

Building Consents Issued: December 2011

Embargoed until 10:45am – 31 January 2012

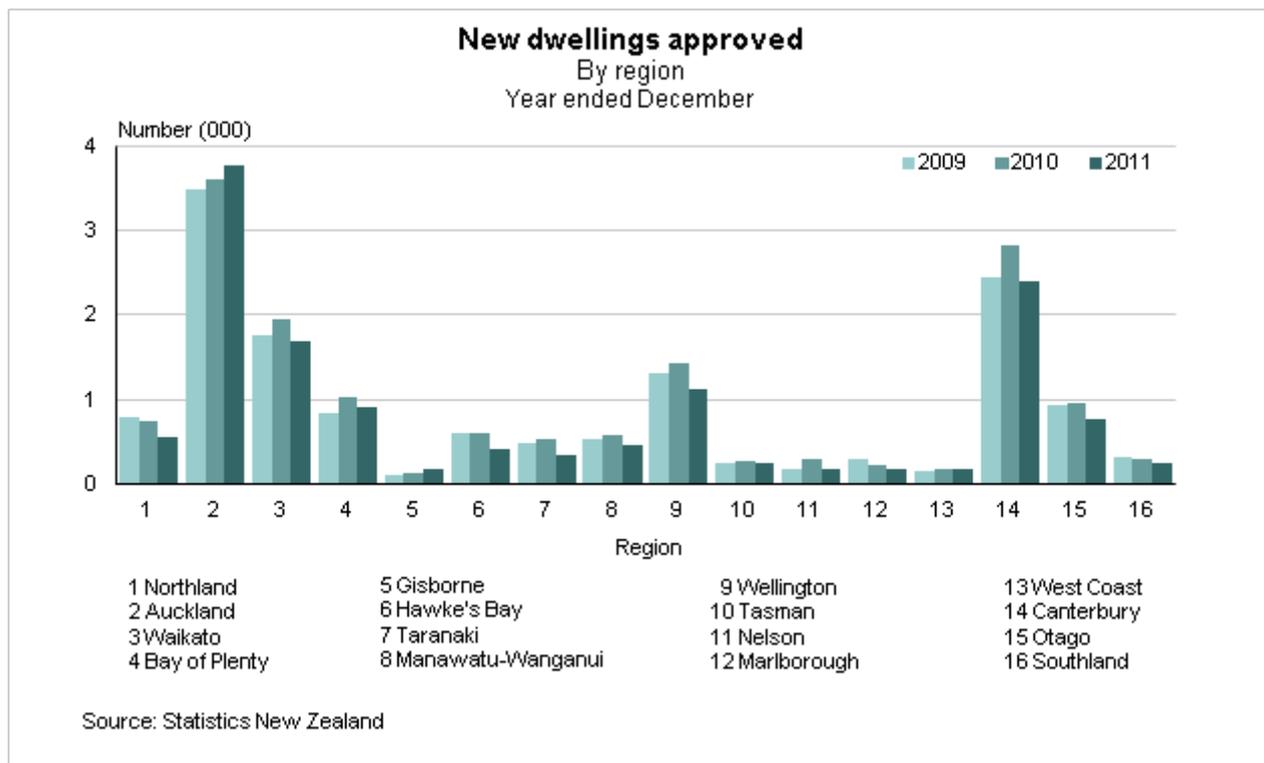
Key facts

For December 2011 (compared with December 2010):

- New dwelling numbers rose 13 percent to 1,127 (from a low of 994).
- Apartment numbers (included in new dwelling numbers) rose from 85 to 148 (of which 41 were rest home units).
- Dwelling numbers rose mainly in Auckland, Wellington, and Canterbury, but fell in most other regions.
- Seasonally adjusted new dwelling numbers showed little change, following several months of volatility.
- Trend numbers for dwelling approvals show a rise for the latest nine months, but at a slowing rate.
- Residential consent values rose \$75 million, while non-residential consent values rose \$7 million.

For the 2011 year (compared with 2010):

- New dwelling numbers fell 12 percent to 13,662 (the lowest December-year total since this series began in 1965).
- Residential consent values fell 12 percent to \$4,925 million, while non-residential consent values fell 3.5 percent to \$3,640 million.



