

# **Housing and Residential Movement**

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## 1. Introduction

New Zealanders have, by international standards, traditionally had high rates of residential movement. Between 1986 and 1991, more than half the population aged five years or more moved at least once. A similar proportion moved between 1991 and 1996. At the 1996 census, a quarter of people had lived at their address less than a year. The most mobile are those in their twenties or thirties. In 1996 over 70 percent of adults 20–34 years old had lived in their residence less than five years and almost 60 percent of children aged 5–9 years had moved from house-to-house at least once in the previous five years. In 2006, of the population that had resided in New Zealand since 2001, only 42.4 percent had resided in the same dwelling over that five year period.

Views about the implications of residential movement broadly fall in two categories. Some commentators have argued that residential movement is associated with upward social mobility with those that shift representing vibrant, active households looking to improve their economic opportunities. Other commentators see residential mobility as representing disengagement from communities and associated with poor social and economic outcomes.<sup>1</sup>

Housing policy has reflected the tensions between those that see ‘staying’ and residential stability as important and those that see ‘shifting’ as the pathway to success. Until the 1990s there was a strong emphasis on support into home ownership, and in the social housing stock, tenure security. Those are both consistent with the concept of housing as a pathway to stable communities.<sup>2</sup> The housing reforms of the 1990s were strongly influenced by the housing voucher policies being implemented in the United States and ushered in New Zealand’s 1990s experiment of directing housing assistance primarily through accommodation supplements. Both are examples of housing policies that saw shifting house and community as the pathway for success and embedded three critical assumptions.

Firstly, they assume that supply-side housing assistance such as the provision of rental housing or housing loans inhibited movement to jobs and educational opportunities and generated stocks of houses in the ‘wrong places’. Secondly, those policies assume that home ownership inhibited residential movement and, consequently, housing assistance needed to be tenure neutral. Finally, there was an assumption in the 1990s that income supplementation would lead to a housing market response that would generate adequate housing supply at the right time and in the right places for New Zealanders to shift to vibrant local economies able to provide employment, improved incomes and reduced welfare dependency. There is considerable evidence that those outcomes did not occur.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Briggs (1997); Winter and Stone (1998); Wiggins, Bartley, Greave, et.al, (1998); Strand (2000); Pearson (1987); Dorling, Shaw and Brimblecombe (2001); Gregg, Machin and Manning (2001); Kariuki, Nash, and College (1999); Levine (1998); Thorns (1976); Young and Willmott (1972); Khwaja (2000); Lee (2000); Macintyre, MacIver and Sooman (1993); Mantzicopoulous and Knutson (2000); Milne (1999).

<sup>2</sup> Schrader (2005); Ferguson (1994).

<sup>3</sup> Waldegrave (2002:62–78); Saville-Smith and Amey (1996); Krishnan (2001:109–127); Statistics New Zealand (1998).

The inadequacies of the housing policy settings of the 1990s were partly due to a lack of understanding of the patterns and dynamics between housing and residential movement. This paper focuses precisely on that relationship and is concerned with the extent to which the housing situation of households prompts or inhibits residential movement. In particular it considers where housing features in the mix of prompts for residential shifts or staying in place, including place attachment, family, and employment. It explores the patterns of inter-community and intra-community house-to-house shifting, and identifies the housing related factors that prompt those movements. Finally, this paper comments on the costs of residential movement and suggests that resolution of problems with the housing stock would help to reduce residential churn.

## **2. Data and Method**

The analysis presented in this paper is based on three primary datasets. These are the: National Attachment Survey; Housing Affordability Surveys in the case study communities of Opotiki, Kawerau, Cannons Creek/Waitangirua and Amuri, and Case Study Community Panel interviews.

The National Attachment Survey was undertaken in 2008 and involved a telephone survey of 1,001 householders. The geographical spread of participants in that survey is presented in Figure 1.<sup>4</sup>

The population was drawn randomly, stratified according to the proportion of the national population dwelling in each regional council area. The 2005 National Attachment Survey elicited information from participants about attitudes to their community, their sociodemographic characteristics, their activities with communities, their housing histories and their residential movement intentions. Table 1 sets out the sample structure which was designed to ensure that rural and provincial experiences as well as city experiences were captured.

Table 2 sets out the sociodemographic characteristics of the participants in the National Attachment Survey. Like most telephone survey samples, this sample shows some bias with an over-representation of older people, people of New Zealand European ethnicity and those not available for paid work.

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<sup>4</sup> Schroder (2006:71).

