

# Building Consents Issued: April 2013

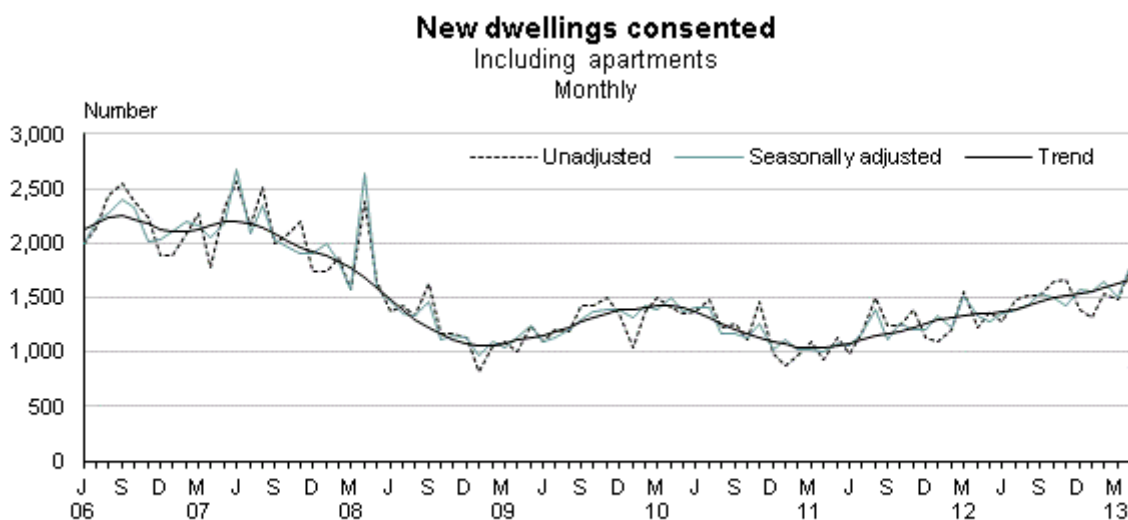
Embargoed until 10:45am – 30 May 2013

## Key facts

In April 2013:

- 1,755 new dwellings were consented, the highest monthly number for five years.
- 214 apartments, including 115 retirement village units, were consented.
- The seasonally adjusted number of new dwellings, including apartments, increased 19 percent – the largest increase since a 23 percent rise in March 2012.

The trend for the number of new dwellings, including apartments, has increased for 25 consecutive months. March 2011 was an historic low in the trend series, and the level is now 61 percent higher.



Source: Statistics New Zealand

In April 2013 compared with April 2012:

- The number of new dwellings consented, including apartments, increased 43 percent to 1,755.
- The value of non-residential buildings increased 35 percent to \$308 million.

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## Commentary

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Figures given are not adjusted for seasonal fluctuations unless otherwise stated.

### New dwellings up

In April 2013, 1,755 new dwellings, including apartments, were consented. This was up 43 percent compared with April 2012. April 2013 had the highest monthly number of new dwellings since April 2008, when 2,373 were consented.

The new dwellings total this month includes 214 apartments, 115 of which were retirement village units.

