

Building Consents Issued: December 2012

Embargoed until 10:45am – 30 January 2013

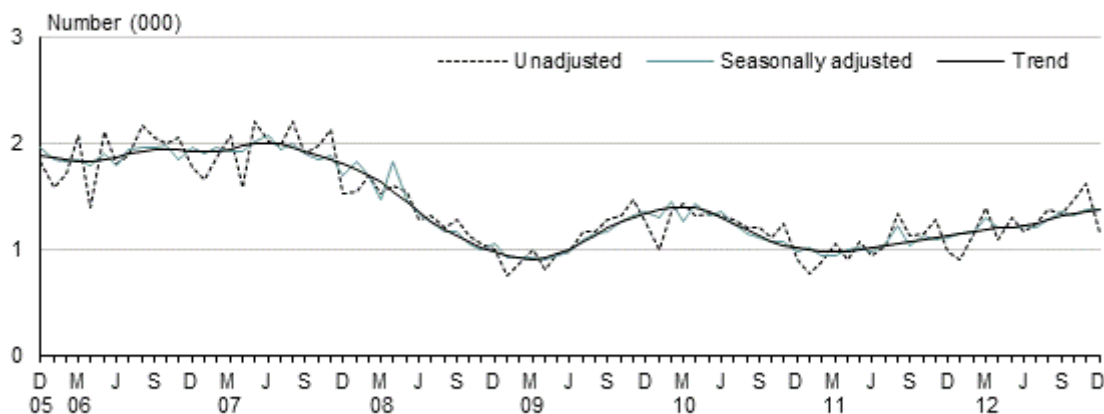
Key facts

In December 2012:

- The seasonally adjusted number of consents for new dwellings (including apartments) increased 9.4 percent in December 2012. Consents for non-apartment dwellings decreased 1.0 percent. Apartment numbers can vary a lot from month to month.
- 1,381 new dwellings (including apartments) were consented.
- 232 new apartments were consented, and just over half of these were in Auckland and Wellington.

Since the latest low point in March 2011, the trend for the number of consents for new dwellings including apartments has increased by 48 percent. The trend for new dwellings excluding apartments increased by 43 percent during the same period.

New dwellings consented
Excluding apartments
Monthly



Source: Statistics New Zealand

In the 2012 year compared with the 2011 year, the number of consents for new dwellings increased by 3,267 (24 percent) to 16,929. This was the largest number of new dwellings consented in a calendar year since 2008.

The regions with the largest number of new dwellings consented were:

- Auckland, up 810 (21 percent) to 4,582
- Canterbury, up 1,642 (69 percent) to 4,037.

Geoff Bascand
Government Statistician

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Commentary

- New dwellings trend continues to grow
- Auckland and Canterbury regions drive new dwellings growth
- Value of non-residential buildings steady
- Consents for 34 new earthquake-related dwellings in Canterbury
- Annual value of all consented buildings rises 18 percent in 2012 year

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

New dwellings trend continues to grow

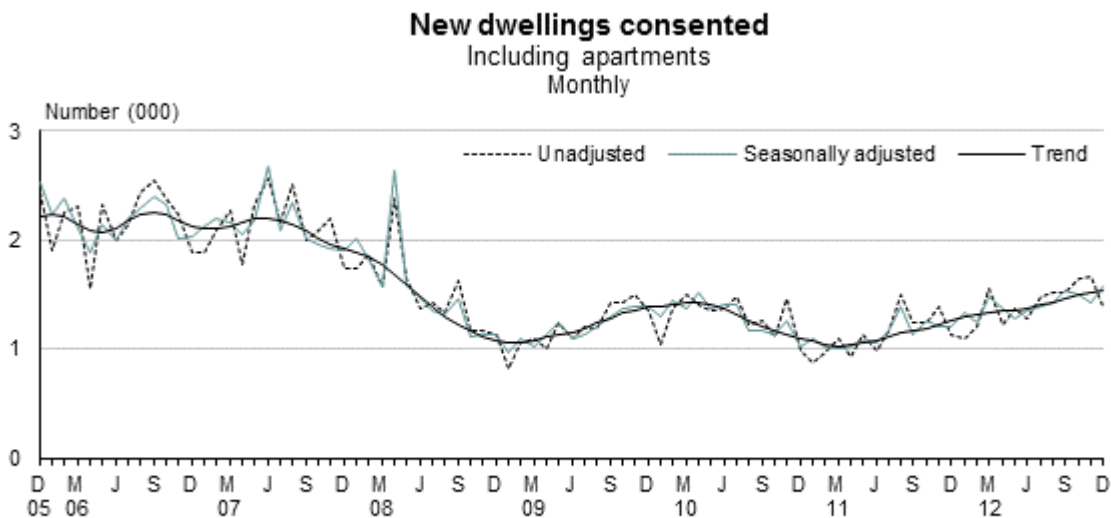
In December 2012, 1,381 new dwellings (including apartments) were consented. It was the 21st consecutive month of growth in the trend for the number of new dwellings. This trend was 48 percent higher than the most recent low point of March 2011. The trend number excluding apartments grew by 43 percent during the same period.

