Study Report SR494 [2023]

New House Owners' Satisfaction Survey 2022

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Preface

This is the 12th in a series of reports on the New House Owners' Satisfaction Survey. The data that makes up this report was obtained through surveying new house owners on the performance of their builder. The purpose of the survey is to add a quality measure to other work on building industry performance. It explores the timeline on the performance of the building industry from the owner's perspective.

This report is intended for several audiences, including designers, new house builders and those looking to build a new home. It will also be useful to government for evaluating some of the challenges and opportunities facing the residential construction industry.

Acknowledgements

The Building Research Levy funded this work.

We would like to thank everyone who filled in the survey form and returned it to BRANZ. The project would not be possible without those new house owners who took the time to fill in our survey.

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BRANZ Study Report SR494

Authors

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Reference

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Abstract

This report presents the results of the 12th annual New House Owners' Satisfaction Survey. The survey looked at how new house owners rated their builder and how satisfied they were with the builder's performance. The survey covered a sample of New Zealand's housing consents. It excluded 'spec builds' (a house built without a specific committed buyer) and houses built by family members where this can be identified from consent data. Overall, the new house owners were satisfied with their builder's performance. They were highly satisfied with their builder's ability to deliver a high-quality home that was in great condition on the day they moved in, and they saw their new build as good value for money. Although the new house owners were overall fairly satisfied with their builder's work, the survey identified some areas that need improvement, in particular, the new house owners reported being most dissatisfied with fixing defects in their home, the service provided by the builder's project manager and the time required to complete construction of their new build. The 2022 New House Owners' Satisfaction Survey included some new items regarding the input costs and provisional costing of new builds. Many of the new house owners who responded to the survey said the input costs were higher than they had expected, and while most of the respondents said the provisional cost sums had been accurately costed, some felt that these sums had been under costed.

Keywords

New houses, builder performance, franchises, independent builders, defects, designers, input into house design, builder, contract, dispute costs, call-backs, satisfaction, new house owners.

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Executive summary

The main findings of this report are:

- Overall, the survey respondents were satisfied with the performance of their builder (68%). Specifically, the respondents were most satisfied with the overall quality of the build, the condition of the home on the day they moved in, and the value for money of their new home. However, they reported being least satisfied with the fixing of defects, the service provided by their project manager, and the time required to complete construction of their new build.
- The majority of the respondents had:
  - used a franchise builder (68%)
  - built a home for the first time (66%)
  - chosen a house-only package (79%) over a house-and-land package.
- The most common value of a build was in the $400,000–$600,000 range (40%). Individuals who had owned a previous property were more likely to have a higher-value build compared with those who had not owned a property beforehand (e.g. had been renting).
- Most of the respondents (59%) said they would recommend their builder to others, with 38% of those willing to do so without being asked. However, nearly a third (31%) said they would speak critically of their builder, with a half of those (16%) saying they would do so without being asked.
- When asked what features were important in choosing their builder, most of the respondents reported looking for examples of high-quality work, a good reputation, and fixed-price certainty.
- More than a third of the respondents (36%) reported choosing their builder based on the quality of their previous work; for example, as seen by show homes. Another common route in choosing a builder was recommendation of the builder from friends or family.
- Disputes over final cost were relatively uncommon, with only 15% of the respondents reporting they had had a dispute. Disputes over final cost were more common for new house owners who had selected their builder based on affordability and fixed-price certainty.
- Most of the respondents (86%) reported calling back a tradesperson to repair defects after first occupancy.
- The most common type of defect was installer-related (31%), with just 8% being product-related defects. The remainder of the respondents either had no defect (57%) or were unsure of the type of defect (4%). Painters, electricians and plumbers were the trades called back the most often to repair defects.
- When asked about any input cost increases during their build, nearly one third (31%) of the respondents thought the input cost increases were as they had expected, nearly one quarter (23%) thought their input costs were more than expected, and just 3% reported that the increases were less than expected. The remaining respondents reported no input cost increases (25%) or said the question was not applicable to their build (17%).
- Provisional cost (PC) sums were also reported to be accurately costed overall (62%), but more respondents believed the PC sums were under-costed than those who thought the sums were over-costed (23% and 15%, respectively).

1. Introduction

The BRANZ New House Owners' Satisfaction Survey (NHOSS) has been running annually since 2011. The survey was developed due to a lack of measures to determine quality of output from the industry. It allows us to monitor trends in the quality of output from the new-residential building industry.

NHOSS aims to understand how the builder performed and the perceived quality of the completed new house from the owner's perspective. The survey also monitors the proportion of new house owners who had to call back their builder, how likely the new house owner is to recommend their builder, and features new house owners consider to be important when choosing their builder.

Definition of 'builder'

New house owners were informed in the letter accompanying the survey form how we defined the term 'builder' for this survey. For the purpose of the NHOSS and the results presented within this report, the term builder refers to all people involved in the build process. This includes (but is not limited to) any office staff within the building company, the project manager and any subcontractors. This definition allowed us to survey new house owners about the whole build process, from their first dealings with the builder during the buying process through to the fixing of defects after first occupancy.

2. Methodology

The methodology for the BRANZ New House Owners' Satisfaction Survey has remained largely the same over the 12 years that the survey has been running. This allows us to compare results across the survey, benchmark performance, and comment on changes over time. NHOSS has historically been distributed through a posted paper-based questionnaire. However, following a successful trial in 2017, the survey was delivered by postcard invitations, which directed respondents to complete the survey online. In return for completion of the survey, respondents were placed in the draw to win one of several Prezzy cards.

A sample of 8,468 new house owners was identified from consents taken out between March 2021 and April 2022. This period was selected to represent houses that were completed in the 2022 calendar year, assuming that a house build typically takes 9 to 10 months from consent to completion. The sample focused on detached housing.

Consents were removed from the sample when the owner was also listed as the builder of another house in the sample, or the builder was listed as the owner. The latter indicates a speculative ('spec') build, where the house is built without a specific committed buyer.

The survey sample consisted of the following territorial authorities:

Auckland	Christchurch	Dunedin	Far North
Gisborne	Hamilton	Hutt City	Invercargill
Kapiti	Marlborough	Napier	New Plymouth
Palmerston North	Porirua	Queenstown Lakes	Rotorua
Tasman	Tauranga	Thames-Coromandel	Waikato
Waimakariri	Waipā	Wellington	Western Bay of Plenty
Whangārei			

BRANZ received 529 completed surveys, which have been used for the analysis presented in this report. The response rate was just over 6%. We will continue to assess our current recruitment/incentive strategy and see whether any updates/improvements can be made for the next version of this survey.

3. Results

This section presents the results of the BRANZ New House Owners' Satisfaction Survey 2022.

There are several questions in the survey that allow us to get an idea of the composition of the respondents:

- Why did the respondent choose to build?
- Did the respondent use a franchise or an independent builder?
- Has the respondent built previously?
- Did the respondent purchase a house-only or a house-and-land package?

All these aspects have been shown in previous surveys to have an influence on a respondent's satisfaction levels and the likelihood of their recommending the builder.

3.1 Basics of the build process

Why did the respondents choose to build?

Respondents were asked to select their reasons for building a new house rather than buying an existing one (see Figure 1). The most common reasons selected were that they owned an empty section (35%), they wanted less maintenance (35%), their specific requirements were not met by existing houses (34%), and/or they believed it was cheaper to build a new house than buying an existing one (34%).

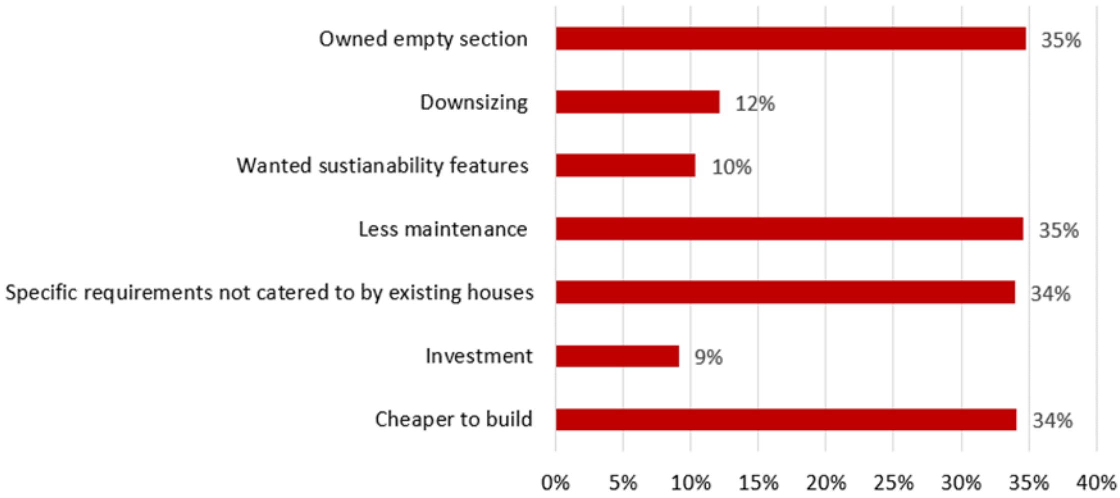


Figure 1. Why the respondents chose to build rather than buy an existing house.