Figure 1: Distribution of participants in the 2005 National Attachment Survey

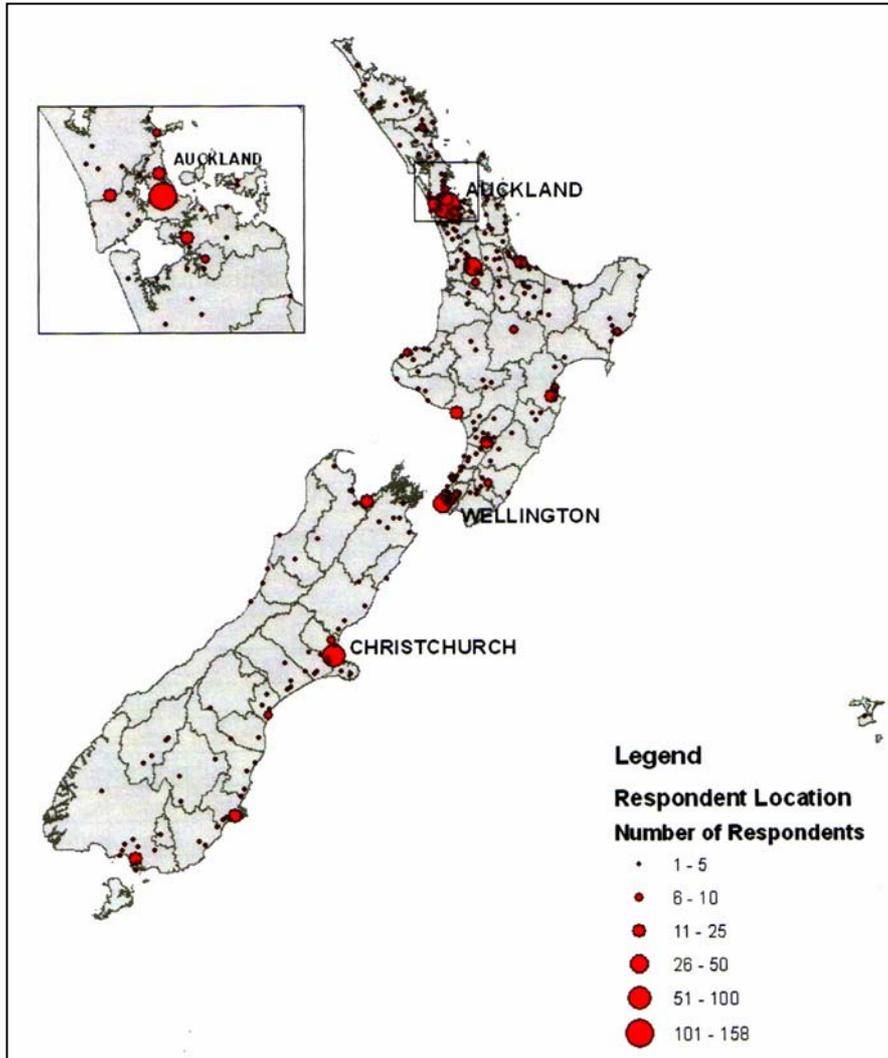


Table 1: Sample for National Attachment Survey 2005

Location	Householders	% Householders
City	578	57.7
Town	210	21.0
Rural area	213	21.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,001</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 2: Sociodemographic characteristics of survey respondents  
National Attachment Survey 2005 (n=1,001)**

<b>Respondent characteristics</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Sex</b>		
Male	499	49.9
Female	502	50.1
<b>Ethnicity</b>		
NZ European	854	85.3
NZ Māori	77	7.7
Pacific	13	1.3
Chinese	15	1.5
Indian	16	1.5
Other European	47	4.7
Other ethnicity	28	2.8
<b>Age</b>		
15–19 years	6	0.6
20–29 years	73	7.3
30–39 years	157	15.7
40–49 years	245	24.5
50–59 years	193	19.3
60 years or over	326	32.6
Refused	1	0.1
<b>Personal income</b>		
\$15,000 or less	209	20.9
\$15,001 to \$25,000	132	13.2
\$25,001 to \$40,000	211	21.1
\$40,001 to \$70,000	232	23.2
\$70,001 or more	126	12.6
Don't know	27	2.7
Refused	64	6.4
<b>Employment</b>		
Employed in either full-time or part-time paid work	655	65.4
Not employed in paid work, but searching for paid work	44	4.4
Not available for paid work	301	30.1
Refused	1	0.1

In addition to the 2005 National Attachment Survey, Housing Affordability Surveys were undertaken in the programme's four case study communities of Kawerau, Opotiki, Cannons Creek/Waitangirua and Amuri. Those telephone surveys were also undertaken in 2005 and involved randomly drawn samples of local populations. The surveys were designed to capture householders' own housing experiences within those communities, and to establish the prevailing perceptions of housing in their communities among householders. The samples for Opotiki and Kawerau were 120 respondents and those in Cannons Creek/Waitangirua and Amuri respectively were 121 respondents.

Table 3 sets out the sociodemographic characteristics of respondents to the Housing Affordability Surveys. Again this sample shows over-representation of older people. Many of these communities have high proportions of Māori and Pacific people. Consequently, while their representation is significantly higher in these surveys relative to the 2005 National Attachment Survey, they are nevertheless, under-represented in the community samples.

The Case Study Community Panel Interviews involved face-to-face in-depth interviews with a set of householders and individuals living in or associated with selected households. Interviews were carried out annually over a three year period and captured a wide range of data including information about housing conditions before and after residential movements. All household members 16 years of age or older were interviewed. In the first year, 335 individuals were interviewed. The second wave of interviews saw 335 individuals interviewed and 342 individuals were involved in the final year of interviewing. Table 4 sets out the sociodemographic characteristics of participants in wave one of the Panel Interviews.