### Apartments lift number of new dwellings in Wellington and Otago regions

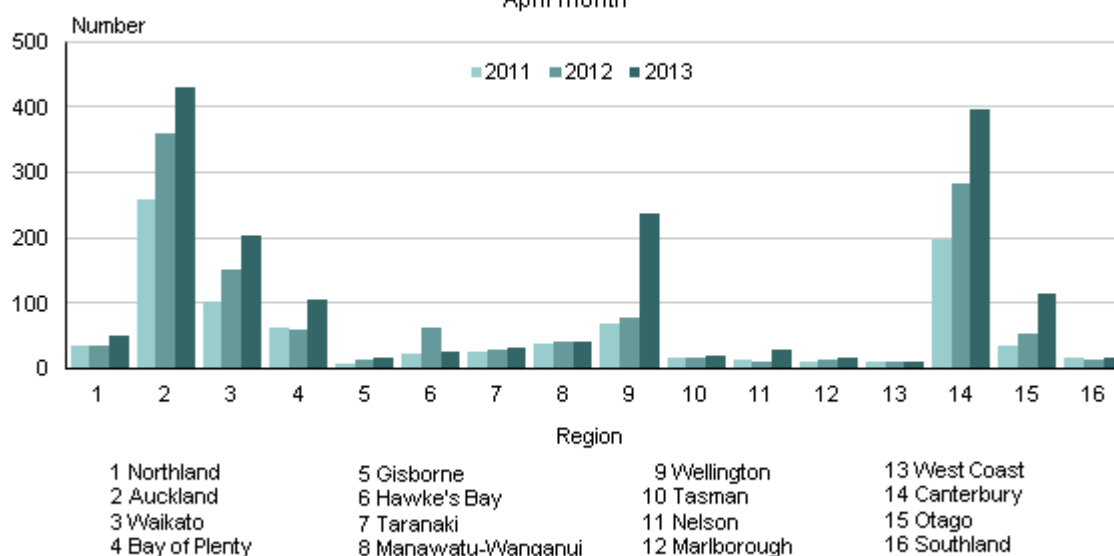
Wellington and Otago regions together consented 185 of the 214 new apartments nationally in April 2013. This lifted the total number of new dwellings, including apartments, making Wellington the top growth region and Otago fourth, after Canterbury and Auckland.

Regional increases in the number of new dwellings in April 2013, compared with April 2012, were:

- Wellington **up** 159 (including 82 apartments in Wellington city and 63 retirement village units in Kapiti Coast district) to 238
- Canterbury **up** 115 to 397
- Auckland **up** 71 to 431
- Otago **up** 62 (including 40 retirement village units in Dunedin city) to 115.

## New dwellings consented

By region  
April month



Source: Statistics New Zealand

Only one region, Hawke's Bay, consented fewer new dwellings in April 2013 than in April 2012.

The value of new dwellings consented increased \$176 million (48 percent) to \$540 million this month, compared with the same month a year ago.

### Steady growth in new dwellings trend

The trend for the number of new dwellings, including apartments, has increased by 61 percent over the last 25 months. March 2011 was the lowest point in the trend series since it began in January 1982. The number of new dwellings has been collected since April 1965, but the earliest point in the trend series for new dwellings including apartments is January 1982. The trend series peaked in January 2004 at 2,845, and the current level is 42 percent lower.

The trend for the number of non-apartment dwellings has also increased over the same 25 months, and is 63 percent higher than the most recent low point in March 2011.

## Trend for new dwellings consented Monthly



Source: Statistics New Zealand

The seasonally adjusted number of new dwellings, including apartments, increased 19 percent in April 2013 – the largest increase since March 2012 when it increased 23 percent. Monthly changes in the seasonally adjusted numbers can be volatile, partly due to apartment numbers varying from month to month.

The seasonally adjusted number of non-apartment dwellings increased 13 percent, the largest increase since August 2011 (16 percent).

### Non-residential buildings value up

The value of non-residential building consents was \$308 million this month, up \$80 million (35 percent) from \$228 million in April 2012. The largest contributors in April 2013 were:

- offices and administration buildings, \$50 million (16 percent)
- education buildings, \$47 million (15 percent)
- shops, restaurants, and taverns, \$47 million (15 percent).

The trend for the value of non-residential buildings has eased in recent months. However, non-residential building consent values are volatile with no stable seasonal pattern, and therefore a stable trend for this series is slow to emerge.

### Canterbury earthquake-related consents worth \$52 million in April

Canterbury earthquake-related building consents in April were worth \$52 million. Of this, \$27 million was residential work, including 49 new dwellings, \$25 million non-residential work, and \$0.2 million non-building work. Demolitions and seismic strengthening work are excluded.