How many respondents used franchise builders?

Most of the respondents (61%) reported using a franchise builder for their house (see Figure 2). The most-used franchise was GJ Gardner, with 20% of people using their builders. Other franchises of note were Jennian Homes (10%), Signature Homes (9%), Mike Greer Homes (7%) and Versatile (6%).

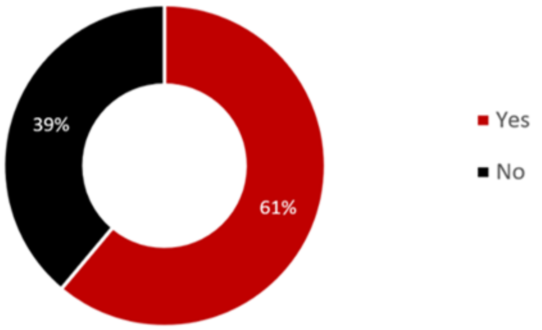


Figure 2. Percentage of respondents who used a franchise builder.

How many respondents had built previously?

For most of the respondents (66%), this was the first house they had built (see Figure 3). Only one third (34%) indicated that they had built a house before.

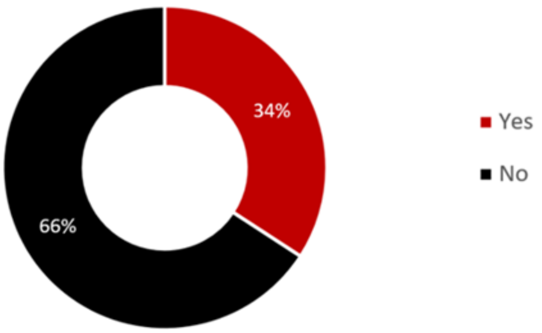


Figure 3. Percentage of respondents who had built previously.

How many respondents owned their previous property before beginning a new build?

Most of the survey respondents (76%) had owned or partially owned their previous property before beginning their new build, while a moderate number (21%) said they had rented their previous property (see Figure 4).

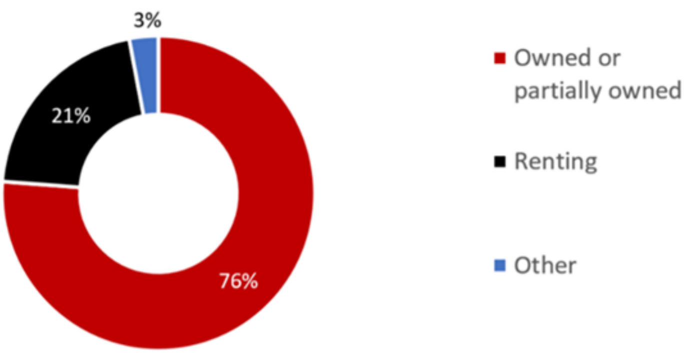


Figure 4. Ownership status of the house owner's previous property prior to purchasing the new build.

These findings indicate it may be easier to build new when an individual already has ownership or part ownership of an existing property. Figure 5 shows new build value plotted by the ownership status of the respondent's previous property. A significantly greater proportion of new houses in the highest-value bracket ($600,001+) were purchased by an individual who had owned or partly owned their previous property (43%) rather than someone who had been renting their previous property (20%). In contrast, a greater proportion of new houses built in the second-lowest-value bracket ($250,001–$400,000) were purchased by individuals who had been renting their previous property (33%) rather than owning or partially owning it (16%).

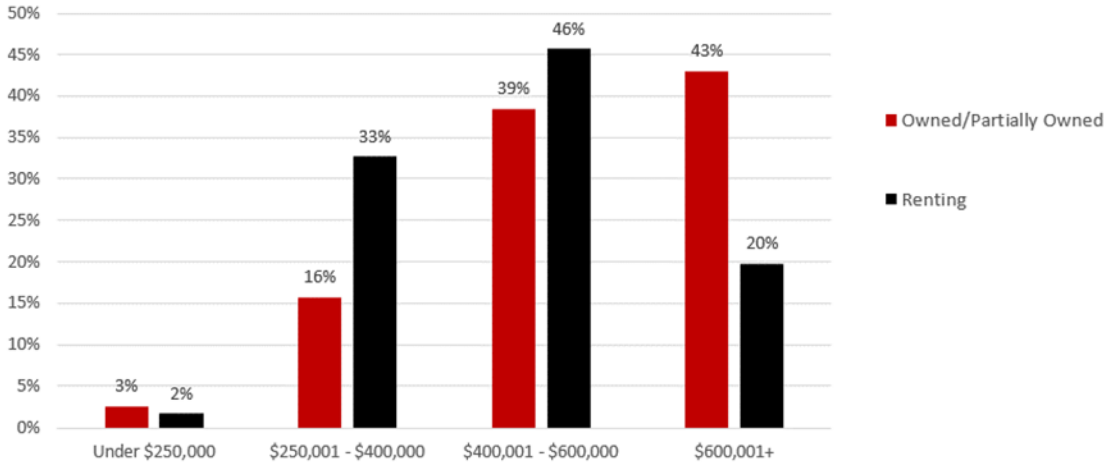


Figure 5. Value of the new build, by ownership status of the house owner's previous property.

3.2 Contracts, packages and value

What type of house packages were most common amongst respondents?

Most of the respondents (79%) reported purchasing a house-only package for their new build (see Figure 6). Regarding these findings, the house-and-land package group only includes respondents who were involved in the new build from the consent stage. Clients who chose a house-and-land package after the consent was issued (i.e., a spec build) have been deliberately excluded from the survey sample to capture the end-to end of the building process.

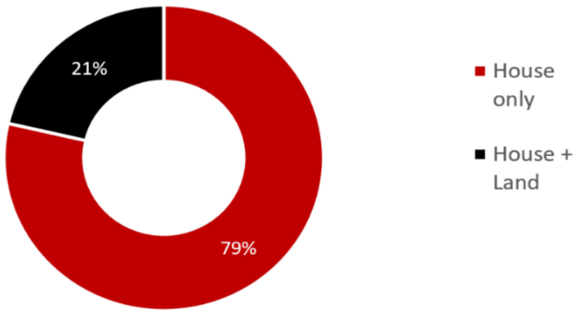


Figure 6. Type of house package purchased.

What type of written contract do clients have with their builder?

Since 2015, it has been a requirement to have a written contract with your builder for all work that will cost more than $30,000.[1] Fixed-price contracts were the most common type of contract in this survey, with 33% of respondents reporting using these with their builder (Figure 7). House-and-land (21%) and design-and-build (14%) were also commonly reported types of contracts.

[1] www.building.govt.nz/projects-and-consents/why-contracts-are-valuable

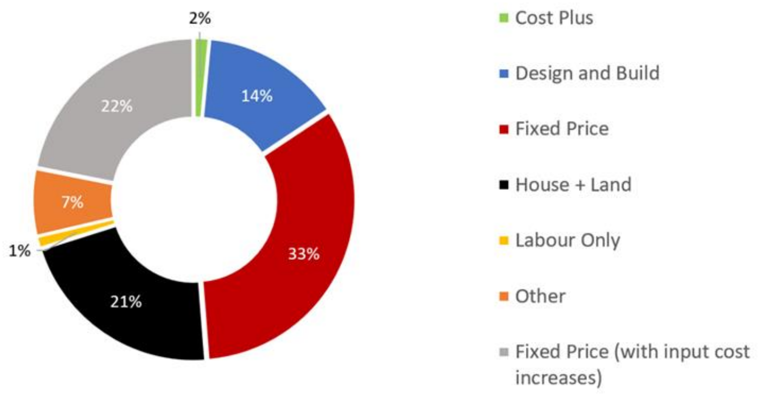


Figure 7. Type of contract with the builder.

Did respondents feel anything was excluded from their contract?

Most of the respondents (69%) did not feel anything had been excluded from their contract that they felt should have been included (see Figure 8).

Of the 31% of individuals who felt that there had been some items excluded from their contract, the most-mentioned exclusions were:

- landscaping
- flooring – carpet/tiles
- concrete, driveways
- hardware – taps, cabinet handles, etc.
- fencing
- hot water tank/underfloor heating
- internet, power points, tv aerials, and
- clean up of the construction site.

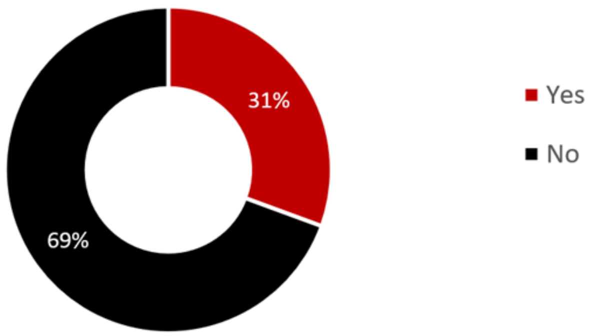


Figure 8. Exclusions from contract that new house owners felt should have been included.

