

# Older People Repairing and Maintaining Homes

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Ageing in Place: Older People's Repairs and  
Maintenance

Housing in An Ageing Society

CHRANZ FORUM

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# Older People's Repairs & Maintenance Research

- Will provide robust evidence on the:
  - prevalence of poor house condition among older people's dwellings
  - dynamics of repair and maintenance among older people
  - range of opportunities to assist older people to age in place.

# Repairs & Maintenance Research

- Case study based
  - Interviews with older people and service providers
  - Service mapping
  - House condition surveying
- National survey of older people
  - House condition
  - Renovations, repairs and maintenance
  - Housing history
  - Housing intentions
- Research team:
  - CRESA - led by Kay Saville-Smith
  - Waikato University - led by Elsie Ho
  - Public Policy and Research - Bev James
  - Auckland University - led by Robin Kearns and Denise Bijoux
  - BRANZ/Victoria University - Nigel Isaacs
- Supporting Groups
  - Building Research Ltd
  - Department of Building and Housing
  - CHRANZ
  - BEACON

# Repairs, Maintenance & House Condition - The Data

- 1999 & 2004 House Condition Survey
  - 77 older people's dwellings in 1999
  - 163 older people's dwellings in 2004
- 2004 Repair & Maintenance Survey
  - 163 older owner occupiers
- 2008 National Survey of Older People's Repairs & Maintenance
  - 1600 older people

# Dwelling Type, Households, & Tenure

- Primarily single, detached (66.3%)
- 22.4% in 2-level detached dwellings
- 41.2% dwellings post-1978
- 27.5% living alone and 60.4% living as a couple
- Most are owner occupiers

# Accessible Houses, House Condition & Residential Movement

- Older people live in their houses a long time
  - 82.2% in excess of 7 yrs
  - 50.6% in excess of 14 years
- 17.8% reported an intention of moving with 6.6% unsure of their future.
- House condition associated with moving intentions:
  - 45.5% living in poor condition dwellings
  - 25.5% living in average condition dwellings
  - 18.4% living in good condition dwellings

# Older People & House Condition

- Older people over estimate the condition of their dwellings
- In 2004
  - 83.5% of older owner occupiers stated their dwellings were in good or excellent condition
  - 73.3% of older owners' dwellings were actually good or excellent
- Main problems in older people's dwellings:
  - Lack of ceiling insulation
- Other problems:
  - Fasteners
  - Steps and ramps
  - Windows
  - Carport
  - Roof cladding
  - Kitchen lings
  - Kitchen joinery
  - Stoves
  - Laundry linings
  - Laundry fittings
  - Bedroom linings

# Older People & Dwelling Condition

- In 2008 National Survey, 88.8% rated their dwellings as in good or excellent condition.
- But:
  - 24.7% reported slips and falls in or around the house
  - 34.4% reported damp, mould and condensation
  - 50% report that heating system does not always keep them warm in winter



# Let's Talk About Cold!!

- Mean Winter evening living room  $17.8^{\circ} C$ 
  - 18% of houses  $>20^{\circ} C$  living room mean
  - 9% of houses  $>21^{\circ} C$  living room mean
  - 22% of houses  $<16^{\circ} C$  living room mean
- Bedrooms overnight average
  - Pre-1978 houses  $13.2^{\circ} C$
  - Post-1978 houses  $14.5^{\circ} C$

# Does it Matter?

- Temperatures lower than 16° C impair respiratory function
- Temperatures lower than 12° C generate cardiovascular strain
- Condensation, damp, mould associated with low temperatures.
- Damp and mould associated with toxic reactions, allergies, inflammatory diseases, gastroenteritis and infections
- Low temperatures associated with social exclusion and reduced household interaction

# Lowest Incomes Over-represented in Coldest Homes

Household Income Quintile	% Living rooms Mean Winter Evening $<16^{\circ}\text{C}$	% Living rooms Mean Winter Evening $>16^{\circ}\text{C}$
Quintile 1 (Lowest)	32.4%	18.1%
Quintile 2	25.7%	22.9%
Quintile 3	9.5%	19.6%
Quintile 4	17.6%	22.9%
Quintile 5 (Highest)	14.9%	16.6%
Total	100%	100%

# Winter Energy Expenditure

Household Income Quintile	% Households Expending <10% Monthly Income	% Households Expending >10% Monthly Income
Quintile 1 (Lowest)	72%	28%
Quintile 2	97%	3%
Quintile 3	100%	0%
Quintile 4	100%	0%
Quintile 5 (Highest)	100%	0%

Mean Living Room Winter Evening  
Temperature of Households Spending  
Less than 10% of Monthly Income is

1.3° C Higher than

Mean Living Room Winter Evening  
Temperature of Households Spending  
More than 10% of Monthly Income

# Repair & Maintenance: Look not Performance

- Most do no repairs and maintenance
- Older people concentrate on painting and replacement rather than maintenance and repair.
- Older people spend:
  - least on repairs and maintenance
  - Most on renovations and modifications.
- 19.4% report deferring maintenance
  - Multiple reasons for deferral
  - Only 55% attribute deferral to affordability

# But Money is Spent!!!

Activity	\$ Mean	\$ Median
Repair or maintenance	\$4,344	\$1,100
Modifications	\$16,345	\$1,000
Renovations	\$7,912	\$2,944

# Value of Unmet Repairs & Maintenance

- The burden of unmet repair:
  - In 1999 fell on young home owners
  - In 2004 the gap between older and younger householders closed
- In 2004 to bring dwelling to code:
  - \$7,081 younger householders
  - \$6,095 older householders
- Between 1999 and 2004 unmet repairs
  - Younger householders - Down \$2,133
  - Older householders - Up \$304



# Older People & the Market

- Less engagement in DIY
- Higher reliance on paid tradesmen
- More use of other, paid people
- Less use of family and friends
- High reliance on retail and trades for advice and local newspapers - especially women
- Low users of internet