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Government Statistician

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Commentary

- Number of approved new dwellings up in December – from low level
- More dwellings approved in Auckland, Wellington, and Canterbury
- Non-residential building value up slightly
- Earthquake-related consents total \$29 million in December
- All buildings value up for December month; down for December year

Figures given are unadjusted for seasonal and irregular factors unless otherwise stated.

Number of approved new dwellings up in December – from low level

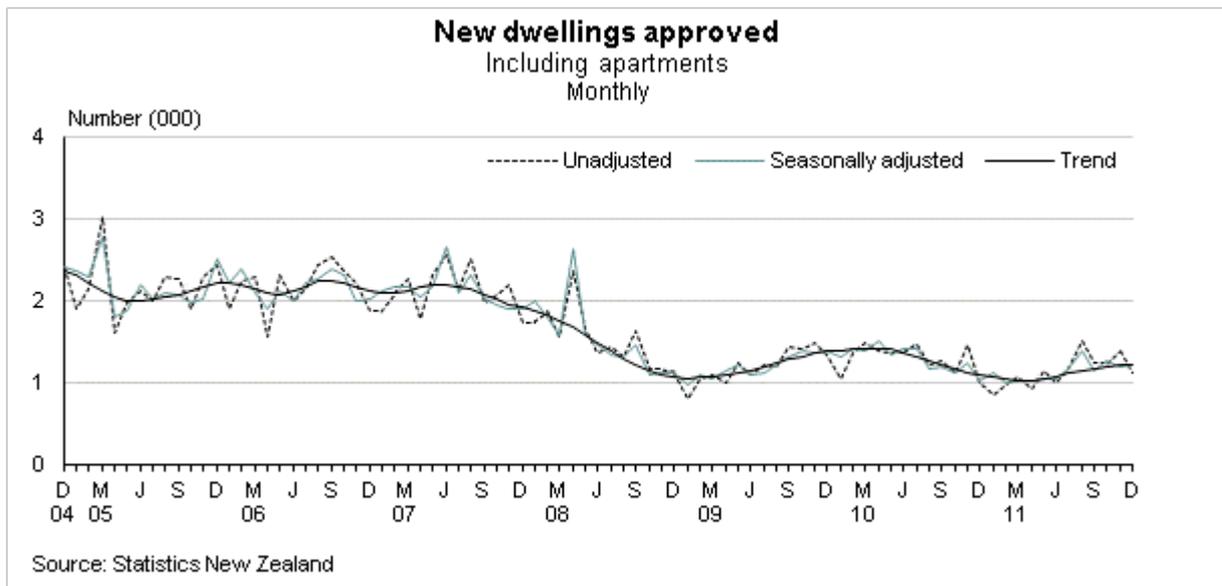
The unadjusted number of new dwelling approvals rose 13 percent in December 2011 (compared with December 2010). However, the number remains at a low level. Figures for December 2010 were the lowest recorded for a December month in the 46-year history of the series.

Dwelling approval numbers for December 2011, compared with December 2010, were:

