



# 2025 Research Investment Priorities

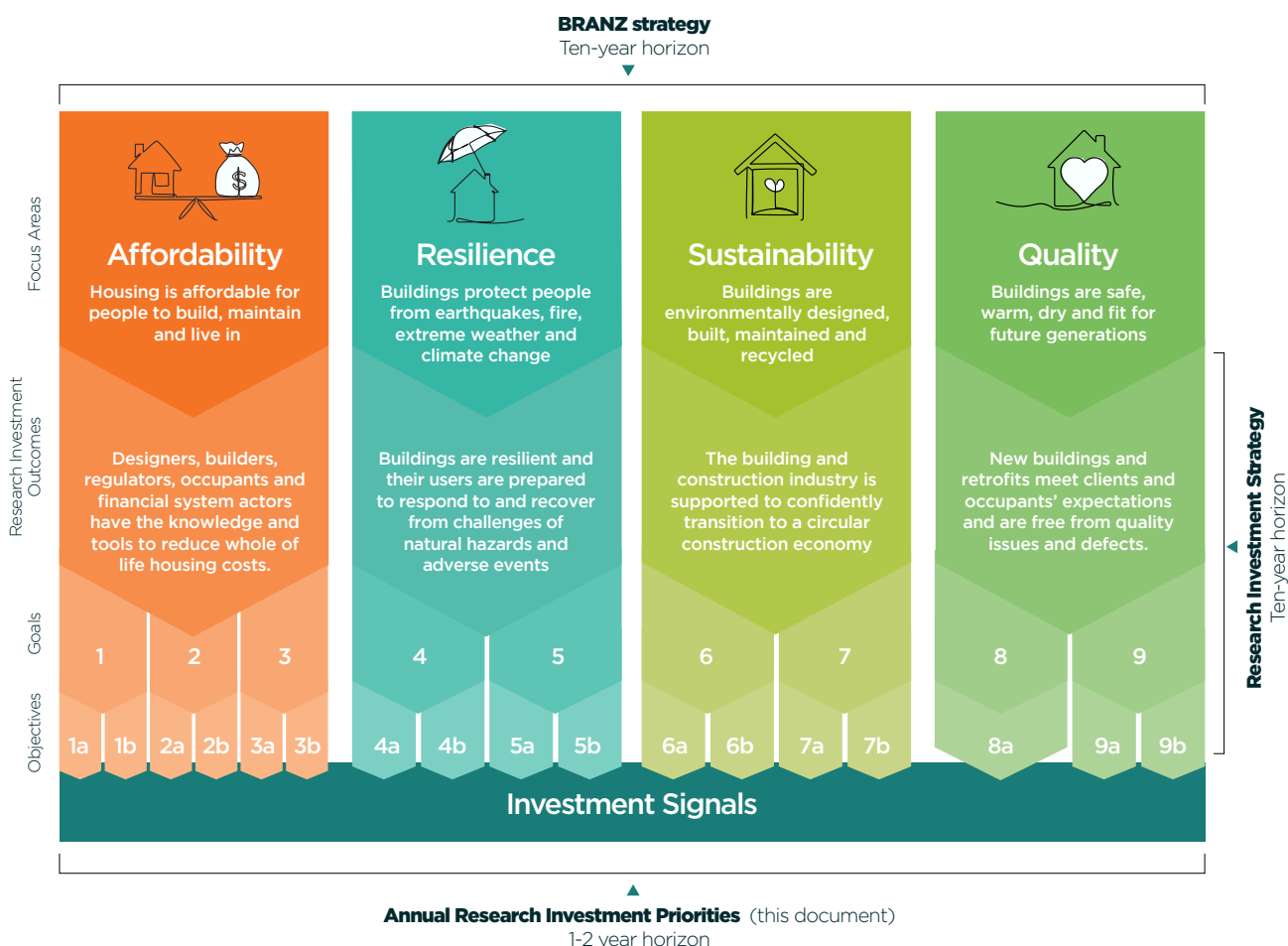


# Investing in the future of Aotearoa New Zealand's building system

BRANZ manages the Building Research Levy (the Levy), driving practical research to positively impact the building and construction sector. The Levy is our key lever for creating impactful change and achieving BRANZ's overarching aspiration – 'affordable, resilient, sustainable and quality buildings for Aotearoa New Zealand'

