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Home Safe Home? How to Identify a Property's Natural Hazards

Looking at buying a new property? As an astute buyer, you will probably have a list of things to check out before you make your offer such as council records, water tightness issues and a building report.



However, many people miss out on one very important subject... the property's susceptibility to natural hazards. And in a country punctuated by ever-changing extreme weather patterns, the Earthquake Commission (EQC) has launched a new public education campaign – Home Safe Home? – to inspire home

buyers to view a prospective property through a 'natural hazard lens'.

Buying a home is a critical time for some people to make risk-based decisions, while others might be willing to make additional investments to improve the safety and resilience of their new home.

But EQC public education manager Hamish Armstrong says the message is clear; before you buy a home, find out how natural hazards might affect it and what you will need to do to remedy any damage.

"There's a lot to think about when buying a new home," Hamish says. "However, top of the list might not be how it will stand up to a natural hazard.

"The campaign is not intended to tell people not to buy a particular home - instead we want to encourage them to be more 'risk aware' during the process. We want home buyers to consider actions they might need to take if they're going to buy it.

"We hope this will continue to improve people's awareness of the natural hazard risks we face in New Zealand and help home buyers spot the risks that might affect them and their property before they buy."

While previous campaign material focused more heavily on earthquakes, EQC has now evolved content to include more natural hazards – landslips, floods and tsunami, hazardous features and earthquakes.

“We know we live with the risk of many different natural hazards here in Aotearoa,” Hamish says. “It’s really important that home buyers do think seriously about those hazards and how they might affect a new property. By doing this, each buyer can make informed decisions that match with their own risk tolerance.”

EQC research through Nielsen IQ shows that natural hazard

awareness is high among home buyers, with 84% saying that they consider natural hazard risk as part of their purchasing decision. However, close to half of those think hazard risk is only ‘quite important’ as opposed to ‘very important’, Hamish says.

If you want to know what makes a safer home or perhaps you’re buying a home that’s had an EQC claim, EQC has lots of helpful information for home buyers on the EQC website [here](#). The new Home Safe Home? campaign will appear across multiple media channels from this month.

Remember before you buy:

- Check local council files on the property that might help you understand any natural hazard risks associated with location, and to ensure any building or construction work has appropriate consents.
- Understand what features of a home might make it more at risk of damage from natural hazards. Consider the potential cost of any construction or repair work needed and talk with your Harcourts sales consultant or lawyer about how this might affect your offer.
- Organise a home inspection report by an appropriately qualified professional such as an independent building surveyor or structural engineer to assess and identify possible issues.

Harcourts celebrates a decade of being New Zealand's Most Trusted Real Estate Brand

New Zealanders have voted Harcourts the most trusted real estate brand for a remarkable 10 years in a row, making Harcourts the only real estate brand to achieve this honour since the real estate agency category was established in 2013. “We recognise that trust doesn’t happen overnight –

it’s earned each and every time we serve our clients and our communities,” says Harcourts Managing Director Bryan Thomson. “To be named the Most Trusted Real Estate Brand for ten years in a row is a vote of confidence from the people of New Zealand and we couldn’t be prouder.”

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