

LESS SPACE, MORE STYLE - TINY HOUSE LIVING MAGAZINE!

# TINY LIVING



Tiny House  
Hub

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Tiny Homeowner Needs to Know

FEATURED LAND  
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NEW SITE FOR LEASE IN  
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## AUCKLAND'S TINY HOUSE TUG-OF-WAR: ECO-FRIENDLY BUT NOT TROUBLE-FREE

Another tiny house owner in Auckland is left jumping through regulatory hurdles after neighbour complains to council.

Bethan Collings' confrontation with regulatory challenges began when she received an abatement notice from Auckland Council on April 10, 2024. The notice, triggered by a neighbour's complaint, classified her tiny house as a minor dwelling and ordered her to disestablish the tiny house by May 10, or secure legal compliance by July 10th. This process involved obtaining resource consent for a minor dwelling and a building consent, alongside paying a development contributions fee.

### **The costs to apply for consent**

Upon further consultation with council planners, Bethan was initially given an estimate ranging from \$8,000 to \$20,000. However, after more detailed discussions, it

became clear that this initial estimate was quite conservative. The actual costs were more accurately projected to be between \$50,000 and \$80,000, a financial burden Bethan could not manage due to existing debts from moving and setting her tiny house up on the land.

### **Details of the Tiny House**

Bethan's home, though tiny, is a marvel of sustainability. Positioned on leased land in East Tamaki Heights, Auckland. Her home rests on timber blocks instead of a permanent foundation. The tiny house operates off-grid, powered by a solar system housed in a garden shed, with water supplied from a rooftop collection system, held in a water tank sitting on the ground next to the tiny house. A composting toilet handles sanitation needs, while greywater is fed into the ground and treated on-site using natural vermiculture processes.

## Key Compliance Issues

Initial conversations with council representatives pinpointed two significant compliance challenges for Bethan's tiny house: The first being that it does not meet the definition of a vehicle. The second being the tiny house is considered "fixed to the land" due to its connections to external utilities and its foundational support.



Photo Credit, Stuff

## Community Engagement and Legal Consultations

Feeling overwhelmed, Bethan reached out to the tiny house community, legal experts, and the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) for guidance. Her proactive efforts were focused on identifying a sustainable way forward without enduring financial hardship. Some of the advice she received led her to reconsider the usual consent pathway. If she were to relocate her tiny house to another leased property in the future, she would face the same costly and repetitive process of applying for new consents and fees each time she moved the tiny house, with no guarantee of approval. This realization underscored the impracticality of pursuing traditional resource and building consents under her circumstances. Since Bethan only leases the land and the duration of her stay is uncertain, the legal costs required to appeal the abatement notice also seemed impractical.

## Strategic Compliance and Revaluation

To comply with the abatement notice, Bethan began disestablishing her home by disconnecting utilities and removing appliances, effectively stripping the house of its "dwelling" characteristics. This act of compliance, however, was a stepping stone to hopefully a more sustainable solution.

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 **Tiny House Hub**





Photo Credit, Living Big in a Tiny House

### **Exploring Re-classification: The Caravan Option**

Bethan is currently exploring the possibility of modifying her tiny house as a caravan, which might allow her to circumvent the usual resource consent requirements under the Auckland Unitary Plan (AUP). The requirements of this strategy, which has not yet been confirmed by Auckland council, involves significant modifications to the tiny house.

**Mounting the House on a Trailer:** Bethan is considering transforming her tiny house into a vehicle by placing it on a road-legal trailer. This change could potentially reclassify her tiny home as a vehicle.

**Self-Contained Utilities:** Bethan is looking to fully integrate all essential utilities—wastewater and freshwater tanks, along with

power systems—within her tiny house. This redesign is strategically focused on ensuring that when the house needs to be relocated, all utilities will be self-contained and mobile, securely incorporated within the structure itself rather than fixed to the land. She is referencing the Self-Containment Certification NZS 5465:2001 standards to guide this integration.

