

Keeping warm



Photo: EMMA ALLEN

People living in warm, dry houses enjoy better health than those whose homes are draughty, cold and damp, say researchers in a nationwide Good Homes for Good Lives project. Jean Wilson, a volunteer in one of their project pilot studies, has contracted Blenheim glazier Jay Bosch to double-glaze the windows in her home.

house proud

homes and communities.

Marlborough was one of five regions included in the study and the findings were outlined at a presentation on Monday in Blenheim.

Jean, 80, was one of the speakers and told community workers, health professionals and other interested parties about the changes she has made to her home.

She still lives in the house she and David bought and the Good Homes project has prompted her to make new improvements.

The former Grey Power Marlborough president, Salvation Army volunteer, Older Person's Forum member and a volunteer co-ordinator for the Ministry of Social Development and Senior Citizens, helped the research team find people in Redwoodtown and Picton to do the survey.

She raised her own hand, too, and last year completed a pilot version of the Householder Maintenance and Repairs Assessment Tool for Good Homes. It helped her look for potential hazards in and outside her house and suggested ways to make things safer.

Trimming trees beside her driveway resulted in extra sunlight preventing pathways



White strip alert: Jean Wilson painted the edge of her steps to make them more visible and easier to negotiate at night time. Photo: EMMA ALLEN

Jean Wilson and her late husband David were considered "ding-a-lings" in the 1950s when they bought, then insulated a Blenheim house.

"When David and I bought this house, we put Batts in and people thought we were ding-a-lings."

The Wilsons had the last laugh though.

Jean is now an ambassador for the benefits of home insulation and is telling her story for the Good Homes for Good Living initiative.

She says her house is always warm and dry and visitors over the years regularly say how comfortable it feels.

Insulation is regarded as one of the basic elements of a healthy home in 2012. Other features are identified in the Good Homes for Good Living room-by-room tool kits.

The national project was funded by the Ministry of

steps make entranceways more negotiable. Jean painted those on herself and professional glaziers were contracted this week to double glaze her rimu-sash windows.

"I never do anything unless I can pay for it," she told Monday's meeting. "That's typical of my generation. As Depression babies we learned all those things. I got three quotes and I picked the price."

Programme leader Kay Saville-Smith told the meeting that people in Marlborough had the best quality houses in the Good Homes study. Many built before the 1970s, however, were not insulated.

Home owners had better houses than rental house tenants, a factor to consider for

Good Homes as younger people find it hard or choose not to buy property.

"More and more people will be renting into their retirement, that's a new situation for New Zealand," Ms Saville-Smith said.

Pauline Troon from APL Property Blenheim which manages residential properties owned by the Marlborough District Council, said the Good Homes tool kits were fantastic. Three different versions have been produced for householders, support service providers and housing and repairs and maintenance providers. All are available from the Good Homes'

web sites. Pauline says APL Property will use the information with the council flats in Blenheim, Picton and Renwick, all largely tenanted by people 65 and older.

"The elderly don't always come forward to tell us of issues. Some just feel like that they don't like to rock the boat and should just get on with it," she says. Confidence in speaking out might be gained, she adds, if tenants see hazards clearly identified in the Good Homes tool kits.

● Each Good Homes' tool can be freely downloaded from the website, goodhomes.co.nz

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