

We're Your Locals

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Maintaining your home—The Top 5 Roof

It is the umbrella over your house, it will protect your investment in the long term.

- is it rusty, has it got holes in it, are the fixings all good?
- is there a good coat of paint on it with a good pitch so that the water is falling away easily?
- check the glue hasn't come unstuck on flat roofs and those with butynol.
- check the condition of concrete tiles, is there cracking in the mortar?
- are the flashings good, check the metal ridge capping, they can move and the rivets can pop.

Gutters

- Keep the gutters clear of debris, they can cause a lot of moisture problems. Once they are cleaned out and the downpipes are running there should be no pooling of water around the house.

Cladding

- Make sure your cladding and fascias are cleaned at least once a year, this is very important and will make your paint last a lot longer. Not only will it look good but it will extend the warranty on your paint.
- Is it in good condition, are all the sides of the windows sealed up so water can't enter. If there is a crack in the plaster cladding of your house or in some brick work get someone to look at it because they are areas where moisture can get in.
- If the house is clad with timber check for rot around the windowsill areas and all corners on weather board houses. If the house is clad in plaster check for remedial cracking as it is quite common around the window areas.

Latest Harcourts Sales Statistics (April and May 2014 Sales)

62.5% of properties sold for more than RV
The average sale price was 12.8% over RV
Highest sale price over RV was 39.5%

If you've got one wall with lots of cracking on it there might be more going on so get that checked

- Clear trees away from the house to get air and sunlight in and around the area. If you just leave it to overgrow it can result in rot in quite a short period of time.
- Make sure all the ground water is taken away from the home and away from your foundations.

Moisture

- Check under laundry tub for leaks
- Check for any moisture that could be coming out of the shower doors, making sure that any water is draining away and that the waste is clear.
- Occasionally look under the shelf in your vanity to check for leaks.
- Make sure you wash tiles down and check for cracks.
- At the first sign of a leak, call a plumber this will save a lot of damage in the long run.

Joinery

- Check window joinery inside and out, making sure it closes properly and if it is timber joinery look after the paint.
- Condensation, what can you do to stop that?
- Check all doors and windows inside and out to make sure that they don't need easing and are all working freely and there has been no movement or subsidence.
- Check that all the drain holes in windows are unblocked so water doesn't build up and leak over the sills.

Is now a good time to sell?

Yes! There is still a shortage of property available for sale and plenty of buyers just waiting for the right property to come on the market.

We are always happy to provide sales statistics for any suburb and our opinion of the current market value of your home. Just let us know how we can help.



House WOFs could include P-lab testing

Houses used as P-labs could rival leaky homes as a problem, with a warrant of fitness system needed to reassure buyers, the Real Estate Institute says. Chief executive Helen O'Sullivan said meth labs that were being discovered were only "the tip of the iceberg". "With leaky homes you have a profile of the kind of house that can be affected, but meth labs can be anywhere, "not surprisingly, meth cooks don't sign a register when they start up". She called for a "warrant of fitness" system for houses, which would include a test for meth at a cost of \$100 to \$500. Other issues, for example the state of wiring, could also be covered.

The problem of meth-tainted homes had reached the point where a test for P was as important for buyers as a LIM report and a building code check. "To a degree this is the new 'leaky homes' but in a way it's worse because it's harder to spot. Perhaps one day we will see legislation that compels homeowners to declare whether their home is a meth home when they sell." Contaminated Site Solutions Limited director Victor Boyd said the issue of contaminated homes was becoming more prevalent. "More people are asking questions," he said. He had received calls from young couples who had bought their first home, not realising it was contaminated. Meth-contaminated homes could be "extremely dangerous" Mr Boyd said. "There are some nasty chemicals involved." P-lab exposure could cause shortness of breath, dizziness, irritation, or burns to the skin, eyes, nose and mouth. There was also a problem with property owners discovering, but failing to report clandestine labs, he said. "They'll say get out or I'll call the police. Then they'll try to clean it up themselves." In Foxton, tradesman Kris Harding has called on the community to help Derek and Ceridwen Hooper, who bought a retirement home only to find it was contaminated by meth. Housing Minister Nick Smith said the scale of the problem did not justify imposing an expensive test for meth contamination on property owners. "It is certainly an issue, but it would be misleading to suggest it's approaching the same level as the \$20 billion leaky homes problem." Police estimated that about 50 homes each year were found to be contaminated by meth, Mr Smith said. He sympathised with the Hoopers. "They need to explore the legal avenues open to them." Mr Smith said he had been contacted by landlords who faced clean-up bills of tens of thousands of dollars after tenants had set up P-labs. Many were left out of pocket, but in one case a landlord was able to claim \$30,000 through the courts after a drug dealer's assets were seized under the Criminal Proceeds Recovery Act.

Overall the best solution remained the targeting of P makers and dealers, Mr Smith said.

What to do

A property owner discovering a P-lab should:

- Arrange for the property to be cleaned and decontaminated by a professional cleaning company.
- Have the property tested to establish that the level of contaminants is within an acceptable level.
- If landlords rent out a contaminated property, they are breaching their obligations under the Residential Tenancies Act, and other legislation such as the Building Act and the Health Act.
- A real estate agent selling a property known to be contaminated may face action by the Real Estate Agents Disciplinary Tribunal.

Telltale Signs

Signs of a meth lab may include:

- Unusual chemical smells.
- Numerous chemical containers stored or stockpiled.
- Stained glass equipment and cookware.
- Numerous cold tablet packages lying around or in the rubbish.
- Portable gas tanks or other cylinders not normally used in the area.
- Chemical stains around household kitchen sink, laundry, toilet or stormwater drains.
- Yellow/brown staining of interior floor, wall or ceiling and surfaces.
- Unusual activity, especially at night.

(Article taken from Stuff)

What is deemed a safe level?

Properties where the level of Meth contamination is less than 0.5µg/cm² are deemed safe for habitation.

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