What was the value of the build?

Most of the respondents (77%) had spent more than $400,000 on their new build, and very few (3%) had spent less than $250,000 (see Figure 9).

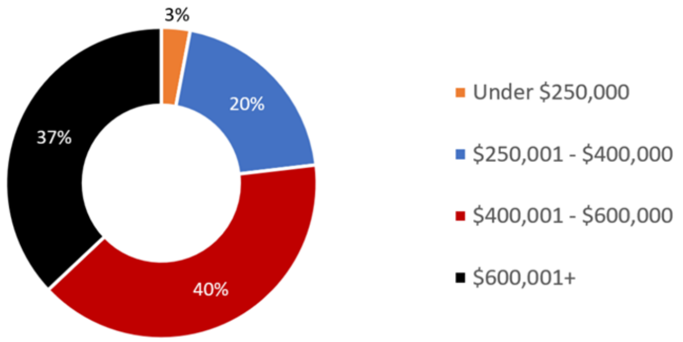


Figure 9. Value of the new build.

How does the value of a build relate to the type of contract?

When grouped by the type of contract (see Figure 10), the majority of both house-only and house-and-land packages are valued in the $400,001 to $600,000 range. Most of the respondents who had a contract worth less than $250,000 or more than $600,001 had house-only packages. However, there was no significant difference between the type of contract and its value.

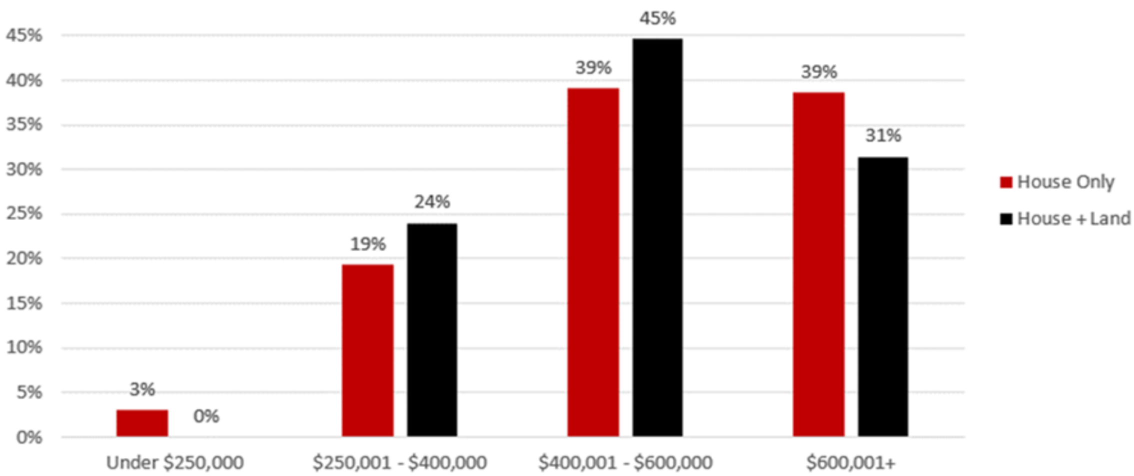


Figure 10. Value of new build, by type of contract.

3.3 Input costs and provisional cost (PC) sums

Were increases in input costs expected?

Input costs are described as cost increases incurred after the contract end date that are outside the control of the builder. Input cost increases can, without limitation, be due to changes in market conditions affecting the availability and supply/demand for materials and subcontractors. Only a quarter of the respondents (25%) had not experienced increased input costs during their build (see Figure 11). For those who had experienced increased input costs, nearly a third (31%) felt that the increases had been about what they had expected, nearly a quarter (24%) felt the increases were more than they had expected, and just 3% thought the increases were less than they had expected.

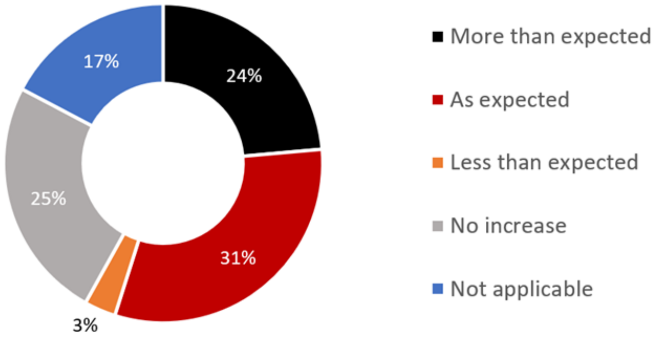


Figure 11. Actual input cost increases during the build compared with respondents' expectations.

How accurately did respondents find their PC sums were costed?

PC sums (provisional cost sums) are amounts included in the contract as allowances for items where at the time of signing the contract the actual cost is not known; for example, landscaping work, the price fluctuation of kitchen appliances, etc. Most of the survey respondents (62%) felt that their PC sums were costed close to actual cost. However, 23% of the respondents felt their PC sums were under costed, while 15% felt their PC sums were over costed (see Figure 12).

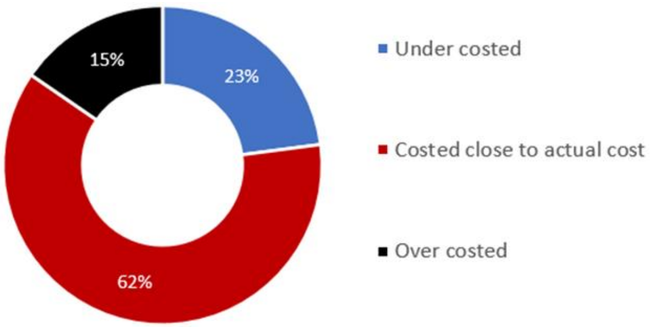


Figure 12. Accuracy of provisional cost sums.

How did respondents find the cost-related aspect of their build process?

Respondents were asked to rate on a scale from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree) how much they agreed with five statements regarding cost and budgetary aspects of their build process. Figure 13 shows these findings. For the most part, the respondents felt that they had a good experience in managing the contractual process, variations during the build process, and their budget.

Nearly two thirds of the respondents (66%) disagreed with the statement that they had felt pressured to sign the build contract even though they weren't totally happy with it, and only a small minority (13%) agreed that they had felt pressured. Well over half the respondents (56%) disagreed with the statement that they had had an excessive number of variations during the build process, although just under a fifth (19%) thought that they had. Likewise, well over half of the respondents (60%) disagreed with the statement that they had had to make sacrifices throughout their build process due to cost increases, and only a fifth of the respondents (20%) agreed. Nearly half of the respondents (48%) disagreed with the statement that their budgetary constraints had had an impact on the satisfaction they felt with their new home, nearly one quarter (22%) agreed with the statement, and the rest (30%) neither agreed nor disagreed.

Figure 13. Respondents' ratings of agreement with statements about cost-related aspects of the build process.

The only area where responses were more mixed is when the new house owners were asked if their bank had been easy to work with and understanding of cost increases. Just over half the respondents (54%) said that they either had not worked with a bank or neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement. Of the respondents who answered with a sure answer, the majority (31%) agreed with the statement, and a minority (15%) disagreed.

3.4 Satisfaction with the build process

Respondents were asked to rate how satisfied they were with various components of the builder's involvement in the build process. Figure 14 shows the average of the satisfaction ratings across the 12 statements (shown separately in Figure 15), thus providing one overall satisfaction score.

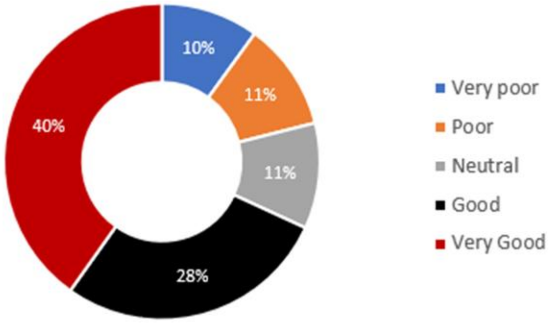


Figure 14. Average of the satisfaction ratings of builder's performance.

How satisfied were the respondents with their builder/the build process overall?

Most of the respondents (68%) thought their builder's performance was good, with 40% reporting very good performance. A small group (11%) were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with their builder's performance. Just over a fifth (21%) of the respondents were dissatisfied with their builder's performance.

What were the respondents most satisfied and dissatisfied with in the build process?

Respondents were asked to rate their builder's performance on a five-point scale (1 = very poor, 5 = very good). They completed these ratings for 12 items related to the build process. Figure 15 shows these findings.