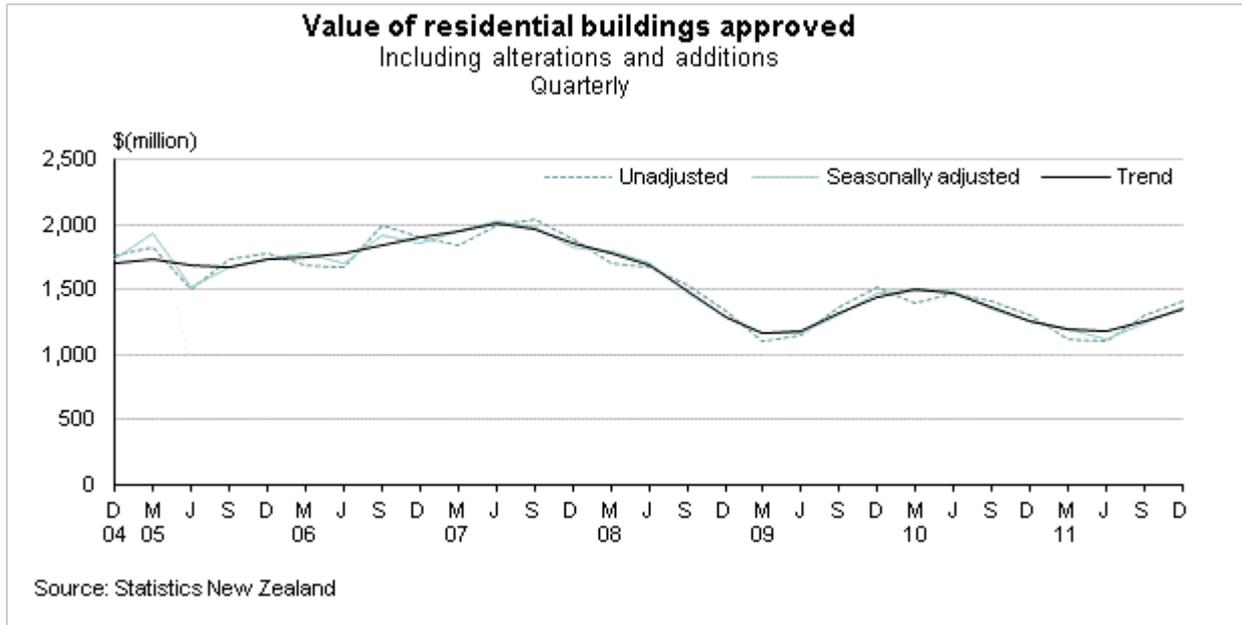
- 1,127 new dwellings, including apartments, up 13 percent (but 17 percent lower than in December 2009)
- 979 new dwellings, excluding apartments, up 7.7 percent
- 148 new apartments (including 41 rest home apartments), up from 85.

After seasonal fluctuations are removed, the number of approved new dwellings, including apartments, shows a rise of 2.1 percent in December 2011. Excluding apartments, there was a small decrease of 0.2 percent. These movements follow several months of volatility.

Trend numbers for dwelling approvals, both including and excluding apartments, show a rise for the nine months to December 2011, but the rate of increase is easing. Trend figures, particularly for the latest months, may be revised whenever an additional month is added to the series.



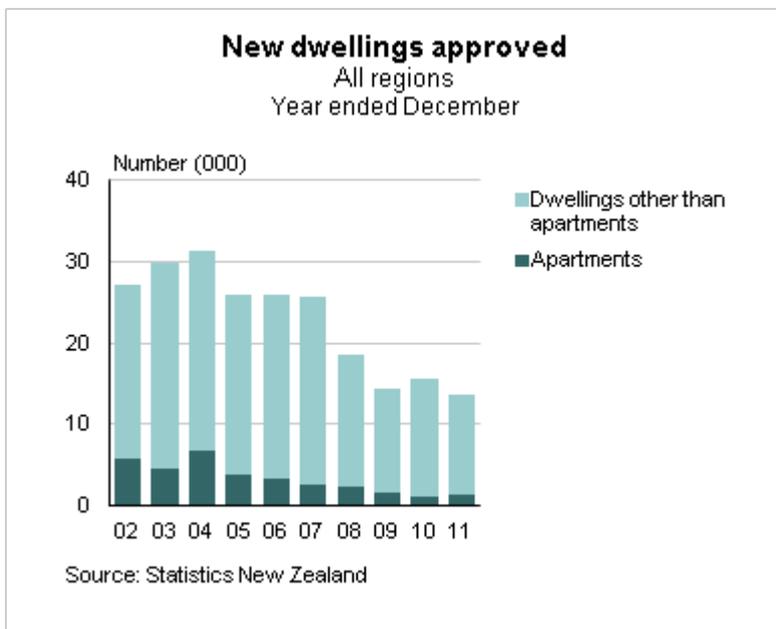
In December 2011, compared with December 2010, the value of all residential building consents rose \$75 million (20 percent) to \$443 million. As in the quarterly graph below, the value trend shows growth for the latest two quarters, after a five-quarter decline.



