

# A much better deal, says homeowner

By Andrew Laxon

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## Tracey MacLeod's home had all the danger signs but her builder reassured her. Photo / Sarah Ivey

Leaky-home owner Tracey MacLeod thinks the Government's latest offer is well worth considering.

"It's a much better deal than the one that was offered last time. It will make my partner and I re-evaluate where we are in the claims process."

The Auckland couple face a bill of at least \$245,000 to completely reclad their two-storey home in Dexter Ave, Mt Eden.

They bought the brand new house in 2002, just as details of the leaky building crisis were emerging. Ms MacLeod said they were assured it was safe, despite having the telltale signs found in so many leaky homes - no eaves, Harditex cladding and untreated timber framing that rotted when wet.

She first noticed water on the outside of the house in 2006 but the builder told her it was okay. By 2008 they had problems in the bathroom, which have since spread to the lounge, the kitchen and the main bedroom.

Estimates to fix the damage varied wildly, from \$65,000 for targeted repairs to \$340,000 for a full reclad.

She is completing a claim to the Weathertight Homes Resolution Service, which put the reclad cost at \$245,000.

"That doesn't include us having to move out, it doesn't include us having to store our stuff, it doesn't include the stress - and there's been a lot of that."

The 43-year-old lawyer, who now works for a company that detects potentially leaky homes, said she thought many owners would be tempted by an offer that paid half their bills.

It was a big improvement on the Government's first attempt, which would have left homeowners with 65 per cent of the cost. The package failed because councils objected to the Government paying only 10 per cent.

But Ms MacLeod said the proposal still did not deal with the widespread problems that remained in the building industry.

She strongly criticised the 10-year limit for claims, which let builders and manufacturers avoid liability and applied whether a homeowner knew the building was leaking or not.

"Everything is happening behind a wall that's shut in. What are we all supposed to do - cut holes in our walls every year to check that they're okay?"

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