

# Building Consents Issued: April 2015

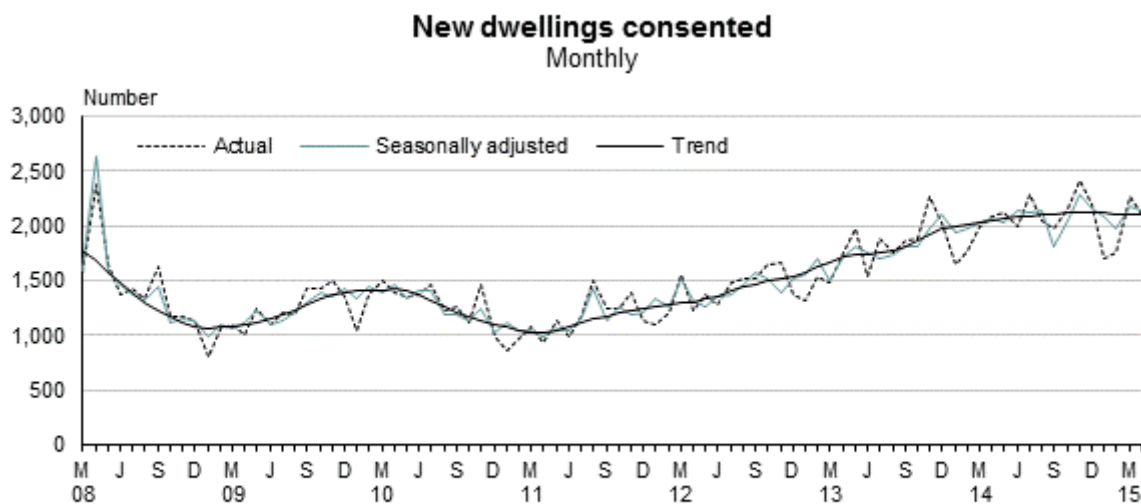
Embargoed until 10:45am – 29 May 2015

## Key facts

In April 2015, building consents were issued for 2,112 new dwellings, including:

- 1,365 houses
- 467 apartments
- 49 retirement village units
- 231 townhouses, flats, and units.

The seasonally adjusted number of new dwellings consented fell 1.7 percent in April, following a 10 percent rise in March. The trend is easing.



Source: Statistics New Zealand

For houses only, the seasonally adjusted number of dwellings consented fell 2.7 percent in April, following a 7.2 percent rise in March. The trend has been decreasing for 13 months.

The unadjusted value of building work consented in April 2015 was \$1.2 billion. For April 2015 compared with April 2014:

- residential work was up \$18 million (2.4 percent) to \$757 million
- non-residential work was up \$17 million (4.2 percent) to \$419 million.

Liz MacPherson, Government Statistician  
ISSN 1178-0231  
29 May 2015

## Commentary

- [New dwelling consents decrease in April](#)
- [Number of consented dwellings down in nine of the 16 regions](#)
- [Non-residential consents valued at \\$419 million in April](#)
- [Canterbury earthquake-related consents total almost \\$2.8 billion](#)
- [Consents for all buildings total \\$1.2 billion in April](#)

Figures given are not adjusted for seasonal fluctuations unless otherwise stated. Values include GST and are not adjusted for inflation.

We have made changes to our building consents statistics. See the [Definitions](#) and [Data quality](#) sections for more information.