Year ended December 2011

For 2011, compared with 2010, consents were issued for:

- 13,662 new dwellings, including apartments, **down** 12 percent (becoming the lowest December-year total in the 46-year history of the series)
- 12,506 new dwellings, excluding apartments, **down** 15 percent
- 1,156 new apartments, **up** 23 percent (from the lowest December-year total in 17 years)
- \$4,925 million of residential building work, **down** 12 percent (to the lowest December-year total in 10 years).

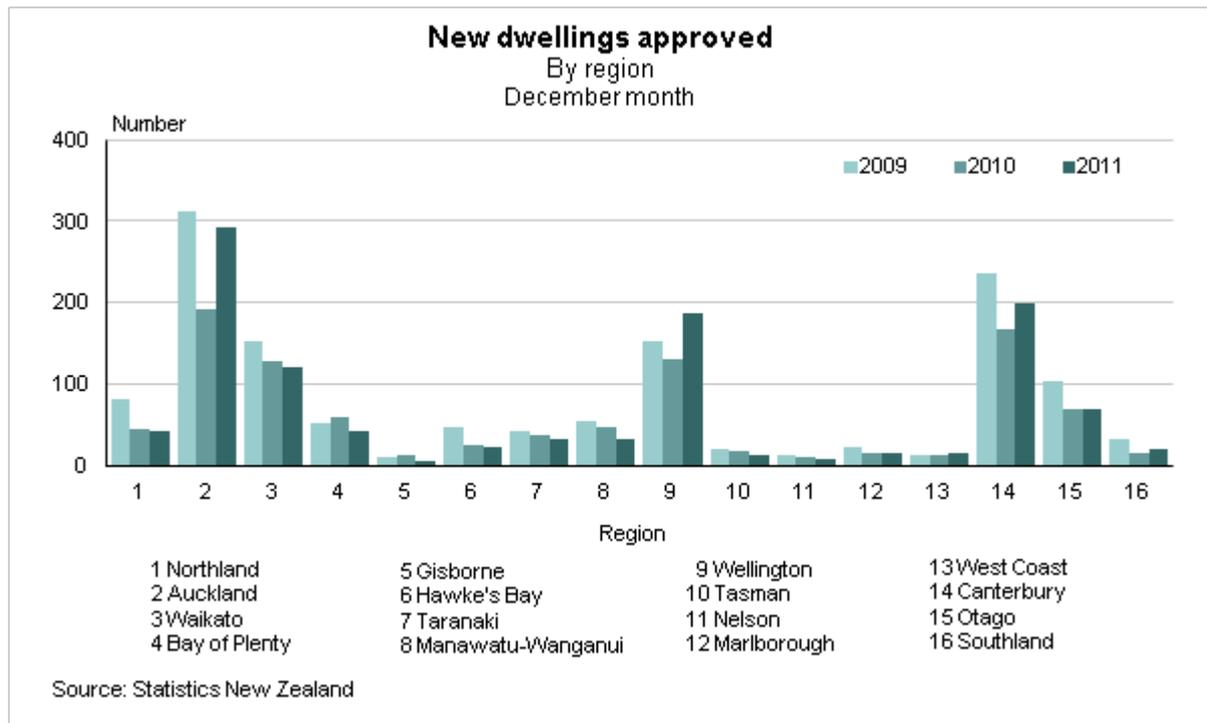


More dwellings approved in Auckland, Wellington, and Canterbury

The 13 percent national increase in dwelling approval numbers, for the December 2011 month compared with December 2010, was concentrated in Auckland, Wellington, and Canterbury. Numbers fell in most of the other 13 regions.

The main changes in regional dwelling approval numbers, compared with December 2010, were:

- Auckland, **up** 99 (51 percent) to 292
- Wellington, **up** 58 (45 percent) to 188
- Canterbury, **up** 32 (19 percent) to 199
- Bay of Plenty, **down** 15 (25 percent) to 44
- Manawatu-Wanganui, **down** 14 (29 percent) to 34.



Auckland and Wellington had the largest regional increases, and Canterbury is yet to begin the bulk of its earthquake-related rebuild. As a result, the North Island contributed most to the increase in national dwelling approvals, as follows:

- North Island, up 105 (15 percent) to 786
- South Island, up 28 (9 percent) to 341.

