged CEA's new premises, they provided temporary housing.

In 1997 they started funding insulation. Exact figures from those early days have been lost in history, but CEA estimates that some 10,000 houses have been insulated by CEA with Orion funding.



Celebrating 25 years working with EECA

CEA had been operating for less than a year when EECA provided the first funding for one of CEA's first (and still running!) projects in 1995: the Curtain Bank. Back in 1995 it was a modest start with 150 sets of curtains. From there the Curtain Bank would expand, giving customers a choice of over a thousand curtains in 2020.

Most of the time though, EECA funded insulation that CEA installed. In 2001, 2008, 2010 and 2014 CEA won EECA awards, recognising the successful co-operation.

In 2007, CEA was part of EECA's pilot insulation subsidy programme. It led to the nationwide subsidy scheme which began in 2009. CEA has been a successful provider of the government insulation programme run by EECA ever since.



Celebrating 10 years of support from Genesis

A sponsorship agreement with Genesis started 1 September 2010. Three days later Christchurch was hit by the first of its series of earthquakes and CEA and its Curtain Bank lost their premises. Through the disruptions caused by the earthquakes, Genesis stuck by the Curtain Bank and the years of earthquake recovery saw some of the highest number of households helped with free recycled curtains.

More than ten years later their generous support is unwavering, providing much needed stability in a time when there is once again much uncertainty and more energy poverty than ever before.

Community organisations

From the ideas of a few passionate volunteers, CEA has grown into a professional organisation with a widely recognised profile in the community. Many social workers, community workers and others working professionally with low income vulnerable households, refer their customers to CEA on a regular basis.



The services provided by Community Energy Action can make a significant difference to children and adults with respiratory conditions such as asthma and COPD. Environmental factors play a significant role in keeping those with respiratory conditions well and we appreciate the support CEA has provided to our clients in the way of Home Energy Checks, Curtain Bank, improved insulation and heating options. CanBreathe has been referring clients to CEA for many years as one of the options to help us help clients improve their respiratory health. Feedback from clients on the services provided by CEA is always very positive.

Teresa Chalecki, Respiratory Nurse Educator at CanBreathe on CEA's services



You provide a service to those in need of warmth and safety, an essential need, and of course as usual for a non-profit group, done with integrity and charity but also often without recognition. Being a community group, we are always grateful for others that can provide a service that we can't, especially one that is free or affordable.

Soozie Bragg, Community Development Worker and Manager at Bromley Community Centre about CEA's Curtain Bank



Volunteers

CEA's Curtain Bank is assisted by a dedicated group of volunteers without which the Curtain Bank would not be able to operate on the scale it has. Lockdown hardly proved a barrier to them. Both Curtain Bank staff and volunteers took curtain fabric (that could not be used for curtains) home to make fundraiser products.

Our staff

CEA prides itself on high staff retention. Its longest serving staff member has worked for CEA for more than twenty years. Many other staff have worked for the trust for more than ten years. Others have joined us more recently.

We have all heard of many people in the tourism and hospitality sector being made redundant due to the lockdown and the closure of the border to tourists. Shelley was working in the aviation industry, an industry she had been working in for more than thirty years, when COVID-19 hit. “I loved working there,” she says about her former job at Virgin Australia. “It was a shock when the whole New Zealand operation was shut down.”

“It is nice to work in the charitable sector. I can’t believe I am working for an organisation that provides a product for free!” she laughs. “The focus in a charity is different but the dollars still need to match up. Business or charity, finance affects all.”

“It is always busy, I love the staff, I feel I can really add value. I can really see myself working here for a long time even if the aviation industry recovers.”



**It is nice to work in the charitable sector.
I can't believe I am working for an organisation
that provides a product for free!**
She laughs.



She applied for a series of jobs before getting an interview at CEA. “The interview was over the phone rather than in person because of the restrictions!” Once restrictions were lifted she had a face to face interview and she joined us as our new Finance Team Leader shortly after.

She finds it is different working for a charity than in the commercial world, but not as much as many people would think, at least not in her area of expertise, finance.

We are happy we have been able to provide this opportunity to someone affected by COVID-19 and we feel very lucky we have been able to add such a valuable staff member with such great experience.

— Shelley, CEA’s Finance Team Leader since June 2020

FINANCIALS

	2020	2019
REVENUE	\$3,688,200	\$4,003,937
Less cost of sales	\$2,232,265	\$2,601,914
GROSS MARGIN	\$1,455,936	\$1,402,023
Other income	\$369,761	\$167,611
TOTAL REVENUE	\$1,825,696	\$1,569,635
Less expenditure	\$1,695,748	\$1,631,803
Total comprehensive revenue & expense	\$129,948	\$(62,169)

Independent Audit Report

The information in this financial report has been summarised from the Annual Accounts of Community Energy Action for the year ending December 2020. The external auditor was Nexia. A full financial report is lodged with the Charities Services and is also available on request from Community Energy Action.



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