### New dwelling consents decrease in April

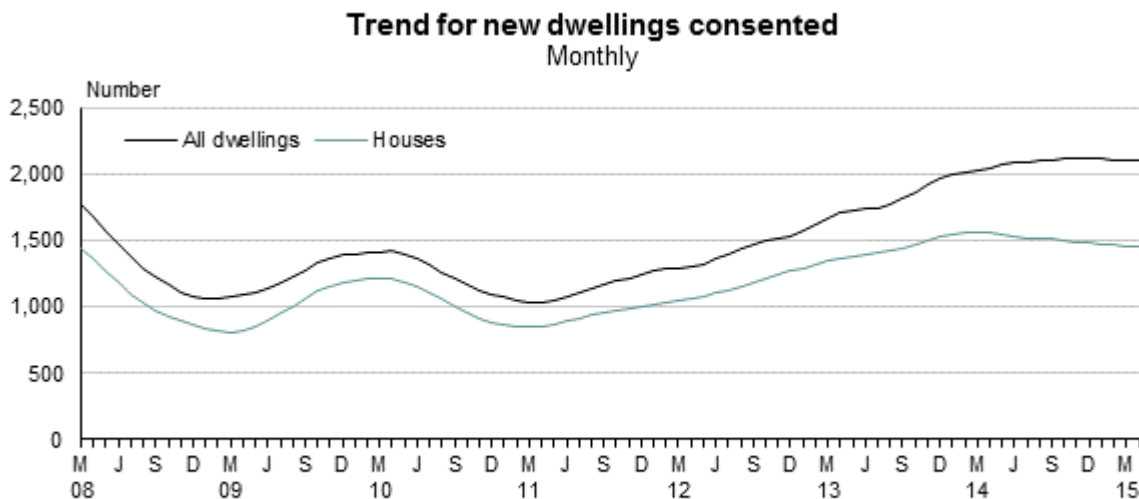
In April 2015, 2,112 new dwellings were consented, comprising:

- 1,365 houses
- 467 apartments (a seven-year high) – including 438 apartments in Auckland
- 49 retirement village units
- 231 townhouses, flats, and units.

The seasonally adjusted number of new dwellings consented fell 1.7 percent, following a 10 percent rise in March.

For houses only, the seasonally adjusted number of new dwellings consented fell 2.7 percent, following a 7.2 percent rise in March.

The trend for the number of new dwellings consented has more than doubled since the series minimum in March 2011, but is currently easing. For houses only, while the trend is up 71 percent from the low point in March 2011, it is now decreasing.