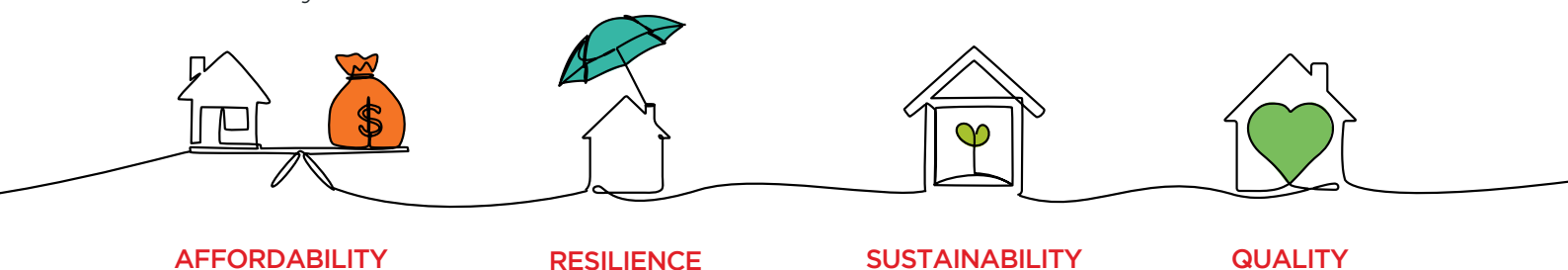
This Research Investment Priorities document (the Priorities) is the guidance for those who intend to put forward proposals for research to BRANZ Inc.'s 2025 annual research funding round.

This year BRANZ has launched two important strategic documents that set the ten-year strategic horizon for the organisation. One is an overarching BRANZ strategy, outlining our four focus areas – Affordability, Resilience, Sustainability and Quality. The other is a new Research Investment Strategy with outcomes, goals and objectives; a portfolio management approach to guide the Levy investment. The diagram below explains the line of sight for these documents and how they link to the Priorities.



# Investment priorities

To maximise impact, the annual investments will prioritise Objectives and associated Investment Signals that contribute to the four Research Investment Outcomes and ultimately align with BRANZ's four focus areas: Affordability, Resilience, Sustainability, and Quality.



The Research Investment Strategy provides a robust matrix of outcomes, goals and objectives that will drive our research investment in collaboration with our partners. Our four Research Investment Outcomes (refer to diagram below) state where we want to be in ten years' time. The focus areas of Affordability, Resilience, Sustainability and Quality are interconnected and cannot be viewed in isolation. Our aim is to support research that emphasises learning from others, collaborating across many domains and utilising open data and tools for maximum benefit.

This year BRANZ Inc. will invest approximately 60 percent of our available investment into the Affordability focus area, ensuring that this area has the impetus to deliver the shifts we want to see for the sector. Housing affordability is a big issue for Aotearoa New Zealand and other countries. We want to invest in key contributing factors that affect housing affordability, supporting research that investigates alternative financial models and insurance options. We want to encourage close partnerships with banks, insurers, councils and other financial institutions whose decisions directly impact on housing affordability.



BRANZ Inc. has opened all six Objectives in the Affordability focus area to all – BRANZ-led, collaborator-led and scholars alike, giving applicants more options to align their research idea to all aspects of this focus area.

The other three focus areas (Resilience, Sustainability and Quality) are only open to both BRANZ-led research and scholarship applications.

Please ensure you have read our Research Investment Strategy and understood how addressing the following Objectives and associated Investment Signals with your proposed research can deliver on the broader goals and outcomes.

We are now inviting research proposals for projects commencing in 2026 that demonstrate clear alignment with and delivery on following Objectives and associated Investment Signals.

Our four research investment outcomes.

# Investment signals

BRANZ Inc. will invest in research that aligns with at least one of the following Objectives and delivers on at least one of the associated Investment Signals—areas of work identified as critical by the sector.

