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MEDIA RELEASE

New Zealand rental property condition continues to lag behind

The condition of owner occupied houses is still well above houses being rented in New Zealand according to the recent BRANZ House Condition Survey.

As New Zealand's the largest survey monitoring housing defects, the BRANZ report indicates rented houses have double the rate of poorly maintained features of owner occupied houses - (32% vs 14%).

While the general trend shows an improvement in the overall condition of housing, more owner occupied houses were assessed to have well-maintained features - double that of rental properties (48% vs 24%).

More than 550 houses throughout New Zealand were visited for an onsite assessment where a series of house features were rated in a bid to track maintenance shortcomings. The condition of up to 49 features of the house were assessed, across exterior and interior, including foundations/subfloors, exterior walls, interior linings, roof and roof space, insulation, decks, paths and steps. Each feature of the property assessed is given a rating from Excellent (no defects) through to Serious (needing immediate attention with health and safety implications).

Mark Jones, BRANZ Building Performance Research Team Leader said, "This survey is the largest of its kind in New Zealand and presents a wealth of information on the condition of New Zealand housing stock."

He said the survey implied owner occupiers took better care of their properties particularly with areas easier to maintain such as interior linings and fittings, doors and windows.

The survey indicated internal features such as wall linings, joinery, and fittings were twice as likely to be in a poor or serious condition in rentals as owner occupied. When it came to external features the gap in condition was less when comparing the two sectors.

The BRANZ House Condition Survey is the fifth in the survey history, which has been run roughly every five years since 1994. It is the largest survey of its kind in New Zealand monitoring housing defects through an onsite house assessment in a bid to track maintenance shortcomings. Surveying rental properties was only first introduced in the 2010 survey. Results from the latest round of surveying suggest the patterns seen in 2010 and the gap between owner-occupied and rental houses remain, but there has been some positive movement towards better maintenance and overall condition.

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Mark Jones said it was important to track this sort of information to help give a full picture of the state of New Zealand's housing stock. This work indicates how well our homes are being maintained and the general conditions people were living in.

The data collected as part of this survey feeds into other work undertaken by BRANZ and has led to further research in Weathertightness, Air Quality and Ventilation in particular. This initial report looks at the key top findings of the data collected and further reports are planned to look into heating, insulation, ventilation and mould in the coming months.

Note about the survey:

- Previous surveys were conducted in 2010, 2005, 1999 and 1994.
- The 2015 survey randomly selected homes across 13 areas of New Zealand including urban and rural, owner-occupied and rental properties. Rental properties featured as part of the survey for the first time in 2010.
- The condition rating does not represent a pass/fail at a household level; rather it is intended to give an overall indication of the condition of New Zealand's housing.
- There will be a number of underlying factors and drivers affecting the trends presented in the report including materials, property age, location and repair and maintenance activity. This report looks at just a few of those variables and BRANZ recognises further analysis would be of benefit

For queries about this research study or the work we do at BRANZ, please contact:

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