Housing consent numbers in December 2012, compared with December 2011, were:

- 1,381 new houses, including apartments (**up 23 percent**)
- 1,149 new houses, excluding apartments (**up 17 percent**)
- 232 new apartments (**up 57 percent**).

Of the apartments, 127 were retirement village units.

The seasonally adjusted number of consents for new dwellings including apartments increased 9.4 percent in December 2012. Non-apartment houses decreased 1.0 percent. Apartment numbers can vary considerably from month to month, as reflected in the graph below.



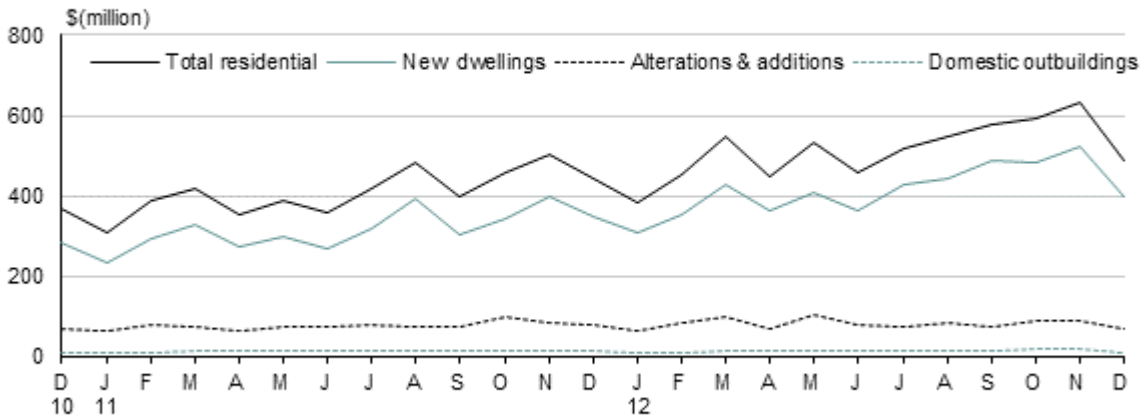
Source: Statistics New Zealand

There were 16,929 new dwellings (including apartments) consented in the December 2012 year. This was up 24 percent on the 13,662 new dwellings consented in the December 2011 year.

In December 2012, the value of all residential building consents was \$487 million, 10 percent higher than in December 2011 and 32 percent higher than in December 2010. New dwellings continue to drive the value increase.

New dwellings contributed \$401 million (82 percent) of the total residential buildings value in December 2012. The remaining \$86 million (18 percent) came from alterations, additions, and domestic outbuildings.

Residential buildings consented Monthly values



Source: Statistics New Zealand

The residential buildings value trend has been rising for 20 consecutive months, and is now 45 percent higher than at the most recent low point of April 2011.

Auckland and Canterbury regions drive new dwellings growth

The 23 percent national increase in dwelling consent numbers, for the December 2012 month compared with December 2011, was concentrated in Auckland and Canterbury.

Auckland had the largest increase in new dwellings, up 140 (48 percent) from December 2011. This increase included 76 new apartments, compared with 41 new apartment consents in December 2011. The former Rodney District was the main contributor to the Auckland increase.