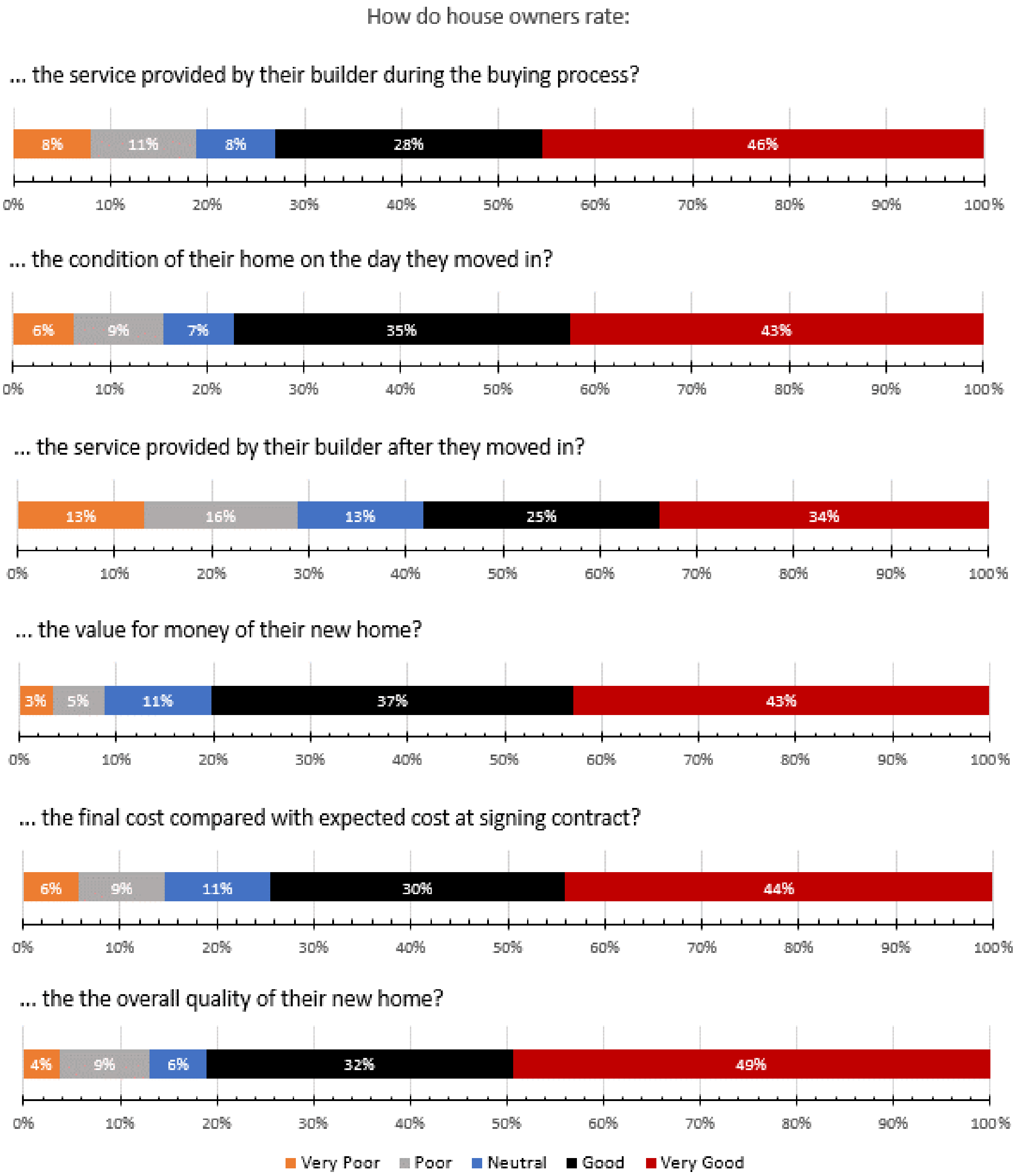
The respondents reported being most satisfied with:

- the overall quality of their new home (81%)
- the value for money of their home (80%)
- and the condition of their home on the day they moved in (77%).

Overall, the building and construction industry performed well across the satisfaction metrics measured in this survey. However, it must be noted that there are some items that the new house owners reported being dissatisfied with, particularly:

- the fixing of defects after first occupancy (33%)
- the service provided by their project manager (32%)
- the builder in relation to completing their home on time (33%).

There are a few areas that may require some evaluation for potential improvements.


How do house owners rate:
... the service provided by their builder during the buying process?
8%
11%
8%
28%
46%
... the condition of their home on the day they moved in?
6%
9%
7%
35%
43%
... the service provided by their builder after they moved in?
13%
16%
13%
25%
34%
... the value for money of their new home?
3%
5%
11%
37%
43%
... the final cost compared with expected cost at signing contract?
6%
9%
11%
30%
44%
... the the overall quality of their new home?
4%
9%
6%
32%
49%
0%
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Good
Very Good

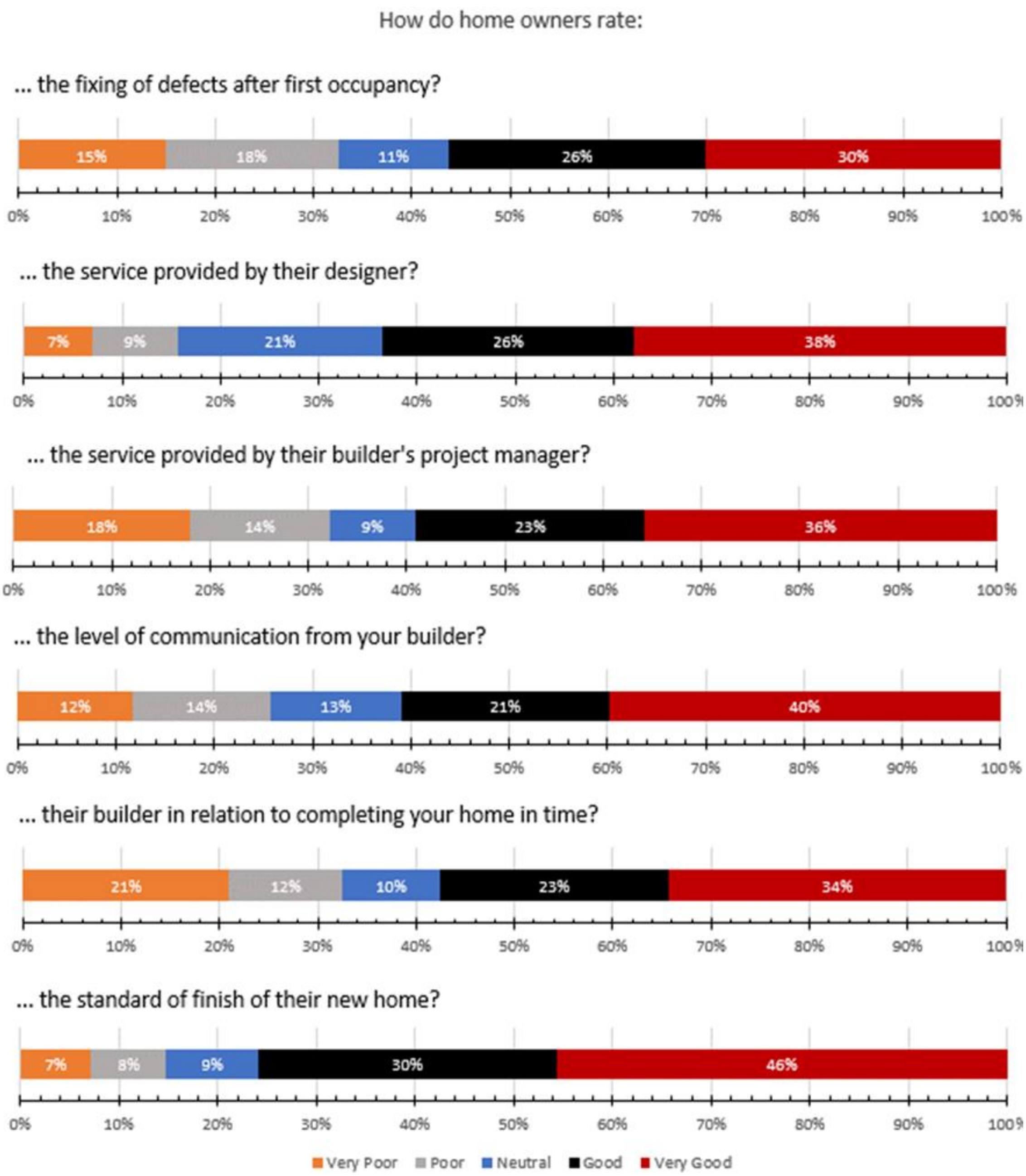


Figure 15. Satisfaction with components of the build process.

Is there a difference in satisfaction depending on the type of builder?

As stated, overall the new house owners were satisfied with their builder's performance (Figure 16). When grouped by type of builder, however, there is a difference between the satisfaction of clients of franchise builders and clients of independent builders, with respondents who had an independent builder (48%) reporting a higher level of satisfaction with their performance than those who had chosen a franchise builder (35%). Likewise, at the other end of the ratings scale, respondents who had chosen a franchise builder (25%) reported higher levels of dissatisfaction with their builder's performance than those who had chosen an independent builder (15%).