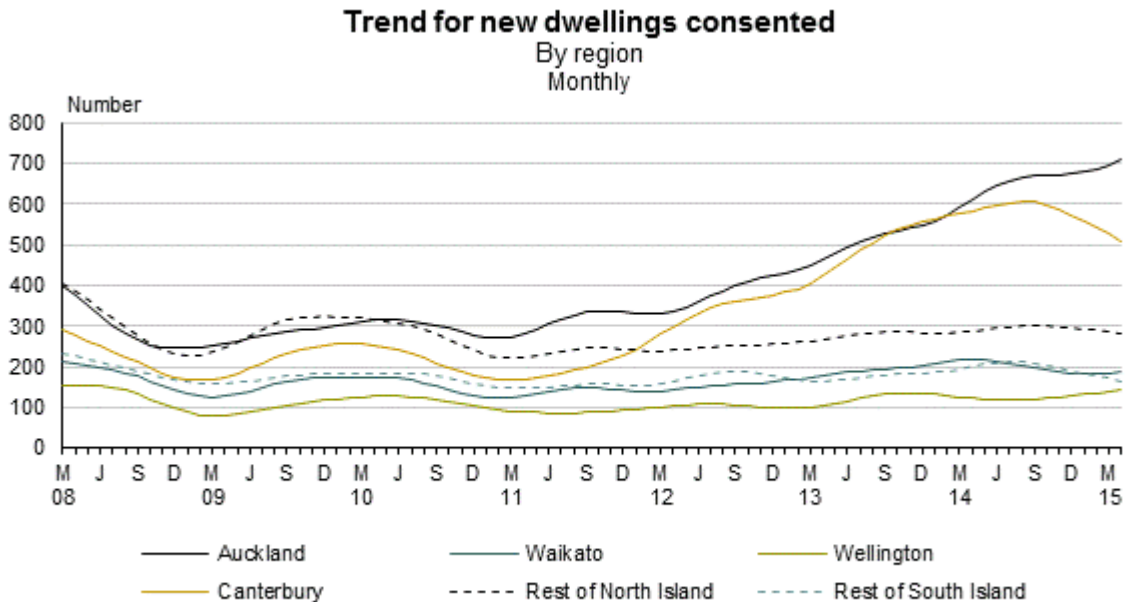
Source: Statistics New Zealand

## Number of consented dwellings down in nine of the 16 regions

Nine of the 16 regions consented fewer new dwellings in April 2015 than in April 2014.

The regions with the largest movements were:

- Auckland – **up** 215, to 912
- Canterbury – **down** 127, to 427 (a 22-month low)
- Waikato – **down** 41, to 220.



Source: Statistics New Zealand

The trends for the number of new dwellings consented have shown strong growth in the Auckland and Canterbury regions since the low point in early 2011. However, the Canterbury trend is showing signs of decreasing.

The trends for the other regions have shown smaller increases over this time.

Trend movements, particularly for recent months, may be revised when future months are added to the series.

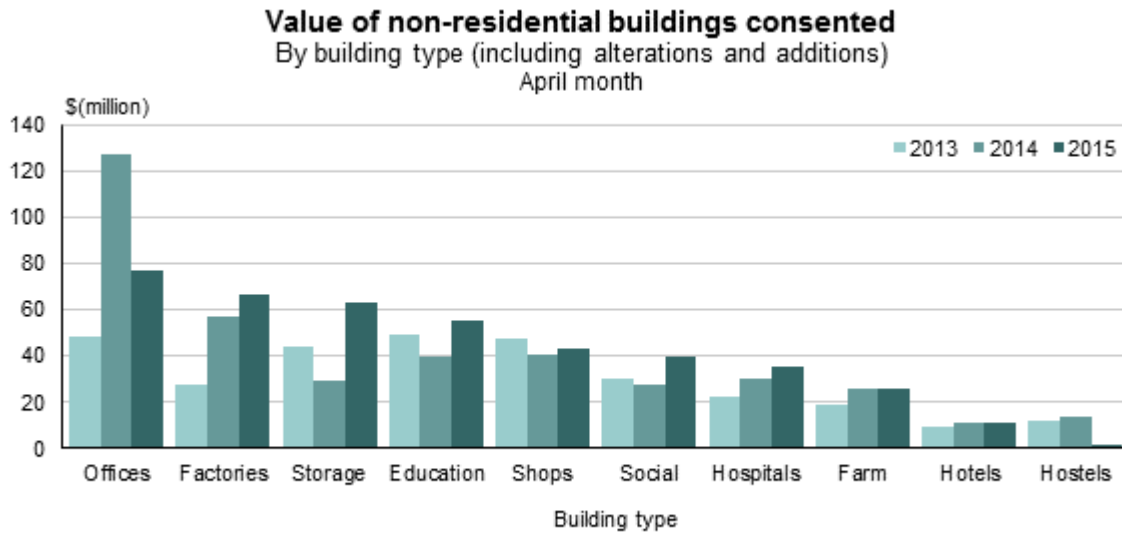
## Non-residential consents valued at \$419 million in April

The value of non-residential building work consented in April 2015 was \$419 million, up \$17 million (4.2 percent) compared with the same month in 2014. The regions that consented the most non-residential building work in April 2015 were:

- Canterbury – \$129 million (31 percent of the national total)
- Auckland – \$114 million (27 percent)
- Waikato – \$34 million (8 percent).

The building types with the highest total consent values were:

- offices, administration, and public transport buildings – \$77 million
- factories and industrial buildings – \$67 million
- storage buildings – \$64 million.



Source: Statistics New Zealand

## Canterbury earthquake-related consents total almost \$2.8 billion

Since 4 September 2010, almost \$2.8 billion of Canterbury's building consents have been identified as earthquake-related. This includes consents for 3,283 new dwellings.