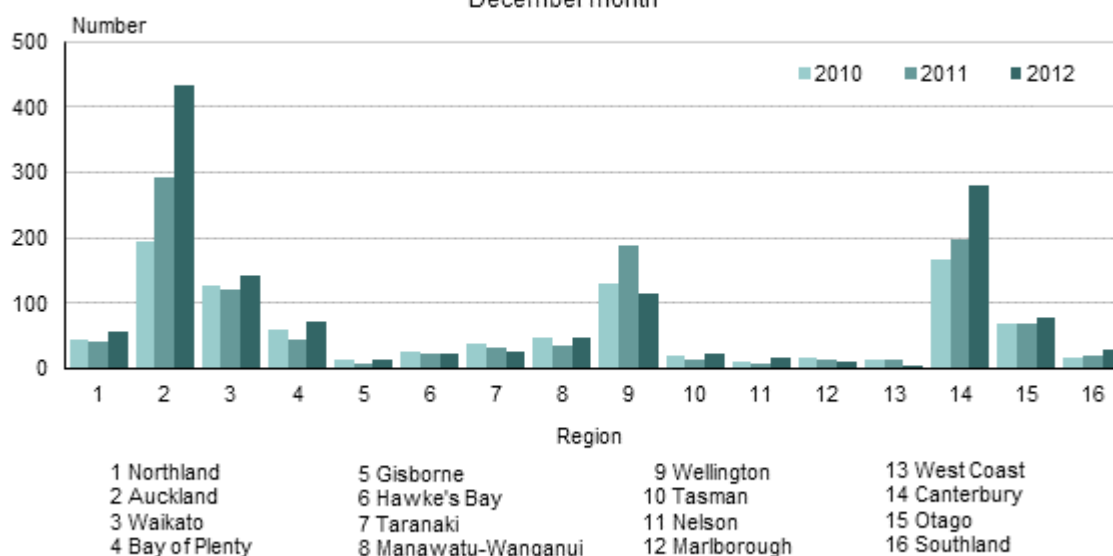
The number of new dwellings consented in the Canterbury region was up 82 (41 percent) compared with December 2011. The biggest contributors to this increase were:

- Christchurch, up 35 (57 percent)
- Waimakariri District, up 23 (42 percent)
- Selwyn District, up 9 (19 percent)

Wellington had the only substantial regional decrease, down 73 (39 percent).

New dwellings consented

By region
December month



Source: Statistics New Zealand

For the December 2012 year compared with the December 2011 year:

- Eight of the nine North Island regions reported an increase in the number of consents for new dwellings. The North Island total was 10,719, up 1,257 (13 percent).
- In the South Island, five of the seven regions had more new dwellings. The South Island total was 6,209, up 2,016 (48 percent).

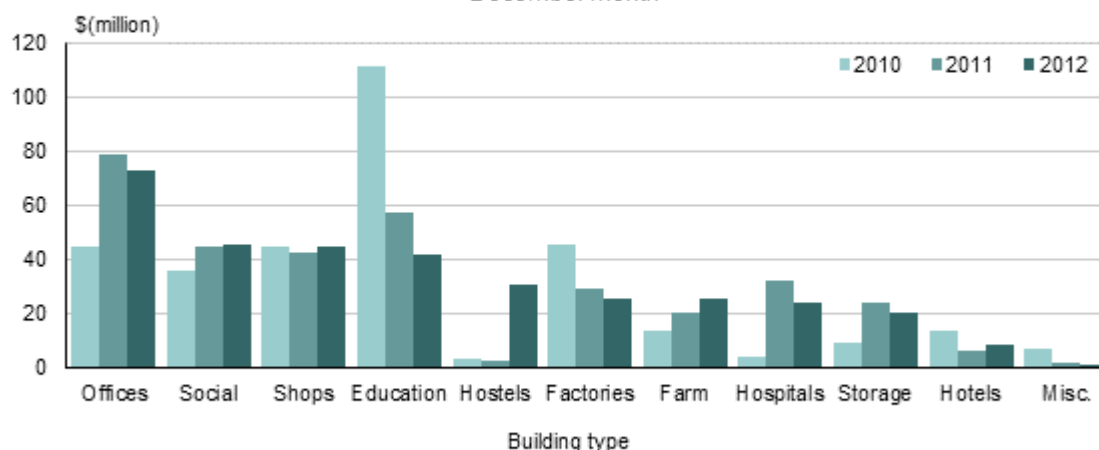
Value of non-residential buildings steady

The value of non-residential building consents in December 2012 was \$340 million, up just \$1 million (0.3 percent) compared with December 2011.

Five of the 11 building types increased in value. The largest movements were in:

- hostels and boarding houses, **up** \$28 million – boosted by a large consent for a men's prison in Manukau city
- education buildings, **down** \$16 million.

Value of non-residential buildings consented
By building type (including alterations and additions)
December month



Source: Statistics New Zealand

As shown by the darkest bars in the graph above, the three largest contributors to the value of non-residential buildings in December 2012 were:

- offices and administration buildings, at 21 percent
- social, cultural, and religious buildings, at 13 percent
- shops, restaurants, and taverns, at 13 percent.

