

Building minister visits Cambridge

Choose your builders wisely

Article courtesy of the Cambridge Edition

The building industry was drowning in red tape before National came into government three years ago, according to Building and Construction Minister Maurice Williamson.

Mr Williamson was in Cambridge last Thursday to talk to 15 representatives of local construction and building businesses about the future of the building industry under National, should the November 26 election go their way.

He said the elephant in the room was the leaky home situation.

Mr Williamson said a report by PricewaterhouseCoopers estimated there were 89,000 leaky homes in New Zealand and the cost to repair them was \$11.3 billion.

The report stated there was a large number of houses that weren't yet counted, either because the houses were in warmer climates or hadn't depreciated yet but once they were all repaired the bill would be closer to \$22.6b.

And the blame wasn't solely on one factor, according to the minister.

"It was a systemic failure across the board," he said, noting poor workmanship, bad inspections and untreated timber were some of the reasons.

Cambridge and Hamilton were not as badly affected by leaky



SPECIAL VISIT: Cambridge Homes hosted Building and Construction Minister Maurice Williamson, pictured second left, and Taupo MP Louise Upston to talk about issues in the building industry. Also pictured are, from left, Tim Goodson, Peter Santner, Peter Nielsen and Phillip Webb, all from Cambridge Homes.

Photo: SHAYNE ELDRIDGE

homes – Auckland, Wellington, Tauranga and Christchurch account for 94 per cent of leaky homes throughout the country, Mr Williamson said.

He explained a quarter of the costs to repair leaky buildings would be paid by the Government in a \$1b package, one quarter from the local authority and the other half would be from a Government-guaranteed loss sharing bank loan.

At the moment, anyone could build a house, no matter what their qualifications.

"It doesn't make sense given it's

the biggest asset people invest in," Mr Williamson said.

"From March of next year you will not be able to do restricted building work, which is the structural integrity . . . you will not be able to do that work unless you are either a licensed building practitioner or it is supervised and signed off by a licensed building practitioner."

If a builder does not become licensed then they face huge fines and imprisonment.

Overseas workers will either need to be New Zealand-licensed, or have a licensed practitioner

sign off all their work, meaning overseas companies won't be able to use their own engineers.

Tomorrow the Government will be celebrating the registration of 10,000 licensed practitioners.

They require 15,000 by March next year otherwise there will be a supply and demand shortage.

Mr Williamson said there were many trade qualification spots at tertiary level that were not being taken up as the New Zealand culture tends to determine a university qualification as more revered than a polytech one.

"A perfect storm is coming," Mr

Williamson said. "A perfect storm in the form of the Canterbury earthquake recovery rebuild . . . Auckland has been dramatically under-building it's residential homes based on demand . . . and a huge remedial build [for the leaky homes]."

"We have a big supertanker to turn around," he said about the culture of New Zealanders and their thoughts about building a home.

"New Zealand is unique in that people generally go for the cheapest now rather than the cheapest over time."

SHOWHOME: Poet's Corner, Shadbolt Drive, Cambridge
Phone 07 827 3362 | Facsimilie 07 827 3362 | Phillip Webb 0274 887 766
Email: sales@cambridgehomes.co.nz | www.cambridgehomes.co.nz