**Table 3: Sociodemographic characteristics of survey respondents  
Housing Affordability Surveys 2005 (n=482)**

<b>Respondent characteristics</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Sex</b>		
Male	239	49.6
Female	243	50.4
<b>Ethnicity (multiple response) n=482</b>		
NZ European	346	71.8
NZ Māori	101	21.0
Pacific	38	7.9
Chinese	2	0.4
Indian	4	0.8
Other European	15	3.1
Other ethnicity	11	2.3
<b>Age</b>		
15-19 years	4	0.8
20-29 years	37	7.7
30-39 years	61	12.7
40-49 years	120	24.9
50-59 years	92	19.1
60 years or over	167	34.6
Refused	1	0.2
<b>Personal income</b>		
\$15,000 or less	120	24.9
\$15,001 to \$25,000	69	14.3
\$25,001 to \$40,000	102	21.2
\$40,001 to \$70,000	101	21.0
\$70,001 or more	33	6.8
Don't know	32	6.6
Refused	25	5.2
<b>Employment</b>		
Employed in either full-time or part-time paid work	286	59.3
Not employed in paid work, but searching for paid work	31	6.4
Not available for paid work	165	34.2

**Table 4: Sociodemographic characteristics of panel interviewees — Wave One**

<b>Respondent characteristics</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Sex</b>		
Male	182	54.3
Female	153	45.7
<b>Ethnicity (multiple response) n=335</b>		
NZ European	126	37.6
NZ Māori	102	30.4
Pacific	107	31.9
Chinese	2	0.6
Indian	0	0.0
Other European	0	0.0
Other ethnicity	29	8.7
<b>Age</b>		
15–19 years	42	12.5
20–29 years	36	10.7
30–39 years	85	25.4
40–49 years	79	23.6
50–59 years	36	10.7
60 years or over	51	15.2
Refused	6	1.8
<b>Personal income</b>		
\$15,000 or less	123	36.7
\$15,001 to \$25,000	57	17.0
\$25,001 to \$40,000	48	14.3
\$40,001 to \$70,000	35	10.4
\$70,001 or more	18	5.4
Don't know	15	4.5
Refused	39	11.6
<b>Employment</b>		
Employed in either full-time or part-time paid work	185	55.2
Not employed in paid work, but searching for paid work	32	9.6
Not available for paid work	118	35.2

### 3. Housing or Place: What Matters for Residential Movement?

There is a substantial, if fragmentary, body of international research that explores the relationship between place attachment and residential movement. That research is by no means conclusive and, at times, appears to be contradictory. Some research shows an association between low levels of place attachment and propensity to move. Other research suggests that some dimensions of place attachment are not associated with residential movement and, indeed, that attachment to particular places survives movement from those places.<sup>5</sup>

What is clear is that potentially, housing can impact on residential movement through two pathways. Firstly, housing can affect place attachment which in turn may impact on residential movement. Secondly, dissatisfaction with or problems of housing access may directly drive residential movement irrespective of place attachment. Teasing out the relative significance of those pathways is critical for communities concerned with attracting or retaining people and critical for those communities who wish to generate or maintain vibrant communities.

Schroder's analysis of the 2005 National Attachment Survey data generated by this research programme is one of the few attempts to establish systematically the way in which housing impacts on the various dimensions of place attachment. The five dimensions of place attachment that Schroder isolates are: Sentiments, Friends, Relatives, Participation and Evaluation. The aspect of housing with which she is concerned is home ownership.<sup>6</sup>

Schroder's analysis of the 2005 National Attachment Survey data shows that home ownership does have a significant and positive impact on an individual's sentimental attachment to their community<sup>7</sup> and their place attachment through friends. Indeed, having friends in a community is 1.8 times more likely for home owners than those in rental accommodation although it has no significant impact on the likelihood of an individual being attached through relatives.<sup>8</sup>

Schroder also found that when the sociodemographic characteristics of respondents to the National Attachment Survey were also taken into account, home ownership was less important to other dimensions of place attachment than previously postulated. For instance, many commentators have suggested that home ownership has a positive impact on community participation.<sup>9</sup> Schroder has found in New Zealand, however, that participation is strongly related to age and household composition — particularly the presence of children in a household — rather than housing tenure.<sup>10</sup> Similarly, while a number of commentators internationally<sup>11</sup> have suggested that home owners are likely to assess their community in more positive terms than tenants, this does not

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<sup>5</sup> For an overview see Schroder (2006:7–42); Saville-Smith et al. (2005:53–60).

<sup>6</sup> Schroder (2006).

<sup>7</sup> Schroder (2006:116).

<sup>8</sup> Schroder (2006:124, 128).

<sup>9</sup> Fried (1982); Bolan (1997); Parkes et.al. (2002); Theodori (2001); Stinner et.al. (1990); Woolever (1992).

<sup>10</sup> Schroder, C. (2006:130–133).

<sup>11</sup> Kearns and Parkes (2002); Kilmartin, Thorns and Burke (1985); Douglas (1986); Rossi and Weber (1996); Winter (2000).

appear to be the case in New Zealand.<sup>12</sup> In short, Schroder found that home ownership has an impact on some dimensions of place attachment, particularly the sentimental attachment of an individual to a community.