## Affordability

<b>Goal 1</b>	<b>Tools and technologies are available and used to drive efficiencies and productivity gains across the building and construction system leading to more affordable solutions.</b>
Objective 1a	Create relevant and interoperable models and data to complement and feed into the current Build Insights tool for coherent and confident decision-making in the sector.
Objective 1b	Explore and create practical incentives for new financial models that offer flexibility for developers, homeowners and tenants that lead to more affordable housing.
<b>Goal 2</b>	<b>Key factors that contribute to total housing cost over the life of the home are understood and options for reducing these costs are developed.</b>
Objective 2a	Deliver solutions that address the opportunities, costs and challenges of building and renovating more affordable homes.
Objective 2b	Offer approaches and solutions for reducing operational housing costs over time.
<b>Goal 3</b>	<b>The different housing needs of our diverse population are understood, and solutions are tailored and delivered to meet these needs.</b>
Objective 3a	Examine the national and regional impacts on housing affordability and different cultural expectations in Aotearoa New Zealand, identifying key issues, barriers, opportunities, and options.
Objective 3b	Explore models for building designers, developers and regulators to make informed choices about affordable current and future housing options (incl. renovation and maintenance).

### INVESTMENT SIGNALS

For the 2025 round, research proposals are invited across all objectives for this research investment outcome. There are no specific Investment Signals proposed, but research proposals must show alignment with at least one of the six Objectives above.

**Open to BRANZ-led, collaborator-led and scholarship applicants.**



## Resilience

**Goal 5** Our buildings are repaired and rebuilt quickly, appropriately and cost-effectively to ensure social, community, and business continuity.

**Objective 5a** Explore ways to reduce risk to people's property and support community response to protect buildings during and after events, ensuring recovery with minimal disruption.

### INVESTMENT SIGNALS

For the 2025 round, research proposals are invited to focus on practical research solutions for the following:

1. How to retrofit existing buildings to be resilient to the multiple-hazard environment.
2. How to prepare and recover (before, during and after an event).
3. How to support consistent guidance across decision-makers (such as that given by insurance, emergency management, councils, consenting authorities).

**Open to BRANZ-led proposals and scholarship applicants only.**



## Sustainability

**Goal 6** The building and construction industry develops and adopts capabilities to support the transition to a circular construction economy.

**Objective 6a** Develop and promote access to capabilities that enable industry, homeowners, and decision-makers to adopt low-carbon and circular construction practices.

### INVESTMENT SIGNALS

For the 2025 round, research proposals are invited to focus on practical research solutions for the following:

1. How to support integrated design for de-construction.
2. How to develop waste solutions for soil, timber and concrete (incl. modelling, economics and business barriers to effective waste solutions).

**Open to BRANZ-led proposals and scholarship applicants only.**



## Quality

**Goal 8** The building and construction industry has the capability and uses tools and technologies to deliver high quality buildings.

**Objective 8a** Support the adoption of appropriate tools, technologies and construction practices to ensure quality issues are addressed and defects are eliminated.

### INVESTMENT SIGNALS

For the 2025 round, research proposals are invited to focus on practical research solutions for the following:

1. How to improve approaches that ensure consistency of data (including how to collate and display existing data in a more consistent and intuitive way) to build for quality.
2. How to adopt capabilities and tools that improve workflow, ensuring early design decisions work hand-in-hand with building performance of the finished product.
3. How to ensure simulation models align with reality for indoor environments.

**Open to BRANZ-led proposals and scholarship applicants only.**

## Cross-cutting enablers

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In addition to the identified Objectives and associated Investment Signals, BRANZ Inc. will prioritise research that addresses holistic enablers relevant to our work, intersecting across all four focus areas. Please refer to the Research Investment Strategy for details.

### 1. COLLABORATION AND CO-FUNDING

### 2. IMPACT AND RESEARCH EXCELLENCE

### 3. TE AO MĀORI LENS

### 4. CAPABILITIES

### 5. TOOLS, DATA AND INFRASTRUCTURE

## Project assessment criteria

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Proposals will be assessed using the following Assessment Criteria

### 1. STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

The research is aligned with Objectives and associated Investment Signals outlined in this document and addresses relevant cross-cutting enablers from the Research Investment Strategy.

### 2. IMPACT AND VALUE OF RESEARCH

Research findings translate into actionable outputs and outcomes with a defined benefits for the sector across Aotearoa New Zealand. There is clear evidence that the research has not been done before or does not duplicate efforts that could be adopted to the Aotearoa New Zealand context.