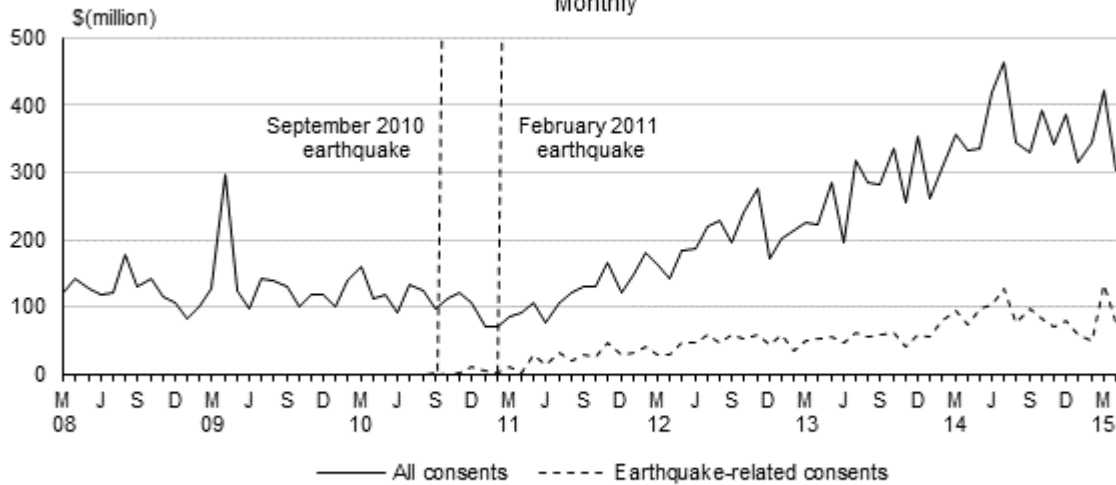
Not all earthquake-related consents can be identified. For comparison, total figures for Canterbury from September 2010 to April 2015 were:

- \$13 billion of building consents
- 22,371 new dwellings consented.

In April, the value of consents identified as earthquake-related in Canterbury was \$77 million (of a total of \$302 million for Canterbury). This included 95 new dwellings (of a total of 427).

[See more about earthquake-related building consents in Canterbury](#)

**Value of building consents in Canterbury<sup>(1)</sup>**  
Including alterations, additions, and non-building construction  
Monthly



1. Not all earthquake-related building consents can be identified.  
Source: Statistics New Zealand

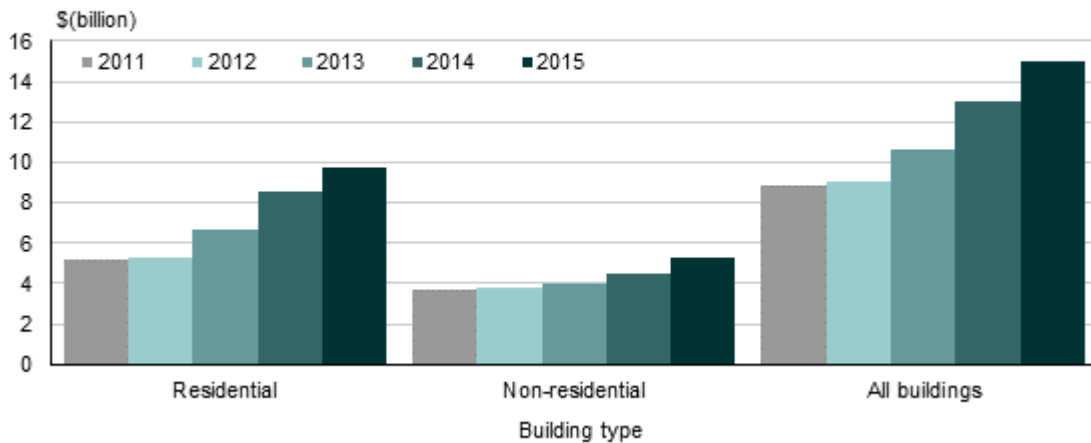
## Consents for all buildings total \$1.2 billion in April

The total value of building work consented in April 2015 was \$1.2 billion – comprising \$757 million of residential work, and \$419 million of non-residential work.