Place attachment in turn impacts on residential movement; the data from the 2005 National Attachment Survey suggests that particular types of place attachment have different impacts on residential movement, both actual and intended in New Zealand. Schroder found that those willing to move out of a place to take up alternative accommodation had a low evaluative attachment to the community in which they lived. Similarly, those who reported that they intended to move out of a community showed lower sentimental attachment to the community.<sup>13</sup>

#### **4. The Tendency to Move**

Overall, then, it appears that the relationship between housing and residential movement is mediated by place attachment, but only to a limited extent. So does housing have a direct effect on residential movement?

There are broadly two types of residential movement in New Zealand. One type is movement within the community; i.e. house-to-house shifts within the area where an individual is already living. The other type of movement is residential movement between communities. Residential movement within communities is strongly indicative that immediate factors around house, street or neighbourhood are critical while movement between communities can be expected to be associated with either community detachment or individuals seeking opportunities not available to them in their community of origin.

The complex patterns of movement found among New Zealanders through this research programme has been described previously. It is, however, useful to note that all the datasets show individuals moving between communities and within communities. One fifth (21.3 percent) of participants in the 2005 National Attachment Survey had moved into a new community since 2001. Among the participants in the Housing Affordability Surveys 27.6 percent of participants had moved into a new community since 2001. Among the panel interviewees in the first wave of interviews in 2004, 25.4 percent had moved between communities since 2001.

House-to-house movement within the community (rather than between communities) was very common. The National Attachment Survey found that 60.8 percent of participants had resided in more than one dwelling within their area or community since respondents' most recent move into the area (Table 5). The average number of moves within communities found in the 2005 National Attachment Survey was 2.8 moves and the median number of moves was two moves.

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<sup>12</sup> Schroder (2006:136).

<sup>13</sup> Schroder (2006:139–147).

**Table 5: Number of dwellings resided in within the community — National Attachment Survey 2005**

<b>Number of dwellings</b>	<b>Householders</b>	<b>% Householders (n=1,001)</b>
1 dwelling	392	39.2
2 dwellings	223	22.3
3 dwellings	143	14.3
4 dwellings or more	243	24.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>1001</b>	<b>100</b>

This is somewhat higher than the tendency to move dwellings found within the case study communities of Opotiki, Kawerau, Cannons Creek/Waitangirua and Amuri. Nevertheless, the four communities showed substantial intra-community movement. Of the 482 people who participated in the 2005 Housing Affordability Surveys, 48.1 percent of householders had lived in only one dwelling in the case study community. Over half the respondents had lived in least one dwelling within the area after their most recent move there (Table 6) and 14.7 percent had lived in four or more dwellings within the community.

**Table 6: Number of dwellings resided in within the community — Housing Affordability Surveys 2005**

<b>Number of dwellings</b>	<b>All householders</b>	<b>% All householders (n=482)</b>
1 dwelling	232	48.1
2 dwellings	118	24.5
3 dwellings	61	12.7
4 dwellings or more	71	14.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>482</b>	<b>100</b>

The Housing Affordability Surveys found that the overall average number of dwellings lived in (across all the case study areas) was 2.2 dwellings. That average, however, varied between case studies. In Opotiki the average was 2.3 dwellings. Kawerau had the highest average number of dwellings lived in at 2.4 dwellings, while Amuri had the lowest average at 1.8 dwellings. The average number of dwellings lived in for the Cannons Creek/Waitangirua case study was 2.1 dwellings. Table 7 shows the pattern of dwellings lived in within a community by householders participating in the Housing Affordability Surveys.

**Table 7: Dwellings resided in within each community — Case Study Housing Affordability Surveys 2005**

Number of dwellings	Percent of householders in each community			
	Kawerau	Opotiki	Cannons Creek	Amuri
1 dwelling	34.2	50.8	50.4	57.0
2 dwellings	30.0	20.8	26.4	20.7
3 dwellings	20.0	11.7	8.3	10.7
4 or more dwellings	15.8	16.7	14.9	11.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Turning to the panel interviews, it is apparent that a substantial number of movers moved within the community. Between wave 1 and wave 2 interviews, around 80.9 percent of individuals interviewed stayed in their community. Of those who stayed in their community, around 8 percent reported moving house. A total of 76 individuals in the Panel Interviews moved between the first wave of interviews and the second wave of interviews approximately one year later. Of those, 22 were in the community at the first wave of interviews and still in the community at the second wave, but had moved house. As Table 8 shows, the majority of those who moved within the community only made one move but some made a series of residential moves.

**Table 8: Moves within their community of origin and between 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> waves by those still residing in the community**

Number of moves	Individuals	% of Individuals
No moves	249	91.9
1 move	16	5.9
2 moves	5	1.8
3 moves	1	0.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>271</b>	<b>100</b>

That intra-community pattern of house-to-house movement was even more pronounced between the second wave of interviews and the third wave of interviews. In the third wave of interviews, 342 individuals were interviewed. Of those, 13 interviewees had moved into the community from outside. Of the 76 movers who had been resident in their communities in the wave 2 interviews but had moved house by the time of the third wave of interviews, 47 (61.8 percent) had moved house within their community. Almost a quarter of those had moved at least twice within their community in the year between interviews.