Year ended December 2011

For 2011 compared with 2010:

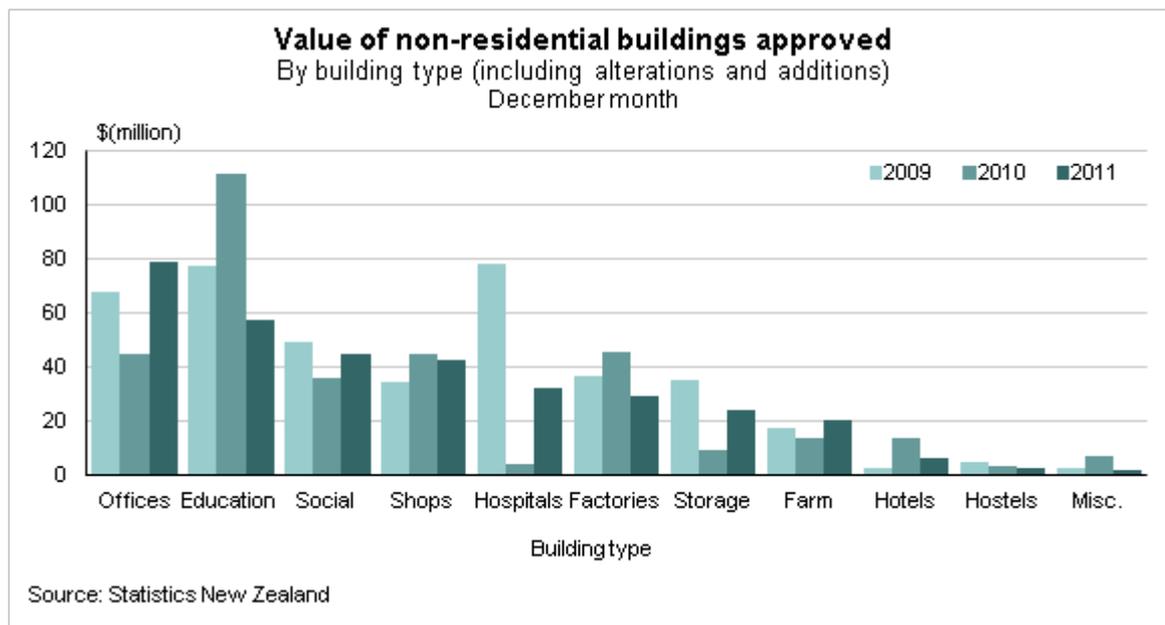
- Nationally, there was an overall decrease of 1,940 new dwelling approvals
- Canterbury had the largest regional decrease, down 426 new dwellings to 2,395
- Auckland had the largest regional increase, up 169 new dwellings to 3,772.

Non-residential building value up slightly

In December 2011, the value of consented non-residential building work was \$338 million, up \$7 million (2.1 percent) compared with December 2010. Five of the 11 building types increased in value.

The largest changes compared with December 2010 were:

- education buildings, **down** \$54 million
- offices and administration buildings, **up** \$34 million
- hospitals and nursing homes, **up** \$28 million.



As shown by the darkest bars in the graph above, the four largest contributors to the value of non-residential buildings in December 2011 were:

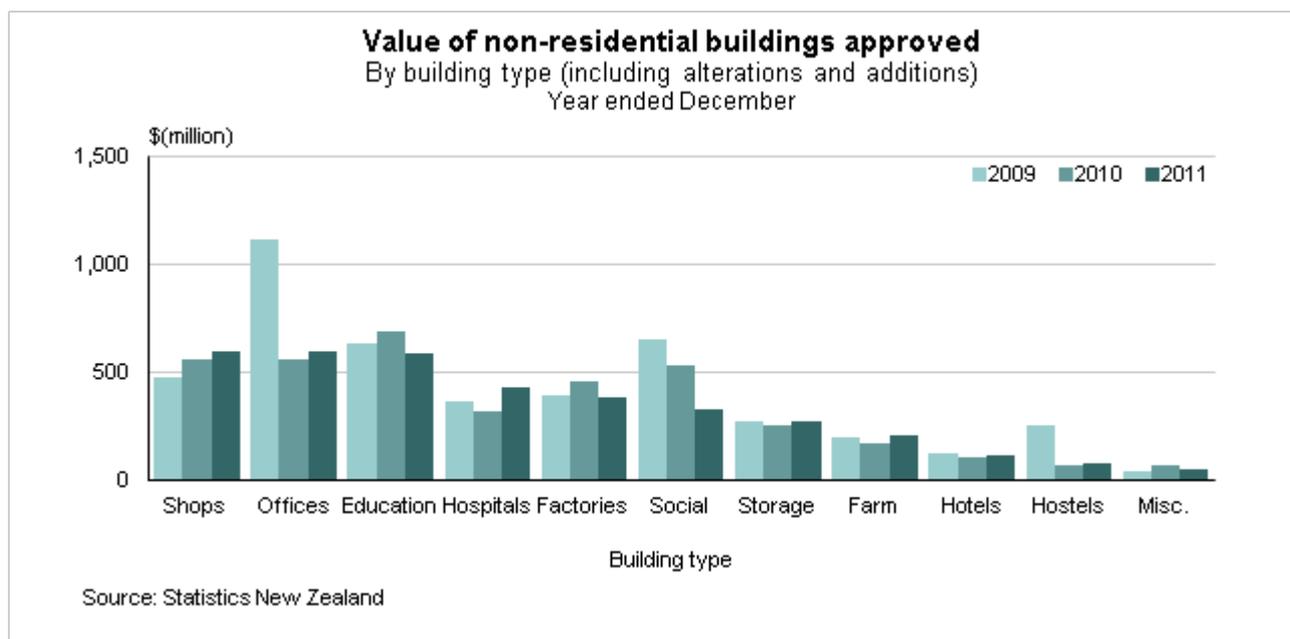
- offices and administration buildings, at 23 percent
- education buildings, at 17 percent
- social, cultural, and recreational buildings, at 13 percent
- shops, restaurants, and taverns, at 12 percent.

Year ended December 2011

For 2011 compared with 2010, the value of consented non-residential building work fell 3.5 percent to \$3,640 million – the lowest in the last eight December years.

The largest changes by building type, compared with 2010 were:

- social, cultural, and religious buildings, **down** \$200 million
- hospitals and nursing homes, **up** \$116 million
- education buildings, **down** \$105 million.



As shown by the darkest bars in the graph above, the largest contributors to the value of non-residential buildings in 2011 were:

- shops, restaurants, and taverns, at 16 percent
- offices and administration buildings, at 16 percent
- education buildings, at 16 percent.

Earthquake-related consents total \$29 million in December

In Canterbury, building consents identified as being earthquake-related totalled \$29 million in December 2011 (compared with \$47 million in November and \$26 million in October). Of the \$29 million recorded for December, \$23 million was for non-residential work, \$5 million was for residential work (including seven new dwellings), and \$1 million was for non-building construction. More information about [earthquake-related building consents in Canterbury](#) is available on the Statistics NZ website.