For the year ended April 2015, compared with the year ended April 2014, the value of building consents increased for:

- all buildings – up \$2.0 billion (15 percent) to \$15 billion
- residential buildings – up \$1.2 billion (14 percent) to \$9.7 billion
- non-residential buildings – up \$0.8 billion (17 percent) to \$5.3 billion.

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



Source: Statistics New Zealand

Data for building consents is obtained from all territorial authorities in New Zealand.

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

# Definitions

## About Building Consents Issued

Building Consents Issued contains statistics on consents for residential and non-residential buildings by region and building type. It includes the number, value, and floor area of new residential dwellings, and the value of consents for residential alterations and additions. It also includes the value of consents for non-residential buildings, and the floor area of new non-residential buildings.

Values include goods and services tax and are not inflation adjusted. We classify buildings according to their main intended function. Subsequent changes in function will be recorded in the statistics if new consents are issued. Building consents are issued by territorial authorities.

## More definitions

**Apartments:** are dwellings identified as apartments on building consents, excluding those in retirement villages.

**Building nature:** refers to the nature of the construction, and includes new buildings, altered, and new plus altered.

- **Alterations and additions:** includes building repairs, alterations, additions, extensions, strengthening, re-cladding, and relocation to another site.
- **New buildings:** are new constructions, and include conversions. For example, if a hotel is converted to apartments, the value of building work is classified to new dwellings.

**Dwellings:** are self-contained permanent residences. Examples include houses, apartments, townhouses, granny flats, and licence to occupy retirement village units.

**Domestic outbuildings:** examples include sleepouts (not fully self-contained), carports, garages, and garden sheds on residential sections.

**Earthquake-related building consents in Canterbury:** are 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.

**Education buildings:** examples include pre-schools, schools, polytechnics, and university buildings.

**Factories and industrial buildings:** examples include sawmills, freezing works, workshops, and hangars.

**Farm buildings:** examples include milking sheds, hay barns, implement sheds, and fattening units.

**Hospitals, nursing homes, and other health buildings:** examples include retirement villages (excluding units), and medical laboratories.

**Hostels, boarding houses, and prisons:** examples include children's homes and workers' quarters.

**Houses:** are houses not attached to other houses.

**Non-building construction:** is work that requires a building consent, but is not a building. For example, retaining walls, roads, bridges, signs, and wharves. Many civil engineering works require a resource consent but not a building consent, so are excluded.

**Non-residential buildings:** includes new construction, alterations, and additions to commercial, industrial, and other non-residential buildings such as schools, hospitals, libraries, and farm buildings.

Note: hostels, rest homes, and serviced apartments are classified as non-residential buildings.

**Office, administration, and public transport buildings:** examples include police stations, postal centres, banks, and railway stations.

**Residential buildings:** includes new construction, alterations, and additions to dwellings and domestic outbuildings.

**Retirement village units:** are villas, townhouses, apartments, or other dwellings within a retirement village, including those owned through a license to occupy. Excludes care apartments.

**Shops, restaurants, and bars:** examples include cafés, retail outlets, and service stations.

**Social, cultural, and religious buildings:** examples include sports facilities, museums, libraries, cinemas, and funeral parlours.

**Storage buildings:** examples include warehouses, cool stores, wharf sheds, and parking buildings.

**Territorial authorities:** are defined under the Local Government Act 2002 and related amendments. There are 67 territorial authorities – Auckland Council, 12 city councils, 53 district councils, and Chatham Islands Council.