## 5. Reasons for Moving

Movement between communities is prompted by housing, family and employment considerations. The 2005 National Attachment Survey found that around a fifth of respondents reported that they came to their current community because of employment opportunities (Table 9).

**Table 9: Reason for moving to current community — National Attachment Survey 2005**

Reason for moving to current community	Responses	% Respondents (n=1,001)
<b>Dwelling</b>		
Affordability	101	10.1
House too big or too small	38	3.8
House quality	2	0.2
House ownership	161	16.1
<b>Area and neighbourhood</b>		
Quieter or better neighbourhood	89	8.9
Bigger city	106	10.6
<b>Social and economic opportunities</b>		
Family contact	120	12.0
New start	48	4.8
Employment	201	20.1
Health	7	0.7

In the case study communities, movement to the current address is characterised by both family and housing considerations. This is the case for both recent movers (having moved since March 2001) and those that had been at their current address prior to March 2001. Notably, however, for those who moved to their current address prior to March 2001, the most common reason for moving was a desire to be closer to family. In the more recent movers, house conditions were more important. It is also notable that house conditions were significantly more commonly cited as a driver of movement than housing cost (Tables 10 and 11).

**Table 10: Reason for moving to current address prior to March 2001 — Panel Interviews**

Reason for moving to current address	Individuals at current address prior to March 2001 — Wave 1 Interviews	
	Responses	% Individuals (n=202)
Closer to family	56	27.7
House conditions	43	21.3
Attraction of the area	38	18.8
Lifestyle	37	18.3
Housing costs	31	15.3
Living costs	30	14.9
Local environment	30	14.9
Education	27	13.4
Other family reasons	26	12.9
Closer to friends	26	12.9
Health	21	10.4
Neighbourhood	16	7.9
Job opportunities	15	7.4
Safety concerns	14	13.9
Business opportunities	13	6.4

**Table 11: Reason for moving to current address after March 2001 — Panel Interviews**

Reason for moving to current address	Individuals moved since March 2001 to home in Case Study — Wave 1 interviews	
	Responses	% Individuals (n=117)
House conditions	33	28.2
Closer to family	29	24.8
Attraction of the area	24	20.5
Lifestyle	24	20.5
Housing costs	19	16.2
Local environment	18	15.4
Education	17	14.5
Job opportunities	16	13.7
Other family reasons	15	12.8
Living costs	14	12.0
Health	13	11.1
Closer to friends	8	6.8
Safety concerns	8	6.8
Neighbourhood	7	6.0
Business opportunities	2	1.7

Housing considerations are much more evident among those who report that they want to leave their current address. Among the participants in the Housing Affordability Surveys, 24.9 percent of individuals wanted to move house. The desire to move dwelling can be divided broadly into three categories. Those are: dwelling related reasons; area related reasons, and social and economic opportunities related reasons. Of all those, dwelling related issues predominate (Table 12).

**Table 12: Reason for wanting to move from current address — Housing Affordability Surveys 2005**

<b>Reason for wanting to move</b>	<b>% All wanting to shift</b>
<b>Dwelling</b>	
House too big or too small	22.5
House quality	20.8
House ownership	8.3
Affordability	5.8
<b>Area and neighbourhood</b>	
Quieter or better neighbourhood	8.3
Bigger city	5.0
<b>Social and economic opportunities</b>	
New start	11.6
Employment	10.0
Health	10.0
Family contact	5.0

A similar pattern emerges from the 2005 National Attachment Survey. Only 8.7 percent of respondents were definite that they wished to move out of the area in which they currently resided. A further 7.4 percent indicated that they were unsure (they might move, or might not). However, 37.5 percent of all respondents to the 2005 National Attachment Survey reported that they would consider moving away from their current community to take up improved accommodation opportunities. This is about the proportion of respondents who reported that they would move out of their current area to take up a particular job that they wanted. The proportion of respondents reporting the latter was 36.9 percent.

The relative importance of housing conditions in prompting house-to-house shifts is most closely tracked among participants in the Panel Interviews in each of the case studies. Those interviews allowed us to follow individuals over a three year period and explore with them the pattern and reasons for movements over that time. Those interviews also allowed us to explore their intentions for future residential movement.

In the second wave of interviews we found that 76 of the 335 individuals interviewed had been in the case study community in the first wave of interviews and had moved dwellings since that first wave of interviewing. Three of those individuals had moved within the community but had ended up back at the same address they had at the time of their first interview. A further 19 interviewees moved address within the community at least once and were now living at an address different to that at which they were living in the first wave of interviews. Twenty individuals had moved from their community in the first wave of interviews to a different community for their second wave of interviews, while 34 interviewees were incomers into the case study community. In short, 71.1 percent had moved between communities.

All the movers, whether they moved within the community or outside of it, were asked about their reasons for moving. The twin preoccupations of housing and family are once again apparent. Over a third (38.2 percent) of movers identified housing conditions as a significant driver of their decision to move from one house to another (Table 13).