See also [Earthquake-related building consents in Canterbury](#).

Since 4 September 2010, over 4,200 earthquake-related consents have been identified in Canterbury, totalling over \$990 million. This includes over 800 new dwellings, of which 150 were

relocatable units. Also included are alterations and additions for residential buildings, non-residential buildings, and non-building construction.

Building consents are often used as an early indicator of building activity, as measured by Statistics NZ's quarterly Value of Building Work Put in Place. Canterbury building activity increased 1.5 percent (current price, seasonally adjusted) in the December 2012 quarter, compared with 1.3 percent for the rest of New Zealand. In the September 2012 quarter, Canterbury building activity surged 30 percent, while the rest of New Zealand had a 5.0 percent increase.

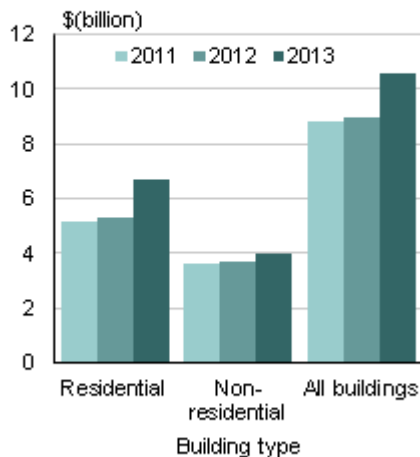
*Value of Building Work Put in Place: March 2013 quarter will be published on 5 June 2013.*

## Annual all buildings value up 18 percent

For the year ended April 2013, compared with the year ended April 2012, the value of building consents increased for:

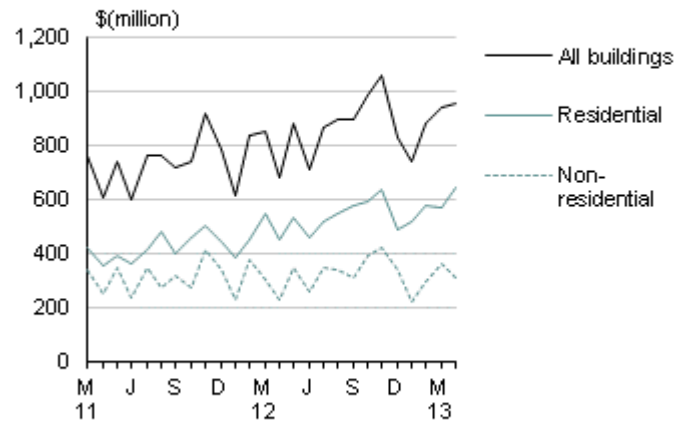
- all buildings, up \$1,632 million (18.2 percent) to \$10,614 million
- residential buildings, up \$1,377 million (26.1 percent) to \$6,660 million
- non-residential buildings, up \$255 million (6.9 percent) to \$3,953 million.

**Value of buildings consented**  
Including alterations and additions  
Year ended April



Source: Statistics New Zealand

**Value of buildings consented**  
Including alterations and additions  
Monthly



Source: Statistics New Zealand

The value of consents for all buildings was \$954 million this month, up 41 percent from \$677 million in April 2012.

For more detailed data, see the Excel tables in the 'Downloads' box.

## Definitions

### About Building Consents Issued

Building Consents Issued contains statistics on the number, value, and floor areas of residential dwellings and the value of non-residential buildings by region and building type. Values include goods and services tax and are not inflation adjusted. Buildings are classified according to their main intended function or functions. Subsequent changes in function will be recorded in the statistics if new consents are issued.

### More definitions

**Domestic outbuildings:** includes new construction, alterations, and additions to garages, glasshouses, and sheds on residential sections.

**Non-residential buildings:** includes new construction, alterations, and additions to industrial, commercial, and other non-residential buildings such as schools, hospitals, and libraries. Barracks, hostels, prisons, serviced apartments, workers' quarters, and other accommodation buildings are included.