**Townhouses, flats, units, and other dwellings:** examples include granny flats, and minor dwellings such as studios.



## **Related links**

### **Next release**

*Building Consents Issued: May 2015* will be released on 30 June 2015.

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[The release calendar](#) lists all 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

The information in this section has been updated as a result of changes to our time series and classifications.

- [Changes to our time series and classifications](#)
- [Data source](#)
- [Survey errors](#)
- [Coverage](#)
- [Interpreting the data](#)
- [More information](#)

### Changes to our time series and classifications

We have made changes to the building consents statistics we publish, beginning with *Building Consents Issued: March 2015*, released on 30 April 2015. The following changes are intended to make the statistics more relevant and useful.

- Updated three classifications: building type, institutional sector, and institutional control.
- Introduced four separate classifications for dwellings: 'houses', 'apartments', 'retirement village units', and 'townhouses, flats, units, and other dwellings'. Some building types have been reclassified within non-residential building categories. Miscellaneous buildings is discontinued.
- Added new dwelling trends for four regions and two aggregated regions.
- Made data much easier to find in new time-series families.
- Provided data for 13 Auckland wards, replacing seven former territorial authorities.
- Implemented an automated process to determine building type, nature, and new dwelling count where possible, with less need for human editing.

In addition, changes to our seasonal adjustment methodology were applied in *Building Consents Issued: April 2015*, released on **29 May 2015**. These changes affected the seasonally adjusted and trend total number of new dwellings consented.

See [Implementing classification and other changes to building consent statistics](#) for more details.

### Data source

We obtain data for building consents from all accredited building consent authorities (ie territorial authorities) each month. We compile information from 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 we make much effort to minimise these errors, they will still occur, and we cannot quantify their effect.

## Coverage

### Scope

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

The Building Act 2004 determines the scope of work requiring a building consent. 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 Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment'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.

We exclude 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.

**2015** From March 2015 we use the 2014 building type classification.

The main changes are:

- dwellings now have four building types instead of two
- miscellaneous buildings series for non-residential buildings is discontinued
- institutional sector and control classifications are updated
- four new time-series families replace eight discontinued families
- series for the 13 wards in Auckland will replace seven former territorial authorities series.

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

**1993** From January 1993, 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 September 1989, we exclude consents below \$5,000.

## **Boundary changes**

**2011** From 1 November 2010, part of the former Franklin district moved from the Auckland region to the Waikato region. We include this change 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. Before November 2010, the Auckland region can be used to approximate the new Auckland Council.

## **Seasonally adjusted series**

Seasonal adjustment removes the estimated effect 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.

We use the X-13 ARIMA-SEATS seasonal adjustment program, developed at the U.S. Census Bureau, to produce the seasonally adjusted and trend estimates.

## **Trend estimates**

Trend estimation removes the estimated effect 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.

We use the X-13 ARIMA-SEATS seasonal adjustment program 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, we estimate the monthly trend series for the value of non-residential buildings after removing 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.

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

## **Interpreting the data**

Values for new buildings include conversion costs. For example, if a hotel is converted to apartments, we treat them 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. We collect value data 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.

Care should be taken in using building consents data for individual building types at small geographic areas, as it may contain errors and omissions that are not significant at the national level. We may not have detected these errors during our editing processes.

### **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, 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 has 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.

We quantify and remove trading day effects when they are estimated to be statistically significant. We don't 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, trend for selected regions
5. Number of new dwellings consented, by selected territorial authority and Auckland ward area
6. Value of building consents issued, actual and trend values

## Machine-readable zipped csv file

A machine-readable zipped csv file is also available. This is a new way for technical users to download our data.

## Access more data on Infoshare

Infoshare allows you to organise data in the way that best meets your needs. You can view the resulting tables onscreen or download them.

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## Next release

*Building Consents Issued: May 2015* will be released on 30 June 2015.