Before starting any modifications to her tiny house, Bethan has been in contact with council planners to outline all the proposed changes she intends to make. She is currently awaiting their confirmation that these changes will be approved.

At the time of publishing, Bethan had not yet received a response from Auckland Council regarding her proposed changes. However, the Council has stated, "At the moment, we have to take a case-by-case approach when assessing whether a tiny home or caravan is compliant with the relevant laws. Tiny homes, while becoming more popular, are fairly new and we do not have specific guidance in place yet. Later this year, we will issue a guidance note that we hope will help the community make well-informed decisions." They also recommend that, "In the meantime, homeowners should work with an independent planning expert to check whether their tiny home is compliant with the Building Act, Resource Management Act, and Auckland Unitary Plan."

We will keep you updated on Bethan's progress with Auckland Council and will update you in the near future with her progress.



Photo Credit, Fox Cabins

## TINY HOME FOUNDATION FACE-OFF: WHEELS VS. SKIDS VS. FIXED – WHICH ONE WINS?

So, you're dreaming of your very own tiny home, but you're stuck on a crucial decision, should it have wheels, skids, or a fixed foundation? Let's break it down in a fun and informative way so you can figure out which option suits your lifestyle best!

### Tiny Houses on Wheels: The Road Warriors

Tiny houses on wheels (THOW) are the rockstars of the tiny home world. They're like the tour buses of the tiny house community – always ready for the next adventure.

#### Pros:

**Mobility:** Love to travel? A tiny house on wheels lets you take your home wherever the

road leads. Whether it's a new job, a new town, or just a change of scenery, your home moves with you.

**Easier Council Approval:** In some places, having your home on wheels might mean it's considered a vehicle rather than a building, potentially dodging the need for building consent. Less red tape, more road trips!

**No Need for Foundations:** Skip the hassle and cost of laying a foundation. Perfect for DIY builders who want to keep things simple.

#### Cons:

**Size Constraints:** Your home must fit the dimensions of a trailer, which can limit how wide, long, heavy, and tall you can go.

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**Stability Issues:** Trailers can be less stable than fixed foundations. If you're parked in a windy area or somewhere prone to earthquakes, you'll need to secure your tiny home well.

**Maintenance:** Trailers require regular upkeep to stay roadworthy. A small price to pay for the freedom to roam!



## Tiny Houses on Skids: The Middle Grounders

If you're not quite ready to hit the open road but still want some flexibility, skids might be your answer. Think of them as the nomadic sloths of the tiny house world – slow to move but still capable of a change of scenery.

### Pros:

**Cost-Effective:** Skids can be cheaper than trailers or fixed foundations, making them a budget-friendly option.

**Portability:** While not as mobile as a THOW, a tiny house on skids can still be moved by

lifting it onto a truck. It's like having a snail shell that you can hitch a ride for!

**No Trailer Constraints:** You're free from the size and weight limits of a trailer, giving you more design freedom.

### Cons:

**Legal Grey Area:** Convincing your local council that a house on skids isn't a building can be tricky. You might still need building and resource consent, which could complicate things.

**Financing Hurdles:** Getting a loan for a tiny house on skids can be tough since they aren't typically seen as sound investments by lenders.

**Insurance Issues:** Insuring a tiny house on skids can be challenging. Many insurers are hesitant to cover non-traditional homes, especially those without a fixed foundation, and it can't be insured as a caravan if it's not on wheels.

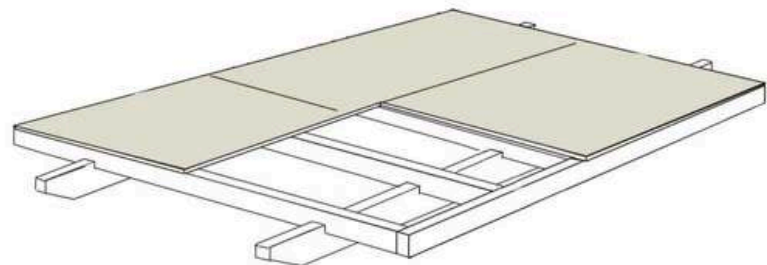




Photo Credit, Tiny Towing Solutions

## Tiny Houses on Fixed Foundations: The Settlers

For those who have found their perfect piece of land and have no intention of moving, a fixed foundation offers a stable and permanent home base. These are the settlers of the tiny house tribe, ready to plant roots.

