



# Older People's Home Repairs and Maintenance: Ageing Well in Place

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# The who of the research

- Research team:
  - CRESA - led by Kay Saville-Smith
  - Waikato & Auckland Universities - led by Elsie Ho
  - Public Policy & Research - Bev James
  - Auckland University - led by Robin Kearns
  - Bijoux Research - Denise Bijoux
  - BRANZ - Lynda Amitrano and Roman Jaques
- Communities - Sandringham, Waiheke Island, Orewa, Blenheim, Picton, Kawerau, Chinese new settlers
- Funded through the Ministry of Science and Innovation and contribution from the Building Levy - BRANZ

# Why did we do this?

- Much of NZ's housing stock is cold, damp and expensive to operate
- Older people's well-being is affected by poor dwelling performance
- Stock performance is worsened by under-maintenance and inadequate repairs
- Poor repair and maintenance can lead to older people moving into higher dependency living

# Value of unmet repairs

- Between 1999 and 2004 the average value of unmet repairs was:
  - Down for under 65s householders by \$2,133 (23%)
  - Up for 65+ householders by \$304 (6%)
- Average value of older householders' unmet repairs to bring to 'new':
  - 2004 = \$6,095
  - 2010/2011 = \$9,000

# Problems with house condition

- National survey of 1600 people aged 65+
- One half said their heating system did not 'always' keep them warm in winter
- 34% reported problems with damp, mould or condensation
- One quarter said they have had slips or falls in or immediately around their house

# "Poor and Serious Condition"

- 2010/11 house condition assessment - older householders:
  - Insulation - 56.8%
  - Header tanks - 21.4%
  - Vents to sub-floor - 20.8%
  - Windows - 18.2%
  - Fasteners - 16.7%
  - Decks and balconies - 16.7%
  - Gutters - 16.7%
  - Paths - 14.1%

# Repairs and maintenance practices of householders

- Deferral of repairs and maintenance:
  - expense
  - inconvenience
  - hard to get the right person
  - trustworthiness of the provider
- Repairs and maintenance just not a priority

- *Maintenance is getting a burden. To do this place up, painting would cost a lot ... I don't like a place to run down. The size is a worry too, it's too big for us.*
- *Too old to start doing repairs. Windows outside need painting and any rotten wood replacing, but I won't be doing that.*
- *I can't find anyone to put down second hand carpet. Upgrading the painting and wallpapering inside - it's finance and time ... the chimney was damaged in recent gales and needs fixing. But I won't do that until my grandson comes, I wouldn't go up on the roof by myself now.*



# What we learned

- Older people:
  - Struggle with repairs and maintenance
  - Ask for advice and information
  - Sometimes not aware of what needs to be fixed
  - Are poorly supported by, and don't trust the market
  - Vulnerable to health problems and disconnection from community because of repairs and maintenance issues

# What we learned

- Money counts, so good information is important
- Assessment without solutions does not help
- Some of the most important things for health, safety and comfort are cheap and easy to do
- Ability to prioritise and actively manage is critical

# Tools working for people

- Evidence and charrette-based tool development
- BRANZ-led tool development
- Charrettes in Kawerau, Auckland and Marlborough
- User tested - older people, service providers, housing providers
- Solutions oriented



## Kawerau Charrette

Ageing in Place: [www.goodhomes.co.nz](http://www.goodhomes.co.nz)



# Testing the Tool at Home

Ageing in Place: [www.goodhomes.co.nz](http://www.goodhomes.co.nz)

# 3 practical tools developed

- Enable people to identify and manage their repairs and maintenance
- Targeted to:
  - (1) Householders
  - (2) Service providers
  - (3) Housing providers, property managers

# #1: Householder Tool

- Based around a simple hardcopy checklist and solutions
- Clear, direct non-technical language
- Always 'Yes' answer = Positive
- Zones examined: outside the house, kitchen, bedrooms, living areas, stairs, bathroom, laundry etc
- Assess at your own pace



# Outside the house

	Yes	No	Do this to check
Do all the <i>outside lights</i> , including sensors, work?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wait until night time to check. Make sure there is enough light to see the edge of the path, any steps and your door handle.
Do you have <i>enough light</i> to see your way into the house from the street?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
If you have a <i>sensor light</i> , does it stay on long enough?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	



**If you answered 'No' to anything in this Section, go to 'Solution A'**



A

Issue	Solution	Priority (1= highest)
Improve lighting	<p><b>Why do this:</b> Poor lighting can lead to falls, abrasions, sprains and broken bones.</p> <p><b>What to do:</b> Improve lighting by putting in stronger bulbs or install more lights. Clean the light housing to allow more light to shine out. Please do not climb up to change a light bulb or reflector. Just note down which ones aren't making the grade.</p> <p><b>Who can do it:</b> Handy person to put in stronger bulbs. Electrician to install more lights.</p>	1

## #2: Support Service Provider Tool

- Similar to the Householder Tool
- Designed so local organisations supporting older people can check whether older clients' homes need repairs, and if there are safety issues to address

# #3: Housing Service Provider Tool

- Assumes technical knowledge
- More comprehensive:
  - covers more areas, e.g. under floor
  - more technical detail e.g. fixings
- More flexibility through use of associated EXCEL tool
- Allows prioritising of work based on:
  - skill base (e.g. volunteers, trades)
  - budget

# Under floor

Issue	Yes	No	N/A	Comments/Notes
Are ventilation grilles around the house clear of blockages? Remove vegetation and soil from around grilles.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Is the area under the floor dry and free from damp, (no musty smell)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Can water under the house drain away easily?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
If the house is on piles:				
• are the floor joists straight?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
• is the particle board sound (no swelling or flaking)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
• are there firm fixings (nails, screws and steel joiners)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Is there under-floor insulation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Does the underfloor insulation cover the entire area with no rips or gaps?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

# Take up of the Tools

- Nelson Marlborough District Health Board - householder and service provider tools
- Age Concern - website hosting tools
- Habitat for Humanity Greater Auckland - housing provider tool
- Grey Power and Mens Sheds Marlborough - promoting and using tools
- Marlborough District Council - using housing provider tool and printing copies of householder tool for older residents
- Kawerau neighbourhood renewal - householder and provider tools

# Download the Tools

- [www.goodhomes.co.nz](http://www.goodhomes.co.nz)