### 3. RESEARCH EXCELLENCE

High quality research fills important knowledge gaps, is well-conducted, innovative, where applicable, and makes significant contributions to our industry.

### 4. DELIVERY CONFIDENCE

The research team's capability, capacity and access to research facilities and data needed to conduct the proposed research is evident.

### 5. INCLUSIVITY

Where applicable, research is conducted in a transdisciplinary way, with diversity of perspectives, considering Aotearoa New Zealand's unique culture and associated knowledge systems.

### 6. PARTNERING AND CO-FUNDING

We seek partnerships with co-investors to maximise the benefit and impact of our collective research investment (**not applicable to scholars**).

### 7. DRIVE

The students' personal ambition to learn and grow is evident; they explore novel approaches and show commitment to solving the issues of the building and construction sector (**only applicable to scholars**).

## How we invest

Our investment aims to deliver transformational impact on the built environment through **excellent research, strong collaboration, and a clear pathway to impact.**

Through investment of the Levy, BRANZ Inc. commissions research and knowledge sharing activities that drive positive changes across the building and construction sector.

BRANZ Inc. invests the Levy through three research investment functions:

- BRANZ-led research;
- Collaborator-led research; and
- Scholarships (supporting future research leaders in the building & construction sector).

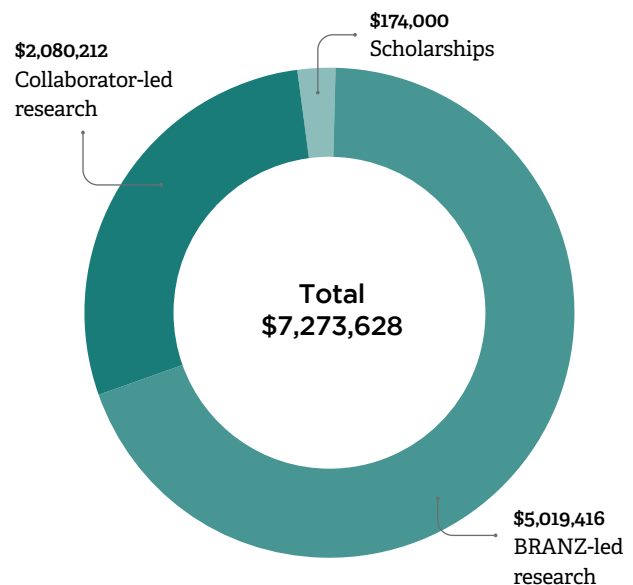
Aligned with the new Research Investment Strategy, we have made some changes to our investment processes. Our main investment mechanism is still our annual funding round. For collaborator-led research and scholarships the funding round runs in two stages: Concept and Full Proposal.

This year Concepts will be assessed by a Subject Matter Experts Panel, shortlisting those Concepts that will go through to Full Proposal. Our newly established overarching panel – the Research Investment Advisory Group (RIAG) – will review all Full Proposals: BRANZ-led research, collaborator-led research and scholarships. This independent panel will provide expert advice to the BRANZ Board, based on the Objectives and associated Investment Signals and the assessment criteria.

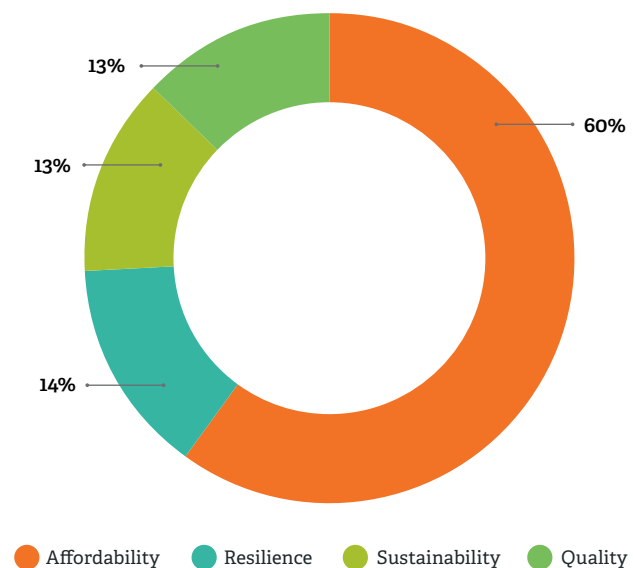
This coming financial year (26/27) we have a total of just under \$7.3M available (i.e. non-committed) for BRANZ-led research, collaborator-led research and scholarships. The graphs to the right show the proportion of available funding allocated across groups and across our four focus areas.