**Table 13: Reason for moving from current address between Wave 1 and Wave 2 interviews — Panel Interviews**

Reason for moving to current address	Moved since Wave 1 interview — Wave 2 interviews	
	All Movers	% All Movers (n=76)
House conditions	29	38.2
Closer to family	22	28.9
Education	17	22.4
Lifestyle	12	15.8
Job opportunities	11	14.5
Other family reasons	11	14.5
Living costs	10	13.2
Housing costs	10	13.2
Attraction of the area	9	11.8
Business opportunities	6	7.9
Local environment	5	6.6
Closer to friends	5	6.6
Safety concerns	5	6.6
Health	4	5.3
Neighbourhood	1	1.3

That pattern is repeated among those participants who moved between the second wave of interviews and the third wave of interviews. The third wave of interviews involved 342 individuals. Of those, 89 had moved dwellings at least once between the second and third waves of interviewing. Seven of those individuals had moved within the community but had ended up back at the same address they had at the time of their second interview. A further 40 interviewees moved address within the community at least once and were now living at an address different to that at which they were living in the second wave of interviews. Twenty-nine individuals in the second wave of interviews had moved outside the community between the second wave of interviews and the third wave of interviews. Thirteen interviewees were incomers into a case study community. That is, just over half of the movers (52.8 percent) moved within their community.

Table 14 shows, once again, the prominence of housing conditions as a driver of movement. It is notable that moving for job opportunities was more prominent. The individuals who moved for job opportunities were predominantly found among those

movers who moved outside the case study community. Overall, 11 of the 16 interviewees reporting job opportunities as a reason for moving house were movers outside the community that they were residing in when they first participated in the panel interviews.

**Table 14: Reason for moving from current address between Wave 2 and Wave 3 interviews — Panel Interviews**

Reason for moving to current address	Moved since Wave 2 interview — Wave 3 interviews	
	Movers	% Movers (n=89)
House conditions	23	25.8
Job opportunities	16	18.0
Closer to family	11	12.4
Other family reasons	10	11.2
Lifestyle	9	10.1
Attraction of the area	8	9.0
Closer to friends	6	6.7
Education	5	5.6
Living costs	3	3.4
Local environment	3	3.4
Health	3	3.4
Safety concerns	3	3.4
Housing costs	2	2.2
Neighbourhood	2	2.2
Business opportunities	1	1.1

## 6. House Conditions that Matter

Clearly a multiplicity of factors prompt residential movement, and housing related concerns are among those factors. Life stage has a considerable impact on some factors. Both employment and education are important prompts for residential movement among young people for instance. Certain aspects of residential movement related to housing have also been identified as life stage related. For instance, there is a significant body of research that shows that shifts in tenure — from rental to owner-occupation — are associated with other life stage transitions. In particular in societies with high levels of owner-occupation, the movement from rental accommodation to owner-occupied accommodation is frequently associated with people transiting from being single to partnered, from being in education to being in employment, from being childless to parenthood.<sup>14</sup> Indeed, housing policy in New Zealand was, for many years, strongly directed to addressing affordability barriers to making the transition from

<sup>14</sup> Bryson, Byers and Thompson (1972); Gans (1995); Hayden (1984); Thorns (1976); Pearson (1980).

tenant to owner-occupier as people entered that part of their life stage that involve marrying and having children.<sup>15</sup>

In the post-war period, both in New Zealand and other Western societies, the transition from tenant to owner-occupier typically involved a house-to-house shift. In Britain, that also meant, almost inevitably, a shift in community as well.<sup>16</sup> This research, however, suggests that the relationship between residential movement and housing factors is more complex in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Certainly the transition from rental to owner-occupation is important. Certainly, too, the data reveals affordability as a factor in house-to-house shifts within communities as well as between communities.

The 2005 National Attachment Survey found that 12.2 percent of the respondents explained their movement to their current community as involving purchasing a house and 3.8 percent reported that they built a house in the area. For 10.2 percent of respondents in the 2005 National Attachment Survey affordability constraints impacted on their selection of both house and community. In relation to intended residential moves, the Housing Affordability Surveys found that 5.8 percent of the 120 people who wished to move from their current house wanted to do so because of housing affordability problems and 8.3 percent of those wishing to leave their current house wanted to move into owner-occupation.

Similarly, in the first wave of panel interviews, over a quarter of interviewees (28.7 percent) expressed a desire to shift from their present dwelling. Of those, 2 percent reported that the primary reason for wanting to leave their current house related to housing affordability problems. Around 12.5 percent reported that they wished to leave their current house because they were looking to transition from a tenant to owner-occupation. In the second wave of interviews, 95 interviewees reported that they wanted to shift from their current house. Of those, 16.8 percent were looking to move from their current house because they wished to move to owner-occupation and only 2.1 percent were looking to move primarily for affordability reasons. In the third wave of interviews, 7.7 percent of those that wanted to shift were people looking to become house owners, while 4.6 percent reported wanting to shift because of affordability problems.