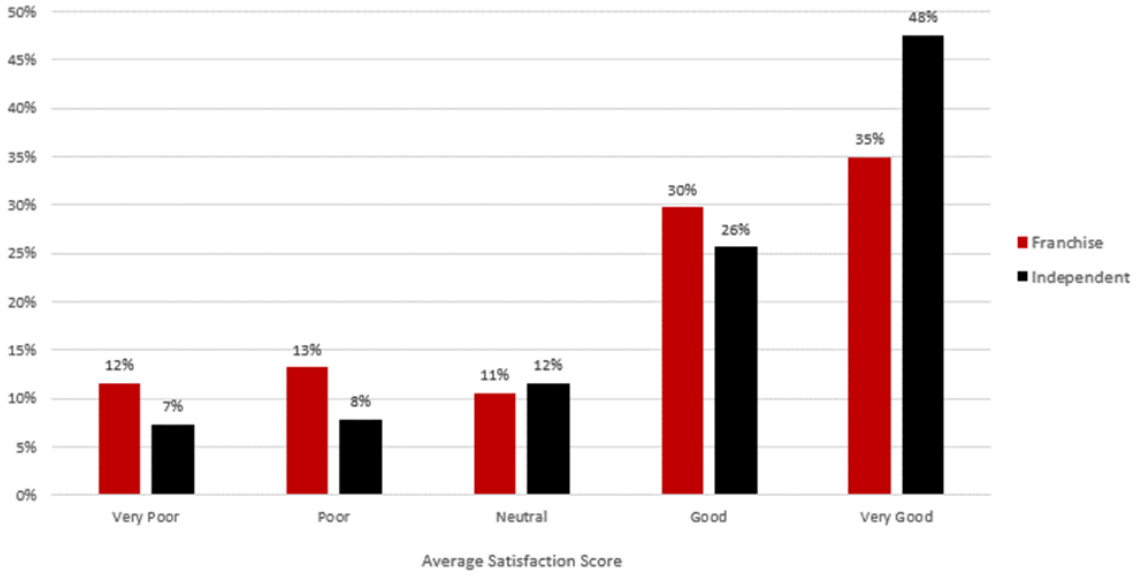


Figure 16. Average satisfaction with builder, by type of builder

3.5 Choosing a builder

The survey respondents were asked to select all features they had considered when choosing the builder for their new build. The feature most selected when choosing a builder was the builder's show homes (36%). Recommendations from friends or family (22%), or the builder owned the land they wanted to build on (19%) were also common features (see Figure 17).

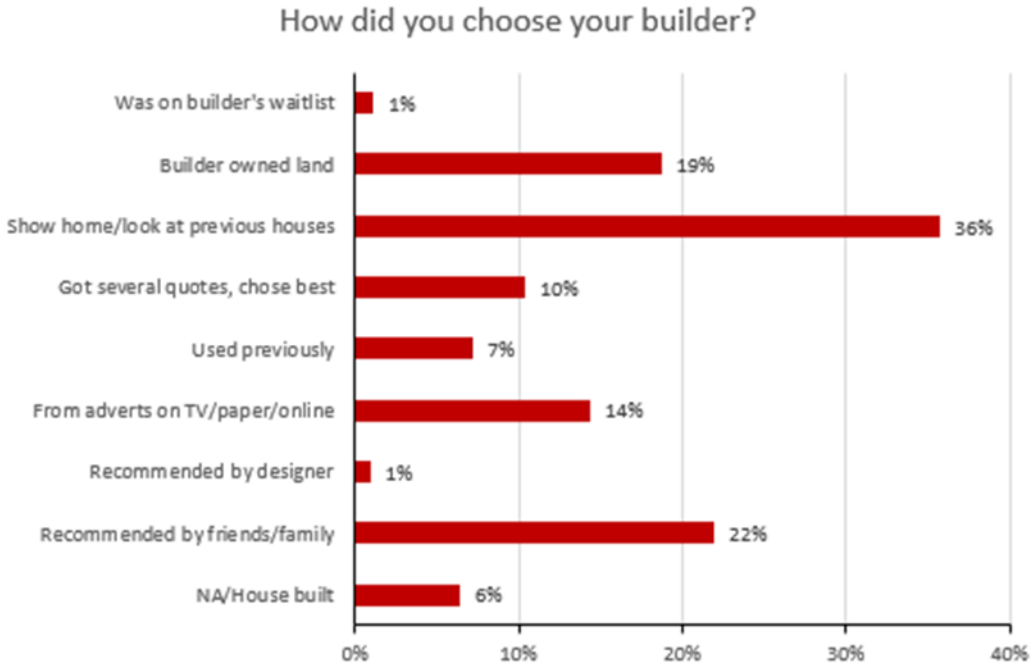


Figure 17. Features considered when choosing a builder.

We examined the answers of those who had provided written comments on their choice of builder and found the following trends. Some of the respondents stated that they chose their builder because they had offered the best price, while others stated that they chose their builder based on a professional recommendation from someone in the industry. A significant number of the respondents reported not having a choice of builder, as the type of land, house plans, developer or franchise had already assigned them one. Lastly, one group of respondents chose their builder because they had a pre-existing relationship with them. This relationship could take various forms, including recommendations from neighbours, friends, their partner or a family member. Another method of choosing a builder appeared to be based on personal characteristics of the builder, with statements referring to trustworthiness, flexibility, likability and reputation coming up often.

What are important features when choosing a builder?

The respondents were asked to select all features that were important to them when choosing a builder. Most respondents (80%) selected 'quality and reputation' as the most important feature in their chosen builder, with another commonly selected feature (63%) being the fixed-price certainty offered by the builder (see Figure 18).

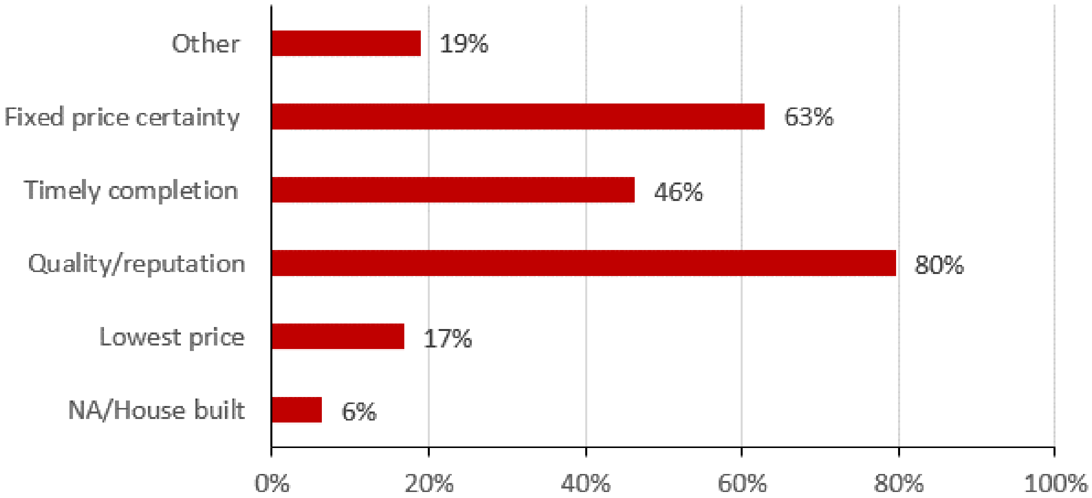


Figure 18. Features considered important when choosing a builder.

Would house owners recommend their builder to others?

The respondents were asked how they would speak about their builder to others. Just over half the respondents (54%) said they would recommend their builder to others, and 38% said they would do so without being asked (see Figure 19). Nearly a third (31%) said they would speak critically of their builder, and half of those would do so without being asked (16%). Negative comments were focused on deficiencies in the service, lack of supervision of subcontractors, poor communication, disputes over defects and delayed completions.

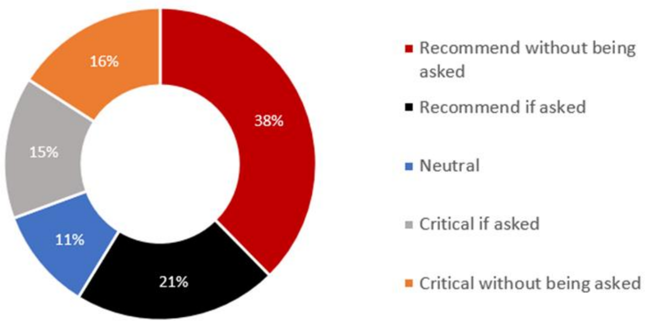


Figure 19. How the new house owners would speak about their builders.

3.6 Disputes over final cost

Most of the respondents (85%) had not had a dispute with their builder about the final cost (see Figure 20).

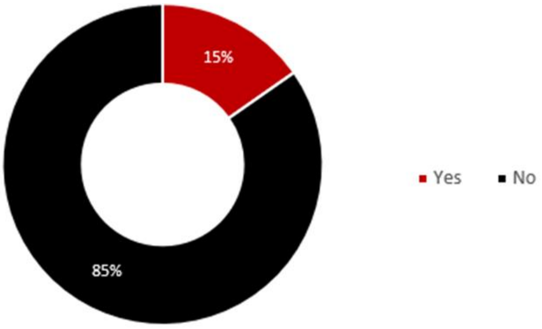


Figure 20. Disputes over final cost.