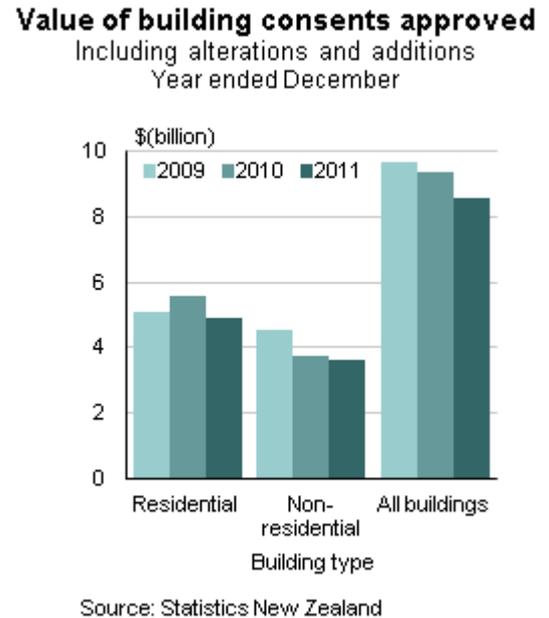
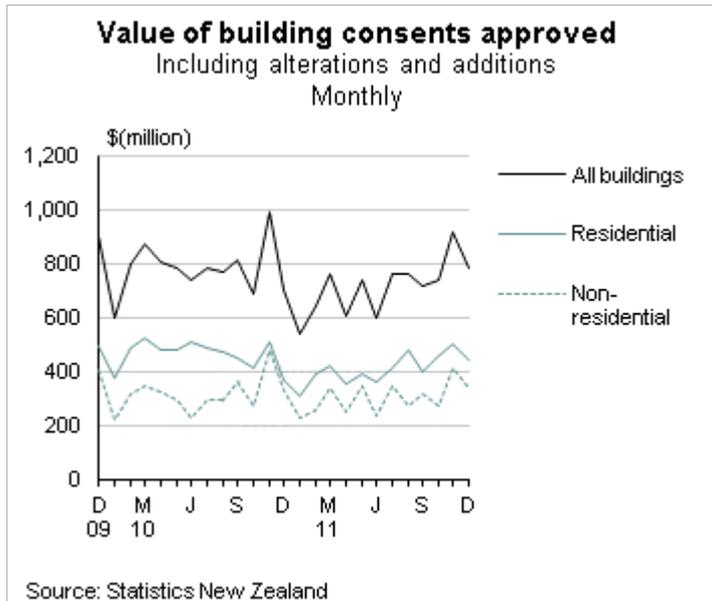
Since 4 September 2010, 1,052 earthquake-related consents have been identified, totalling \$259 million. This includes 224 new dwellings; 146 were relocatable units.

Earthquake-related consents cover residential, non-residential, and some non-building construction. Non-building construction may include swimming pools, bridges, reservoirs, and retaining walls. Consents that are mainly for demolitions are excluded.

Building consents are often used as an early indicator of building activity. The extent of damage to Christchurch and adjacent districts, particularly that caused by the earthquake on 22 February 2011, means that the relationship between consents and activity may change, even at the national level. Statistics NZ's quarterly [Value of Building Work Put in Place](#) provides estimates of the dollar value of building work. *Value of Building Work Put in Place: December 2011 quarter* will be published on 5 March 2012.

All buildings value up for December month; down for December year

In the December 2011 month, the value of consents issued for all buildings (residential and non-residential combined) was \$781 million, up 12 percent compared with December 2010.



For the year ended December 2011, compared with 2010, the value of consents for:

- all buildings **decreased** \$782 million (8 percent) to \$8,565 million
- residential buildings **decreased** \$649 million (12 percent) to \$4,925 million
- non-residential buildings **decreased** \$133 million (3.5 percent) to \$3,640 million.

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.

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

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.

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 2012 will be released on 29 February 2012.

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

Past releases

See [Building Consents Issued – information releases](#) for links to past releases.

Related information

[Earthquake-related building consents](#) 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 New Zealand 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 changes to [Schedule 1 of 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.

Further information on seasonal adjustment is available on the Statistics NZ website.

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

More [information about Building Consents Issued](#) is available on our website.

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Timing

Timed statistical releases are delivered using postal and electronic services provided by third parties. Delivery of these releases may be delayed by circumstances outside the control of Statistics NZ. Statistics NZ accepts no responsibility for any such delays.

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Tables

The following tables are included with this release. They are available in Excel format from the 'Downloads' box of *Building Consents Issued: December 2011* on the Statistics NZ website.

If you do not have access to Excel, you may use the [Excel file viewer](#) to view, print, and export the contents of the file.

1. Building consents issued – December
2. Number of new dwellings approved
3. Number and value of new dwellings approved, by region
4. Number of new dwellings approved, by selected territorial authority area
5. Value of building consents issued, unadjusted and trend series
6. Number of new dwellings approved, by quarter
7. Value of building consents issued, by quarter

Access more data on Infoshare

Use [Infoshare](#), a free, online database to access time-series data specific to your needs. To access the release time series on Infoshare, select the following categories from the homepage:

Subject category: **Industry sectors**

Group: Building Consents - **BLD**