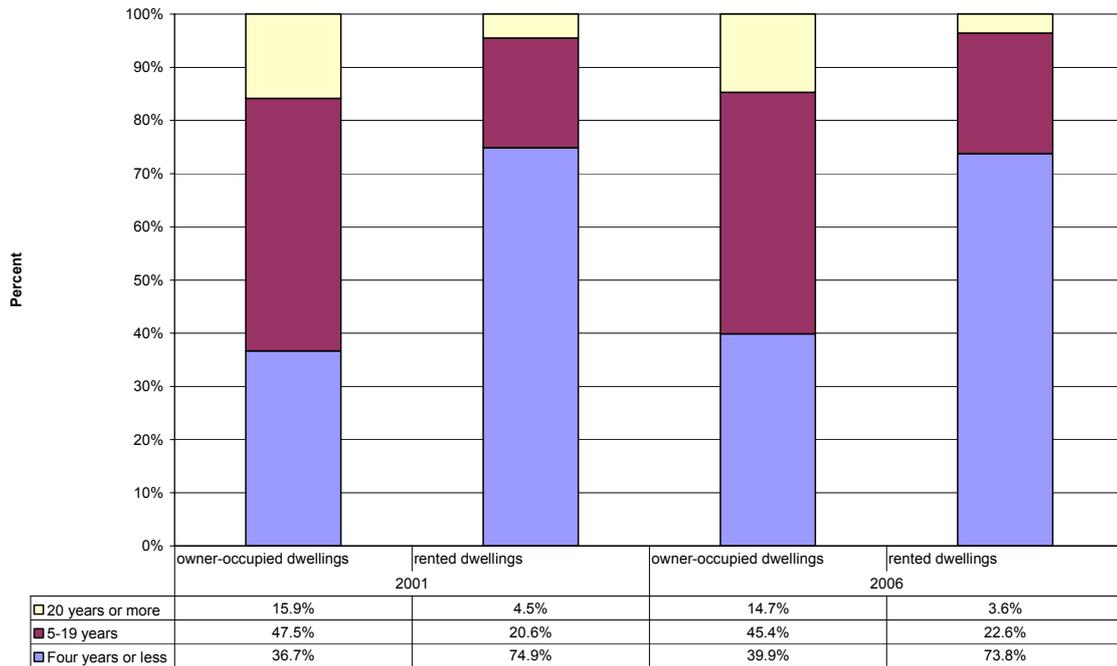
The vast majority of house-to-house movement in New Zealand, however, does not appear to be related to tenure transition. If residential movement was primarily associated with tenure transition from rental to owner-occupation it could be expected that tenants would show low levels of movement between censuses relative to owner-occupiers. However, recent censuses show not only falling rates of home ownership in New Zealand, they also show that tenants have higher rates of house-to-house movement than owner occupiers over the five years from the previous census. That pattern is evident both in the 2001 census and the 2006 census (Figure 2). That pattern suggests that aspects of housing other than tenure transition and affordability prompt house-to-house shifts. It appears that those factors involve the design, performance and maintenance of houses themselves.

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<sup>15</sup> These included State Advances Loans and capitalisation of the Family Benefit to allow first home buyers to enter the mortgage market.

<sup>16</sup> Young and Willmott (1972).

**Figure 2: Years at usual residence by dwelling tenure for the usually resident population — 2001 and 2006 Census**



Issues of house size, house performance, dilapidation, undesirable design characteristics and problems of tenure security are consistently reported as the major prompts for residents wanting to shift in this research. Damp, cold and poor repairs and maintenance are repeatedly identified as problematic. Among the panel interviewees, many of the tenants wishing to shift reported that problems of house performance, maintenance and repairs were exacerbated by landlords being unwilling to address those issues. In addition, panel interviewees who had been tenants and shifted between interviews reported that the reason for their shift was that their landlord was selling up the house in which they were resident. That is, they found their tenure to be insecure.<sup>17</sup>

Those findings are consistent with other research about the prompts for intended moves. For instance, the 2008 National Survey of Older People's Repairs and Maintenance involved 1,600 older people. Of those, 17.8 percent reported that they intended to move within the next few years. As Table 15 shows, the predominant driver of that desire to move was property size. Over a third, (38.9 percent) wanted to shift to a smaller property.

<sup>17</sup> It should be noted that tenure insecurity is not limited to tenants. A small number of individuals living in owner-occupied dwellings reported that shifting house was due to family dissolution, or for some young people, their parents' decision to move house. For an early discussion of problems of tenure security among owner-occupiers see Davey and Gray (1985).

**Table 15: Reasons for wanting to move — 2008 National Survey of Older People’s Repair and Maintenance**

<b>A move planned</b>	<b>Older people</b>	<b>% Older people (n=285)</b>
Want a smaller property	111	38.9
Ill health/old age (poor health)	64	22.5
Want to be closer to family	26	9.1
Want a different area	17	6.0
Want to go to a retirement village	14	4.9
Want a better house	12	4.2
Change in family size	9	3.2
Want a larger property	7	2.5
To be nearer friends	7	2.5
Can't afford to stay	4	1.4
This accommodation is temporary	3	1.1
Want to go to a rest home	2	.7
Want a garden	2	.7
Want to move to a safer area	1	.4
Dislike neighbours/unfriendly people	1	.4
House/flat in poor repair	0	0

\* Multiple response 5 missing cases

Moreover, property size was not the only aspect of housing dissatisfaction associated with a desire to move. While none of the participants in the 2008 National Survey of Older People’s Repairs and Maintenance reported that they wished to move because of their dwelling’s state of repair, there is a relationship between house condition and older people’s desire to move. Only 18.4 percent of older people who typified their dwelling as in excellent condition wanted to shift house. A similar proportion (18.1 percent) of older people in dwellings they typified as in good condition intended to shift. But as older householders’ assessment of their dwelling’s condition fell, their likelihood of intending to move increased. Around a quarter (25.1 percent) of older people who typified their dwellings as in average condition reported an intention to move. Among householders in dwellings they considered to be in poor or very poor condition, 45.5 percent intended to move.