**Residential buildings:** includes new construction, alterations, and additions to dwellings (houses, flats, and apartments) and domestic outbuildings.

**Territorial authorities:** are defined under the Local Government Act 2002 and related amendments. There are 67 territorial authorities, comprising 13 cities, 53 districts, and 1 territory.

**Earthquake-related building consents in Canterbury:** Building consents issued in the Canterbury region and identified (primarily by the issuing authorities) as being earthquake-related.

Not all earthquake-related consents can be identified. For example, if a new house (to replace a damaged house) is built at a different site, the new house might not be identified as being earthquake-related.

Note: Excludes seismic strengthening work and demolitions.

## **Related links**

### **Upcoming releases**

*Building Consents Issued: May 2013* will be released on 28 June 2013.

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[The release calendar](#) lists all our upcoming information releases by date of release.

### **Past releases**

[Building Consents Issued](#) has links to past releases.

### **Related information**

[Earthquake-related building consents in Canterbury](#) summarises Canterbury consents identified as earthquake-related. This table is updated monthly.

[Value of building work put in place](#) statistics estimate the actual dollar value of work put in place on construction jobs within New Zealand (quarterly). It includes information by building type, and deflated values.

## Data quality

This section contains information that does not change between releases.

- [Data source](#)
- [Survey errors](#)
- [Coverage](#)
- [Interpreting the data](#)
- [More information](#)

### Data source

Data for building consents is obtained each month from all accredited building consent authorities (ie territorial authorities). Statistics NZ compiles information from all building consents issued each month if:

- they are valued at \$5,000 or more
- they are not predominantly for demolition work.

### Survey errors

#### Sample errors

Because the survey has 100 percent coverage of the target population, there is no sample error.

#### Non-sample errors

These errors can occur when there is incomplete or incorrect information on consent forms, or when information is incorrectly delivered, interpreted, or classified. While much effort is made to minimise these errors, they will still occur, and it is not possible to quantify their effect.

### Coverage

#### Scope

Only construction work that requires a building consent is included in these statistics. Some civil engineering works, such as roads, require resource consents but not building consents, so are excluded.

The scope of work requiring a building consent is determined by the Building Act 2004. Its main parts came into force in 2005, replacing the Building Act 2001. The new act introduced measures to provide greater assurances to consumers, such as registration of building consent authorities, and the licensing of building practitioners. The act was reviewed in 2009. The review broadened the scope of work that may proceed without a building consent (see [Schedule 1 exemptions](#) for changes to the Building Act 2004, on the Department of Building and Housing's website, effective from 23 December 2010).

The [Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority](#) has legislative powers to undertake work without a building consent. For example, demolition work and temporary repairs.



Statistics NZ excludes consents that are predominantly for demolition work, and consents valued below \$5,000.

### **Changes in coverage**

The building consents included in this release have changed over time. The list below highlights the key changes.

**1996** From the June 1996 month, consent values for multi-purpose buildings are coded to one or more of the most appropriate building types. Before this date, multi-purpose buildings were classified separately.

**1993** From the January 1993 month, building authorisations have been applied for under the building consents system administered by territorial authorities. Before this date, applications were made under the building permits system. The building consents system has wider coverage than the building permits system. The additional coverage includes some government building (particularly work on education buildings), and on-site drainage and reticulation work.

**1989** From the September 1989 month, consents below \$5,000 are excluded.

### **Boundary changes**

**2011** From 1 November 2010, part of the former Franklin district moved from the Auckland region to the Waikato region. This change is included in building consents data from January 2011.

**2010** On 1 November 2010, the new Auckland Council came into being from seven former cities and districts (see table 4). Before November 2010, the Auckland region (see table 3) can be used to approximate the new Auckland Council.

### **Seasonally adjusted series**

Seasonal adjustment removes the estimated impact of regular seasonal events, such as summer holidays and pre-Christmas purchasing, from statistical series. This makes figures for adjacent periods more comparable.