### Pros:

**Stability and Durability:** Fixed foundations provide a rock-solid base, making your home more resistant to wind and earthquakes. It's the fort knox of tiny living!

**More Design Flexibility:** Without trailer limitations, you can get creative with your floor plan and build a larger, more comfortable tiny home.

**Increased Property Value:** A consented tiny house on a foundation can increase your property's value, making it a better investment long-term.

### Cons:

**Building Consent Required:** You'll need council consent, which can be a headache and limit some design choices.

**Less Mobility:** Once it's built, moving a house on a fixed foundation is a major undertaking. Think of it as an anchor – great for stability but not for mobility.

## So, Which One is Right for You?

Your choice depends on your lifestyle, budget, and long-term plans. If you're a free spirit yearning for the open road, wheels are your best bet. If you want a bit of both worlds, skids offer a flexible, cost-effective option. And if you're ready to settle down and invest in your future, a fixed foundation provides stability and permanence.

Remember, there's no one-size-fits-all answer. It's all about finding what works best for you and your tiny house dreams!



# 10 FIRE SAFETY HACKS EVERY TINY HOMEOWNER NEEDS TO KNOW!

Tiny houses are the epitome of smart design and efficient living. But with their cosy, compact nature comes the need for some serious fire safety measures. Let's dive into ten essential tips to keep your tiny home safe and sound.

## 1. Install Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Detectors

First things first – you need smoke and carbon monoxide (CO) detectors. These little devices are your first line of defence against fire and gas hazards. Pop them up as per the manufacturer's instructions, test them regularly, and remember to replace them every 8 to 10 years. Simple, right?

## 2. Use Propane Gas Detectors

Propane is handy but can be a bit of a troublemaker if it leaks. Install a propane gas detector near the floor to catch any sneaky gas build-ups early. It's like having a superhero sidekick watching out for explosive dangers.

## 3. Implement Automatic Controls

How cool would it be if your tiny house could protect itself? With automatic controls, it can! Install a system that shuts off gas at the tank source and electrical power if smoke, CO, or gas detectors go off. Plus, it can send you a text alert – your house is looking out for you even when you're out!

## 4. Keep Fire Extinguishers Accessible

Make sure you've got at least one fire extinguisher in a visible, easy-to-reach spot. It's smart to have extras near fire-prone areas like the kitchen or heating appliances. Bonus points for keeping one outside, ready for any unexpected outdoor fires.

## 5. Clean Fireplace Chimneys Regularly

Got a tiny fireplace? It needs love too! Regular chimney cleaning prevents soot and creosote build-up, reducing the risk of chimney fires. Aim

for at least once a year – it's a small task for a big safety boost.

## 6. Install a Fire Sprinkler System

Fire sprinklers aren't just for big buildings. These systems can detect heat and release a fire-extinguishing fluid to douse flames automatically. Perfect for high-risk areas like your kitchen or loft.

## 7. Ensure Proper Loft Egress

If you have a loft, make sure there's a big, easy-to-access window or skylight for escaping in case of fire. An exterior ladder is a great addition for a quick and safe exit from higher sleeping areas.

## 8. Maintain Indoor Air Quality & Exhaust Fans

Good air quality is crucial in a tiny home. Use exhaust fans, especially when cooking or burning anything, to keep the air fresh and free from hazardous gases. It's like giving your home a breath of fresh air.

## 9. Safe Propane and Gas Venting

Make sure all your gas and propane appliances are vented properly to avoid dangerous gas build-up. This includes your water heater – it's all about giving those gases a safe escape route.