What is evident from this research is that people show diverse house size requirements. In this research, some participants reported needing houses which are larger, other participants sought houses that are smaller. Whether New Zealand can do better in house size matching within communities is doubtful. The New Zealand housing stock remains relatively homogenous. The stock is dominated by dwellings of three and four bedrooms. In the 2006 Census, it was found that only a quarter of the stock is one or two bedroom despite an average occupancy of less than 2.6 people.

The trend has been for dwellings to increase in size (Table 16). These will increase the diversity of the stock over time. However, whether that trend will bring about better dwellings and household matching requires improved supply of not simply larger dwellings but smaller dwellings as well. But, as Table 16 shows, both houses and flats are increasing in size and, despite the so-called apartment boom, the number of flats recently added to the stock is relatively modest.

**Table 16: Average floor area 1976–2008**

March, year	Number of		Average floor area	
	Houses	Flats	Houses (m <sup>2</sup> )	Flats (m <sup>2</sup> )
1976	20,932	11,257	121	83
1980	11,687	3,510	133	93
1985	15,664	6,118	133	99
1990	21,365	1,486	136	88
1995	21,619	2,062	171	116
2000	21,386	4,472	177	105
2005	23,355	6,690	206	94
2008	22,422	2,811	205	137

Moreover, although there is a trend for stock diversification across the whole stock at the national level, it is less clear that stock diversification is occurring at the local level. Both land use planning and market dynamics tend to inhibit diversification. New housing developments, with the exception of a few master plan developments,<sup>18</sup> tend to involve relatively few housing types and sizes. Consequently, for households to access dwellings of significantly different design or size may require not only a house-to-house shift but a change of community as well. With regard to house performance and functionality, perhaps these inadequacies and therefore their role in prompting house-to-house shifts will be reduced. There has been considerable investment in energy-related retrofitting in existing dwellings, improved building performance requirements on new dwellings, and the development of an accreditation system for houses meeting lifetime design standards. However, the reality is that the performance of New Zealand's housing is poor and inadequate to maintain health and comfort.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Master plan developments involve an integrated development in a location of different house sizes and types suitable for a mix of home owners.

<sup>19</sup> Howden-Chapman et.al., in press; Isaacs, et.al. (2005); Saville-Smith, James and Fraser (2008); Saville-Smith, Fraser and Page (2008).

## 7. The Cost of Moving

There are real costs, direct and indirect, associated with shifting house. The costs of house-to-house shifts for individuals and households can be substantial. There are also costs for local communities, landlords in relation to the tenancies, and for taxpayers generally. None of those costs have been subject to robust enumeration. However, the cost to house owners of moving house has been recently estimated as \$20,000 per move. This is based on a four percent commission on the price of an average house plus associated legal fees and the costs of transporting household goods and chattels to another dwelling. Tenants in New Zealand can be expected to have less cost exposure associated with goods and chattels. It is estimated that tenants may have net bond and moving costs of at least \$2,000 for each individual taking up a new tenancy.<sup>20</sup>

There are also costs for landlords. These include loss of rental due to vacancy, costs of search, legal fees and time costs around entering into new tenancy agreements. Search fees are set at around one week of rent which includes limited advertising. On that basis it can be conservatively estimated that if retenanting takes around a fortnight costs could range between \$800 and \$1,300 per tenant depending on the rental value of the property.

Those costs in aggregate are by no means trivial given the significant churn in rental housing. The average duration of tenancies with bonds lodged with Tenancy Services was 15 months in 2002. The 2003 National Landlord Survey found that 82.3 percent of landlords had to find at least one new tenant over a period of 12 months. Some 58 percent of landlords in that survey had to find tenants more than once in a 12 month period. The landlords in 2003 reported that tenants stay on average between six months and two years.<sup>21</sup> In addition to these direct costs, house-to-house movement can engender a range of costs for both movers and the agencies and organisations they deal with. These include costs related to changing addresses and transition between service providers including health and education services.

Given those costs, it appears desirable that residential moves that might be referred to as house avoidance moves be reduced. Reducing those moves is dependant however on improving the overall profile and performance of New Zealand's housing stock. Until these problems with the housing stock are addressed, households, landlords and communities will be faced with the costs of avoidable shifts. Communities concerned about churn and disengagement may do well to encourage a diverse, adaptable and well-performing housing stock. In doing so they will be well placed to attract and maintain the people needed for vibrant communities.

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<sup>20</sup> Dwyer (2009), personal communication.

<sup>21</sup> Saville-Smith and Fraser (2004).

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