The minority of respondents (15%) who had had a dispute with their builder about the final cost, reported that their disputes tended to focus on:

- charges for variations
- the builder not meeting the agreed completion date and penalties for not meeting completion dates
- items going beyond the provisional cost (PC) sum, particularly when the clients considered that PC sums were unrealistically low
- incorrect materials/products used
- additional charges for items believed to be included in the contract
- miscommunication between subcontractors hired by the client and the main contractor, and/or
- defects that hadn't been fixed.

The 31% of respondents who felt that items had been excluded from their contract that should have been included were more than three times more likely to have had a dispute over final cost than the 69% who did not feel anything had been excluded from their contract (Figure 21).

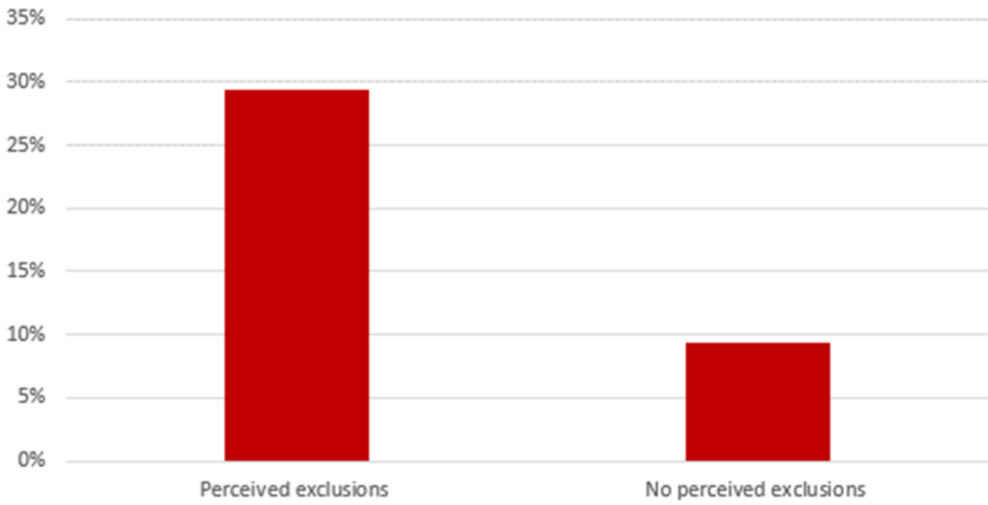


Figure 21. Disputes over final cost, by perceived exclusions from the contract.

3.7 Call-backs

The respondents were asked if they had had to call back their builder, or any other tradesperson, to repair defects after moving in ('first occupancy'). Most of the new house owners (86%) said they had to call back a tradesperson to repair defects (Figure 22).

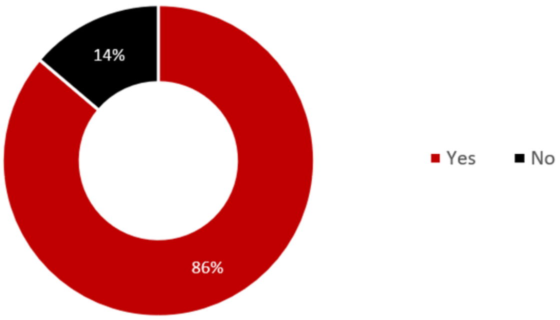


Figure 22. Tradesperson call-back for defect repair after first occupancy.

What type of defects are tradespeople being called back to fix?

The respondents who stated they had had to call back a tradesperson were asked to specify whether the call-back was due to an installer-related defect (i.e., error by the tradesperson), a product-related defect, or if they were unsure of the type of defect.

The trades that were called back the most were painters (60%), electricians (59%), and plumbers (59%) (see Figure 23).

Most of the call-backs were for installer-related defects, and were highest for painters (57%), plumbers (39%), electricians (34%), and carpenters (34%). The trades most called back for product-related defects were plumbers (20%), glaziers (16%) and electricians (15%).

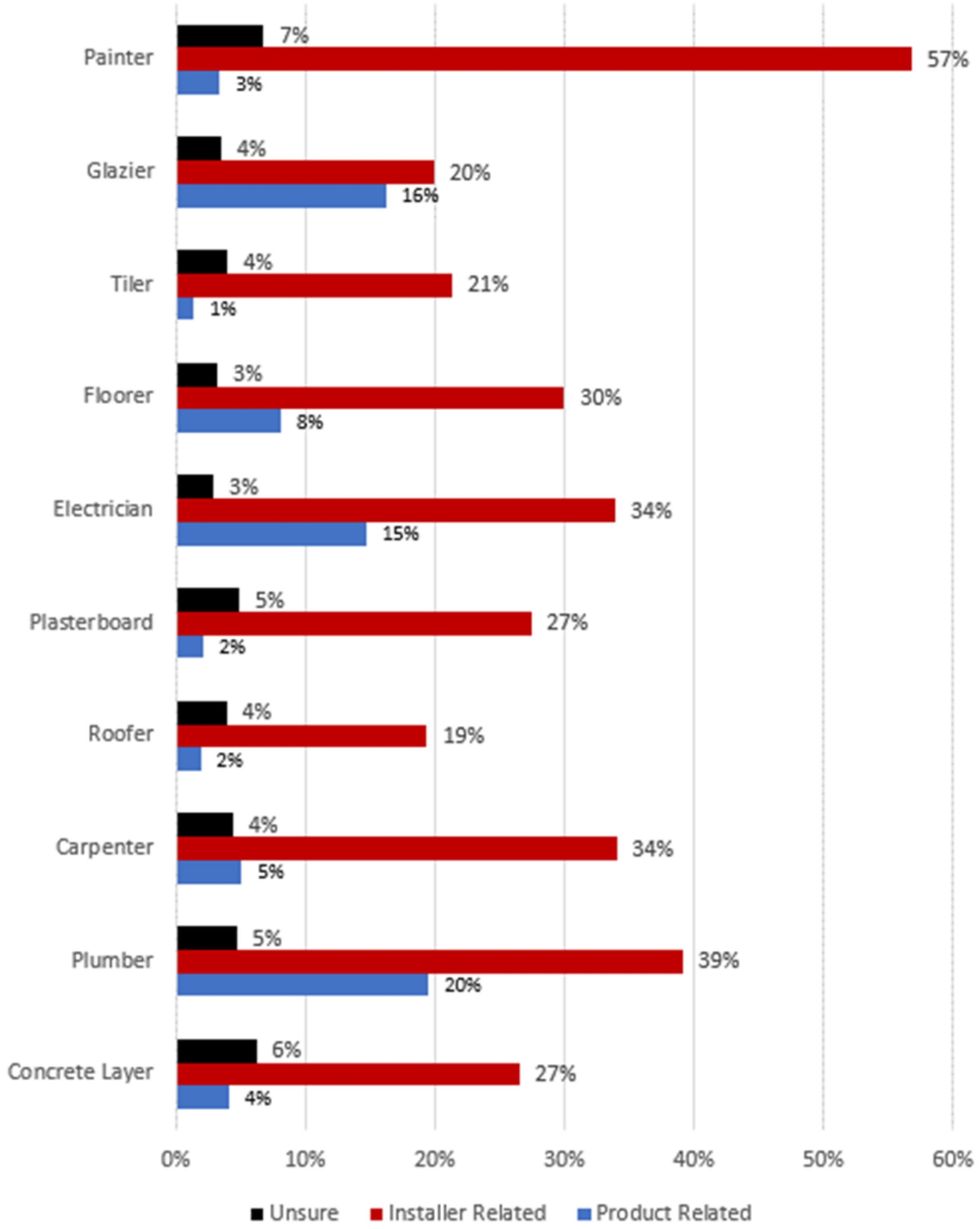


Figure 23. Trades that were called back, by type of defect.

How did the number of defects match up to house owners' expectations?

The respondents were asked whether the number of defects that had occurred in their new home matched with what they had expected in a new build (Figure 24). A large proportion of the respondents (40%) said there were more defects in their new home than they had expected, while another large group (31%) indicated that the number of defects that had occurred in their new home was about what they would have expected. Almost a quarter believed that there were fewer defects than they would have expected (21%), and a very small number of the respondents (8%) hadn't expected any defects in their new build.

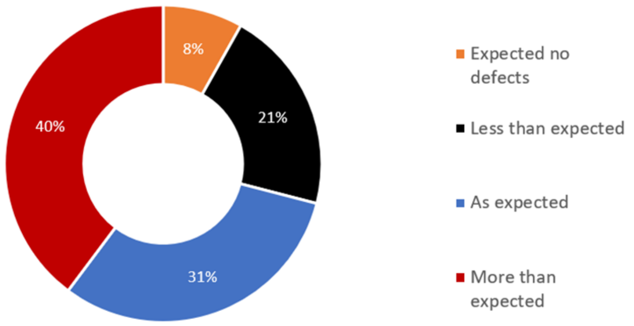


Figure 24. Actual number of defects compared with house owners' expectations

Figure 25 shows the percentage of call-backs for repair grouped by the type of builder; that is, franchise or independent. There is a significant difference between the percentage of franchise builders (63%) and independent builders (37%) who were called back to repair a defect.