Consents for 34 new earthquake-related dwellings in Canterbury

Canterbury consents identified as being earthquake-related totalled \$45 million in December 2012. In 2012, the monthly value ranged from \$25 million to \$59 million.

Of the \$45 million recorded for December, \$20 million was for residential buildings, including 34 new dwellings. A further \$25 million was for non-residential building work. See also [Earthquake-related building consents in Canterbury](#).

Since 4 September 2010, more than 3,500 earthquake-related consents have been identified in Canterbury, totalling \$793 million. This includes 599 new dwellings, of which 149 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](#). In the September 2012 quarter there were strong increases in both residential and non-residential building activity in Canterbury. This follows a strong increase in earthquake-related residential building activity in the previous quarter.

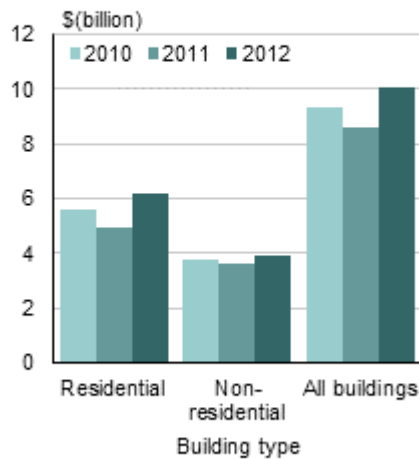
Value of Building Work Put in Place: December 2012 quarter will be published on 6 March 2013.

Annual value of all consented buildings rises 18 percent in 2012 year

For the December 2012 year, compared with the December 2011 year, the value of consents increased for:

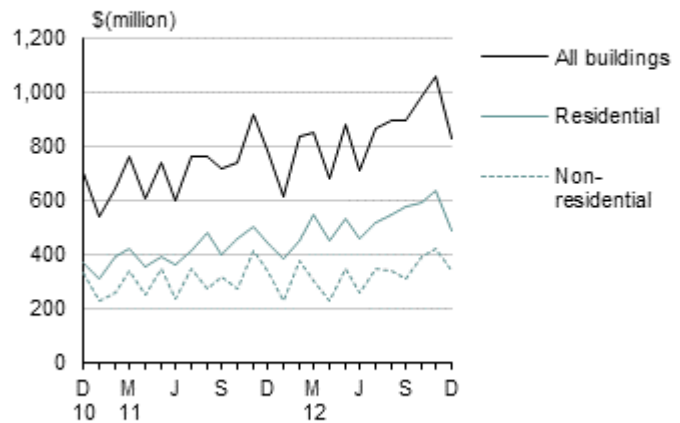
- all buildings, **up** \$1,510 million (18 percent) to \$10,075 million
- residential buildings, **up** \$1,252 million (25 percent) to \$6,177 million
- non-residential buildings, **up** \$258 million (7.1 percent) to \$3,898 million.

Value of buildings consented
Including alterations and additions
Year ended December



Source: Statistics New Zealand

Value of buildings consented
Including alterations and additions
Monthly



Source: Statistics New Zealand

In the December 2012 month, the value of consents for all buildings (both residential and non-residential) was \$826 million, up 5.8 percent compared with December 2011. Residential buildings contributed \$44 million of the \$45 million increase. The trend for the value of all buildings began increasing after May 2011 but has flattened in recent months.

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.

Related links

Upcoming releases

Building Consents Issued: January 2013 will be released on 28 February 2013.

[Subscribe to information releases](#), including this one, by completing the online subscription form.

[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 (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 dwelling units (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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Correction

1 February 2013

After this release was published on 30 January 2013, we made a correction to the figures for earthquake-related building consents in Canterbury in the 'Commentary' section of this release and on the webpage [Earthquake-related building consents in Canterbury](#).

The total value of earthquake-related consents has not changed, but the split between the values of residential and non-residential consents was inaccurate. Also the number of new dwellings was calculated incorrectly.

The main changes were:

- the number of consents for new dwellings was reduced by 82 (from 116)
- the value of residential consents was reduced by \$22 million (from \$42 million)
- the value of non-residential consents was increased by \$23 million (from \$2 million).

We regret any inconvenience these errors caused.

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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 – December
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
6. Number of new dwellings approved, by quarter
7. Value of building consents issued, by quarter

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**