## 10. Prioritise Exit Access and Emergency Preparedness

Ensure your tiny house has safe and easy exits, even in the dark. Uniform stair tread heights can prevent trips and falls during an evacuation. Keep a first aid kit handy and know where the nearest emergency services are. It's all about being prepared for anything!

By following these ten crucial fire safety tips, you can enjoy the charm and efficiency of your tiny home without compromising on safety. Prevention and preparedness are your best buddies in creating a safe, secure tiny house experience. Stay safe, and happy tiny living!





# COULD YOUR TINY HOUSE BE AWARD-WINNING?



Are you the lucky owner or builder of a stunning tiny home? Well, the New Zealand Tiny House Awards were created just for you! These awards are all about celebrating the incredible work happening in the tiny house community across New Zealand. And let me tell you, they've grown quite a bit over the years, drawing in more entries and thousands of public votes. It's the perfect stage to showcase the most innovative and creative tiny house designs out there.

So, what's the scoop for this year? Entries are now open until 22nd July 2024, and the winners will be announced at the Tiny House Expo on 11th October 2024. Due to some sneaky attempts at fraudulent voting







last year, we've put in place some strict measures to keep things fair. Our clever team caught and booted out people attempting to make dodgy votes, and those involved were disqualified. Now, all categories except the People's Choice Award will be judged by a panel of experts. But don't worry, you still get a say! Public voting for the People's Choice Award runs from 30th July to 10th September 2024.

Got a tiny house you're proud of? Or maybe you're about to get the keys to one? This is your moment! We've got categories like Best Commercial Build, Most Creative Design, Best DIY Build, and the big one – Tiny House of the Year. Winners bag some cool prizes, with the overall champ walking away with \$2,000. It's not just about the money, though. The awards are a fantastic way to get your work noticed and to inspire others.



Entering your tiny house isn't just about winning (although that's pretty awesome, too). It's about being part of a vibrant, supportive community that shares your passion for tiny living. Plus, it's a great opportunity to show off the incredible talent and creativity in New Zealand's tiny house scene. Let's see if our judges and all of New Zealand love your tiny house just as much as you do!

So, what are you waiting for? Enter your build and rally your friends, family, and fellow tiny house lovers to vote.

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Landshare: New Zealand's online directory connecting tiny house owners and land owners.



**NEW**

### LAND FOR LEASE



Land Lease Opportunity for Tiny House in Little River, Canterbury



**CANTERBURY**

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 \$150 per week

- **Available:** Now
- **Site foundation:** grass on gravel soil
- **Water connection:** Yes
- **Power connection:** No
- **Off-street parking:** Yes
- **Pets:** Yes
- **Child Friendly:** Yes
- **Smokers:** Yes
- **WiFi connection:** No
- **Private location:** Yes

Offering a private 400m2 area of a rear section near the serene Birdlings Flat beach, this spot is ideal for anyone looking to enjoy a peaceful coastal lifestyle. The section comes with the convenience of town supply water, available on gravity from a tank, ensuring a hassle-free living environment. This secluded parcel is perfect for parking a Tiny Home or similar setup, where residents can relax and soak in the natural beauty of the surrounding area.





NEW

## LOOKING FOR LAND

For a Motorhome anywhere between Canterbury to Otago



🔍 CANTERBURY TO OTAGO

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### Looking for:

- **Power connection:** No
- **Water connection:** Yes
- **Off-street Parking:** Yes
- **Pet Friendly:** Yes
- **Child Friendly:** No
- **Smokers:** No
- **WiFi Connection:** No
- **Private Location:** Yes



**Tiny House  
Landshare**

A retired building inspector and surveyor, noted for being fit and handy, along with his wife, who works remotely for an Australian company, are seeking a small block of land for a long-term lease between Canterbury and Otago. This clean, tidy, and friendly couple is self-sufficient with their own power and internet; they only require access to water. They are an ideal match for someone with a spare block who values a reliable, long-term agreement and appreciates having engaging, helpful tenants.

## Leasing land for a tiny?

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 **Tiny House Hub**



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