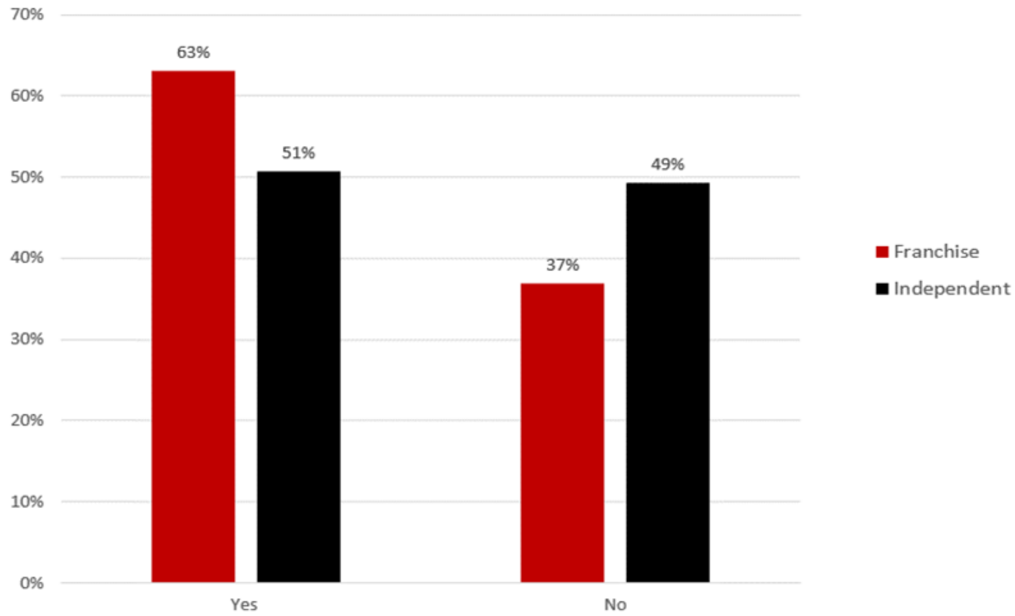


Figure 25. Call backs for defects after first occupancy, by type of builder.

Are there differences in expectations of defects depending on builder type?

Figure 26 shows the expectations of the survey respondents regarding the number of defects in their new home, grouped by the type of builder they used. Of the respondents who indicated they believed there were more defects than they had expected, once again there is a significant difference between the percentage who used franchise builders (44%) and those who used independent builders (32%).

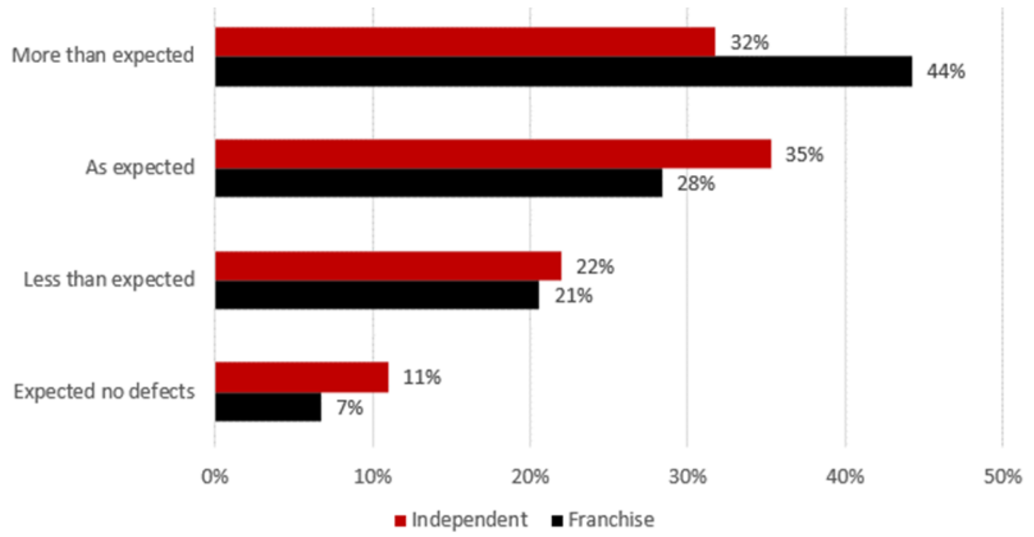


Figure 26. Expectations of defects, by type of builder

3.8 Considerations for a new home

What materials did the new house owners choose for their new build?

The respondents were asked to select all the materials they had chosen for their new build (Figure 27). Most of the new house owners reported having chosen the cladding (69%), the roof and wall cladding (65%), the joinery (61%), and the windows (58%). A smaller number said they had chosen the insulation (40%) and the framing (17%) used in their new build.

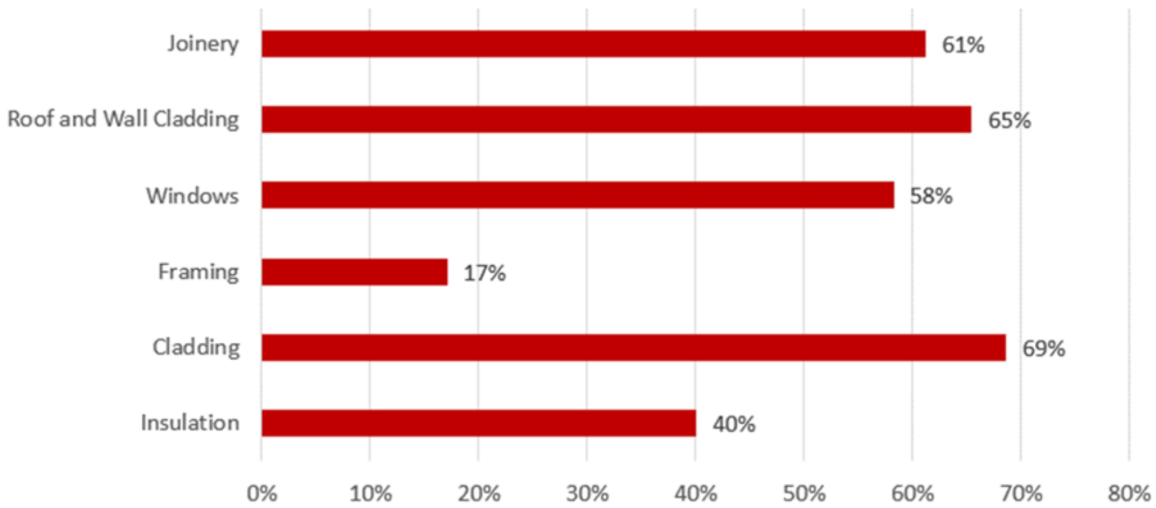
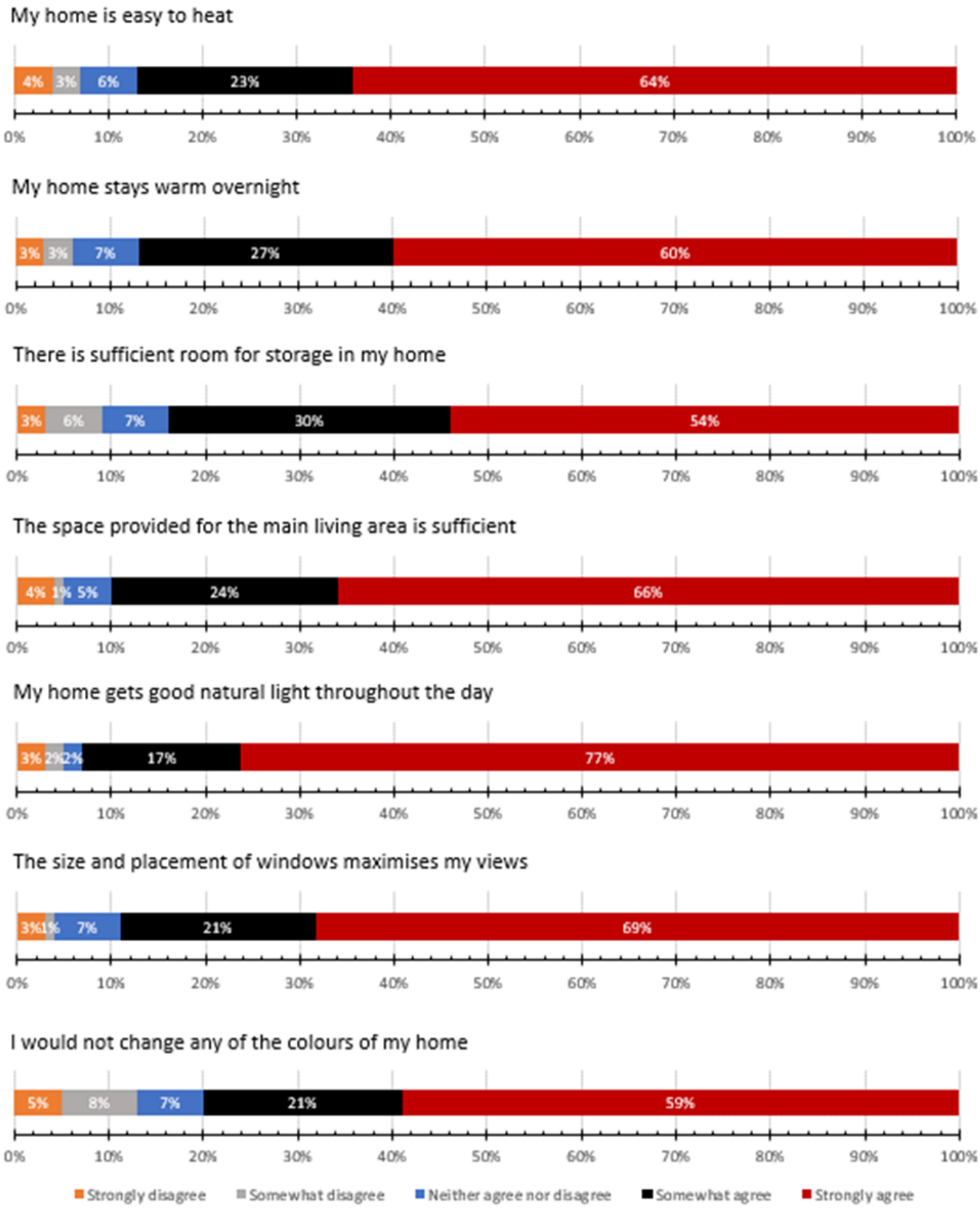