From 2026 BRANZ Inc. will be open to receiving out-of-cycle proposals that respond to critical and urgent industry needs when there is available Levy funding. Criteria for out-of-cycle proposals are set out on page 9 of this document.

**2026/27 Funding allocation across functions**  
(in \$NZD)



**2026/27 Funding allocation across focus areas**  
(by percentage)



● Affordability ● Resilience ● Sustainability ● Quality

\*These figures are correct as of 1 July 2025 and can be subject to change.

# Scholarships

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This year, BRANZ Inc. is launching a refreshed scholarship programme designed to grow research capability and deliver real impact for Aotearoa New Zealand's building and construction sector.

With increased funding the new programme provides tailored support for Master's and PhD students to tackle the big challenges facing our built environment. Scholarships will be awarded in areas that align with a specific Objective and associated Investment Signals in this document.

Our scholarships focus on:

- Backing future leaders: Supporting talented researchers to build skills that benefit the sector.
- Driving meaningful research: Funding high-quality research in the areas that matter most to the building and construction sector.
- Boosting sector impact: Sharing trusted, independent research to deliver practical solutions that help shape better buildings and communities.
- Building lasting connections: Creating a strong pipeline of researchers and ongoing collaboration across the sector.

Every year, BRANZ Inc. will award up to five new research scholarships, including:

- **Up to two Master's scholarships:** One-year research projects, each valued at up to \$22,000 per year.
- **Up to two PhD scholarships:** Three-year research projects, each valued at up to \$40,000 per year.

- **BRANZ Building with Science PhD scholarship:** A flagship three-year PhD research project, in an identified area, valued at up to \$50,000 per year. This year we are looking for scholarship proposals in the Resilience focus area, specifically in the fire research space. Building with Science PhD scholarships are awarded when an exceptional proposal is received, typically every one to three years.

## MĀTAURANGA MĀORI MASTER'S SCHOLARSHIP

This year we will award one of the two Master's scholarships to an exceptional student who has not only aligned their research to one of the Objectives and associated Investment Signals, but also embedded kaupapa Māori and mātauranga Māori approaches into their research.

## BRANZ BUILDING WITH SCIENCE PHD SCHOLARSHIP

This year we encourage students to apply whose proposals demonstrate exceptional quality and robust scientific merit in **fire research**.



# Out-of-cycle applications

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Occasionally, BRANZ Inc. will fund a project outside of its annual funding round, when there is available Levy funding. These projects will respond to an urgent and critical systems issue where research can make a significant contribution. Proposals for out-of-cycle funding are not accepted during our annual funding

round. These projects have a cap of \$100,000 in value and will not be more than 12 months duration.

Projects must secure relevant endorsement and co-funding contribution (cash or in-kind).

**Applicants must first register on the BRANZ website at [www.branz.co.nz/investing-research](http://www.branz.co.nz/investing-research) and will receive an invitation to our online web portal for their concept application.**

For more information please check out the following documents:

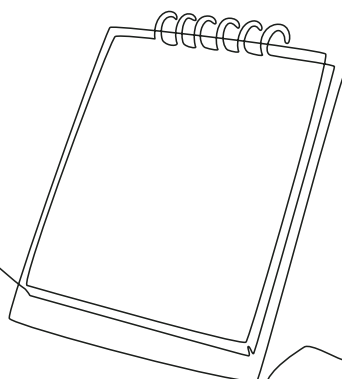
- Guidelines for applicants – Collaborator-led research
- Guidelines for applicants - Scholarships

## Our timeframe for the 2025 funding round

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If you are interested in finding out more, please visit the BRANZ website [www.branz.co.nz/investing-research](http://www.branz.co.nz/investing-research)



For more information, please get in touch:

**[branz.co.nz](http://branz.co.nz) | [researchinvestment@branz.org.nz](mailto:researchinvestment@branz.org.nz)**



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