

BEACON'S NOW HOMES® - BUILDING AND RENOVATING HOMES FOR SUSTAINABILITY

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The sustainability of the residential built environment is an important issue for New Zealand, as much of the energy and water consumed and waste produced in the country occurs in people's homes. Similarly the health of the indoor environment within homes has a significant impact on the overall health of the community, particularly as relates to respiratory conditions. Beacon, a FRST funded research consortium, aims to see the majority of New Zealand homes achieve a high standard of sustainability by 2012. As part of developing and testing approaches to increase the sustainability of New Zealand homes Beacon has built two NOW Homes® – resource efficient homes defined to be affordable to most New Zealanders, and is retrofitting ten “average” homes to increase their level of sustainability. The first NOW Home® in Auckland is occupied by an “average” New Zealand family and has been monitored for 18 months. The data confirms the Beacon hypothesis about the ease of achieving an energy and water efficient home with today's technology. A further NOW Home® in Rotorua has also been built in partnership with Housing New Zealand and eight NOW Home® Renovations have been undertaken on existing homes in Papakowhai, Wellington. The learnings from these projects and implications of these for larger scale development and renovation to improve the wider sustainability of New Zealand's housing stock are discussed.

References:

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