Figure 27. Materials chosen by the new house owners for their build.

How happy are the house owners with their new home?

The respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement with 13 statements about their new house. These findings are displayed in Figure 28.

The statements given in the survey can be split into three categories. First, there were statements specific to the perceived performance of the respondent's new home. This category included statements about how easy it is to heat their new home, whether their new home stays warm overnight, and if their electricity bill is lower than expected. Second, there were statements about the more functional aspects of their new home. This category included statements on storage, size of the main living area, whether their new home gets natural light during the day, and the size and placement of windows to maximise views. Third, there were statements about the workmanship of some of the features of their new home. This final category included statements about the paint finish in their new home, the landscaping improvements as part of the build, and the quality of fittings and fixtures in their kitchen/bathroom.



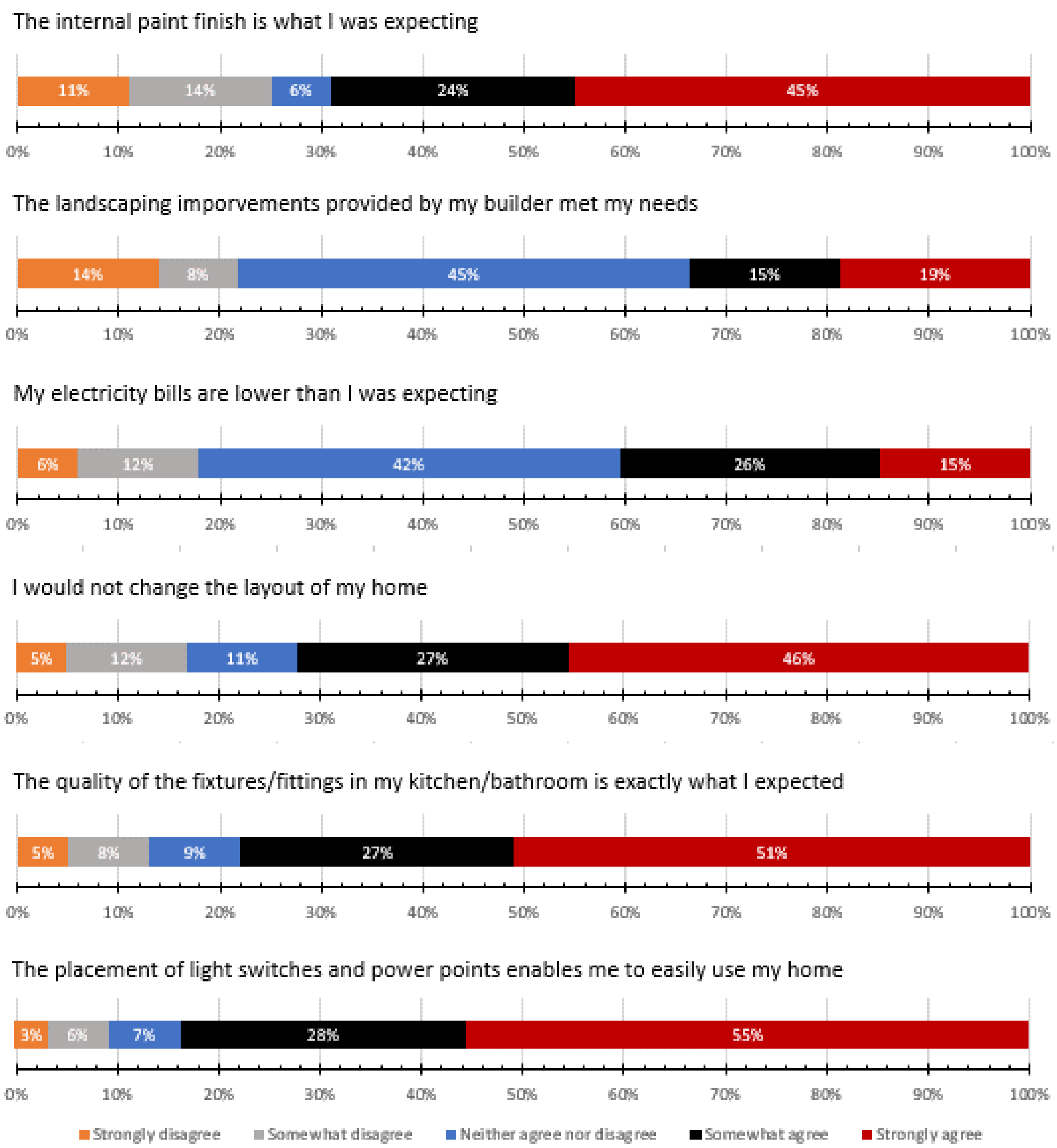


Figure 28. Respondents' agreement with statements about their new home.

Overall, and positively, a large majority of the respondents agreed with most of the 13 statements. The statements with the highest percentage of agreement concerned the amount of natural light throughout the day (94%), the sufficiency of space in the main living area (90%), and the maximisation of views due to window size and placement (90%).

Most of the 13 statements did not receive any noticeable degree of disagreement from the respondents. Relative to the other statements, however, the statements that had the most disagreement were those relating to whether the internal paint finish meet the respondent's expectations (25%), their landscaping/outdoor improvement needs being met by their builder (22%), and their electricity bills being lower than expected (18%).

4. Conclusion

The twelfth annual New House Owners' Satisfaction Survey (NHOSS), like its preceding editions, has aimed to look at how new house owners rate their builder, and how satisfied they are with their builder's overall performance. This edition of the NHOSS added four new questions around expectations of input cost increases, costing of provisional cost (PC) sums, exclusions from the respondent's build contract, and rating of the cost-related aspects of the building process.

A large proportion of the survey respondents (31%) experienced input cost increases around what they had expected. Another significant group within the sample (24%), however, felt that the input cost increases had exceeded their expectations. Only a small fraction of the respondents (3%) felt that input cost increases were less than they had expected. A quarter of the respondents did not experience an input cost increase.

Most of the respondents (62%) felt that the costing of the PC sums for their new build had been largely accurate, but there was also a significant proportion (23%) who felt their PC costs had been under-costed. Overall, most of the respondents reported having a positive experience regarding cost-related aspects of the build process.

The bulk of the respondents agreed that they hadn't felt pressured to sign their build contract, and had not had to make an excessive number of changes throughout their build or sacrifices due to cost increases. There were, however, some mixed opinions when asked the respondents were asked if their bank had been easy to work with and understanding of cost increases.

Almost a third (31%) of the respondents felt that something had been excluded from their contract. The most frequently omitted items were landscaping, flooring, concrete, hardware and fencing. House-and-land packages have grown in popularity in recent years, although house-only packages continue to be most common contract type. The survey found no significant difference between the type of contract and its value.

The new house owners were satisfied with their builders overall, and nearly two thirds of the respondents said they would recommend their builder to others without being asked. Specifically, the new house owners were most satisfied with the value for money of their builder, the overall quality of the home, and the condition of their home the day they moved in. Some respondents did, however, report dissatisfaction with the fixing of defects, level of communication, and timely completion of their build, and there were negative comments particularly about deficiencies in service, lack of supervision of subcontractors, poor communication and disputes over defects.

Call-backs for defect repair remain high (86%), with painters, plumbers and electricians being the trades most called back. The most common type of defect was installer-related, not product-related.

When choosing their builder, the feature most often considered by this year's survey respondents was the builder's previous work, such as show homes, closely followed by recommendations by family and friends. The features considered to be most important are the builder's reputation and quality of work, with the respondents reporting they highly value the trustworthiness, reputation, flexibility and likability of a builder. Affordability (lowest price) was also a key consideration when choosing a builder.