The seasonally adjusted series are re-estimated monthly when each new month's data becomes available. Figures are therefore subject to revision, with the largest changes normally occurring in the latest months.

The X-12-ARIMA seasonal adjustment program, developed at the U.S. Census Bureau, is used to produce the seasonally adjusted and trend estimates.

### **Trend estimates**

Trend estimation removes the estimated impact of regular seasonal events and irregular short-term variation from statistical series. This reveals turning points and the underlying direction of movement over time.

The trend series are re-estimated monthly when each new month's data becomes available. Figures are therefore subject to revision, with the largest changes normally occurring in the latest months. Revisions can be large if values are initially treated as outliers but are later found to be part of the underlying trend.

The X-12-ARIMA seasonal adjustment program is used to produce the seasonally adjusted and trend estimates. Irregular short-term variation is removed by smoothing the seasonally adjusted series using optimal weighted moving averages.

To reduce distortions, the monthly trend series for the value of non-residential buildings is estimated after removal of consent values of \$25 million or more between January 1990 and December 2005, and of \$50 million or more from January 2006. However, non-residential building consent values are still volatile with no stable seasonal pattern, and therefore a stable trend for this series is slow to emerge.

See [Seasonal adjustment in Statistics New Zealand](#) for more information.

## **Interpreting the data**

Figures for new apartments are compiled from consents that have 10 or more new attached dwellings (flats or apartments). If there are fewer than 10 flats or apartments on a consent, they are treated as being dwellings other than apartments. Apartment numbers often show large fluctuations from month to month and, unless removed from dwelling figures, can mask underlying movements.

Values for new buildings include conversion costs. For example, if a hotel is converted to apartments, these are treated as new dwellings in the statistics. Consent values for new buildings sometimes include the cost of demolishing or removing the previous buildings.

Some consents, particularly for large projects, are issued in stages across more than one month. Value data is collected at each stage but floor areas and dwelling or building counts are normally recorded at the first large stage of the project. This difference in timing can affect calculations of average prices.

## **Trading day adjustments**

An aim of time series analysis is to identify movements that are due to actual changes. Seasonal adjustment is done to remove systematic calendar-related variation. Specific adjustments can be made to remove variations due to trading day differences and moving holidays, such as Easter, which are not accounted for in a standard seasonal adjustment.

Some of the apparent movement in building consent figures is due to trading day differences between months. For example, a month with four weekends will have more trading or working days than a comparable month with five weekends. This can affect monthly figures, even though there may be no difference in the length of the month or difference in the rate at which consents are issued. Trading day effects, when estimated to be statistically significant, are quantified and removed. This is trading day adjustment.

Since 1998, trading day adjustments have been made to the building consents series during the seasonal adjustment process. Since May 2004, an improved method has been used. At present, there is no adjustment to remove the effect of moving holidays such as Easter.

## Trend estimates versus month-on-month comparisons

Trend estimates reveal the underlying direction of movement in statistical series. In contrast, comparisons of unadjusted data between one month and the same month in the previous year/s do not take account of data recorded for the intervening months, and are subject to one-off fluctuations. Reasons for fluctuations include changes in legislation, economic variables such as interest rates, and trading day composition of months.

## More information

See more [information about Building Consents Issued](#).

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## Tables

The following tables are available in Excel format from the 'Downloads' box. If you have problems viewing the files, see [opening files and PDFs](#).

1. Building consents issued – April
2. Number of new dwellings consented
3. Number and value of new dwellings consented, by region
4. Number of new dwellings consented, by selected territorial authority area
5. Value of building consents issued, unadjusted and trend values

## Access more data on Infoshare

Use [Infoshare](#) to access time-series data specific to your needs. For this release, select the following category from the Infoshare homepage:

Subject category: **Industry sectors**

Group: **Building Consents - BLD**