

LESS SPACE, MORE STYLE - TINY HOUSE LIVING MAGAZINE!

TINY LIVING

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Tiny House
Hub

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WHY 63% OF TINY HOME BUYERS DEMAND COMPLIANCE

By Sharla May - Tiny House Hub

WILL THE GOVERNMENT FINALLY TAKE ACTION?

The tiny house movement in New Zealand is no longer just a trend—it's a solution, an aspiration, and, for many, the future of affordable, sustainable living. This year's Tiny House Expo drew a record-breaking 10,200 attendees, marking a 20% increase from last year and underscoring the growing interest in tiny living.

For tiny home enthusiasts, however, compliance remains a major hurdle. The 2024 Expo survey revealed a clear demand for legal security, with 63.2% of respondents prioritising certificates of compliance for their tiny homes. For a growing number, legal recognition is more than a formality; it's essential to living sustainably and with peace of mind.

Why Compliance Matters for Tiny Home Buyers
Many New Zealanders drawn to tiny living are seeking not just a place to call home, but a foundation of stability and security. Among those surveyed, 73.1% plan to use their tiny home for personal use, and 40.4% of these anticipate living alone, while 35.9% plan to live as a couple. These numbers highlight that tiny homes are increasingly being viewed as primary residences rather than temporary escapes.

For homeowners, a certificate of compliance means protection against the unexpected, whether it's an insurance claim, financing, or simply the confidence that their home meets building standards.

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**Granny flats
Minor Dwellings
Modular Homes
Tiny Homes on Wheels**

The lack of standardisation for tiny homes, especially those with wheels or non-traditional foundations, presents a significant barrier. 24.6% of respondents prefer homes on wheels, while 27.5% favour fixed foundations. This range of preferences points to diverse lifestyles within the tiny home community. A legal framework that can accommodate different designs and mobility options will allow individuals the flexibility to live sustainably without regulatory uncertainties.

The Granny Flat Reform Bill: A Step in the Right Direction

The New Zealand government is taking steps to address housing challenges by promoting minor residential units (MRUs) through the Granny Flat Reform Bill. The bill seeks to allow MRUs of up to 60 square metres to be built without traditional building or resource consents, provided they meet specific criteria. This reform, if adapted to support tiny homes, would provide much-needed clarity and open doors for those ready to embrace a minimalist lifestyle. However, the current version of the bill does not fully accommodate tiny homes, particularly those on wheels, which represent nearly a quarter of attendees' preferences.

This bill has garnered significant interest within the tiny home community, and many advocates took the opportunity to submit feedback during the public consultation period. The hope is that future iterations of the reform will consider the unique needs of tiny homes, recognising them as legitimate residential spaces and offering provisions for flexibility and mobility.

The Path Forward for Builders and Landowners

The evolving regulatory landscape means builders and landowners are also adjusting their approaches. For builders, alignment with compliance standards becomes a competitive advantage, offering buyers reassurance and long-term stability. Landowners, too, are keeping an eye on the proposed changes. 48.2% of expo attendees already own land, with many hoping to place a tiny home on their property as an affordable housing option or to support family members in a private, independent residence.

Expanding the Granny Flat Reform Bill to include tiny homes would not only support buyers but also incentivise builders and landowners to invest in this sector.



Why 63% of tiny home buyers demand compliance

An inclusive approach will facilitate sustainable development and foster community while addressing New Zealand's pressing housing shortage.

Advocating for a Compliant, Sustainable Future
With the recent survey showing that 50.9% of attendees are planning to buy or build a tiny home in the next 1-2 years, the demand for compliant, secure tiny homes is only set to increase. The tiny house community in New Zealand is hopeful that continued discussions and legislative updates will bring recognition to tiny homes as a viable and essential housing option.

As we look to the future, the push for compliance isn't just about meeting regulations—it's about legitimising a lifestyle that aligns with New Zealand's values of sustainability, affordability, and innovation. For both buyers and builders, compliance offers a foundation of security, and, as the legislative framework evolves, it's clear that tiny homes are more than just small spaces; they are part of a big movement towards a sustainable and resilient future.



Photo Credit - Cocoon Tiny Homes



Photo Credit - Tiny House Builders Ltd



FORGET THE HIGH-PRICED RETIREMENT VILLAGE

WHY SAVVY RETIREES ARE DOWNSIZING DIFFERENTLY

Tiny homes are often associated with millennial minimalism and urban wanderlust. Yet, the 2024 Tiny House Expo painted a different picture: tiny homes are becoming increasingly popular among older adults. With 74.8% of expo attendees over the age of 46, this trend highlights a significant shift in New Zealand's tiny home movement. Far from being a trend confined to younger generations, tiny living is drawing retirees and soon-to-be retirees seeking simpler, more financially sustainable lifestyles.

Tiny Living: Not Just a Millennial Trend Anymore

For years, tiny homes have been marketed as eco-friendly and cost-effective solutions, often appealing to younger buyers. However, our expo survey results reveal that this lifestyle has a growing appeal among older New Zealanders, who are motivated by similar goals of affordability and minimalism—but with an added focus on security and long-term sustainability. 41.5% of attendees were 56 or older, and an additional 33.3% were between 46 and 55, suggesting that a significant portion of the tiny home community consists of those who are approaching or enjoying retirement.

This older demographic's interest in tiny homes aligns with their desire for manageable housing costs. Downsizing offers a chance to reduce living expenses, embrace a simpler lifestyle, and create financial breathing room—without the hefty mortgage and upkeep costs associated with traditional homes.

Financial Independence in a Compact Space

The draw of financial freedom is clear from the survey results. Most attendees indicated plans to invest in tiny homes priced between \$100,000 and \$150,000 (32.2%) or \$150,000 and \$200,000 (24%). For many retirees, these budgets reflect a comfortable balance between affordability and quality, offering the chance to own a home without debt. Additionally, 48.2% of attendees already own land, allowing them to build a tiny home without the need to purchase new property.

With tiny homes offering a more accessible price point and reduced maintenance demands, retirees are seeing these structures as practical investments. Living in a compact space not only lowers expenses but also promotes a lifestyle with fewer physical and financial burdens, allowing older adults to focus on hobbies, travel, or spending time with loved ones.

A New Take on Design Preferences

The older demographic is shaping tiny home design as well. While lofted designs appeal to younger audiences, 56.6% of attendees prefer single-level layouts—an option that aligns well with accessibility needs. Single-level homes eliminate the need for stairs or ladders, offering greater ease of movement, particularly for those seeking long-term residence.

These design preferences also highlight the practical priorities of the older tiny house buyer. Many are looking to age in place, and single-level designs offer flexibility and security. With a fixed foundation also preferred by 27.5% of attendees, the desire for stability, both literally and figuratively, is a significant factor for those planning to live in tiny homes full-time.

Looking Ahead: The Future of Tiny Homes for All Ages

The demand for tiny homes among older adults signifies a broader shift in New Zealand's housing landscape. Tiny homes are becoming more than a millennial lifestyle choice; they are evolving into a practical solution for those seeking financial independence, simplicity, and legal security. By understanding and addressing the needs of older tiny home buyers, builders and policymakers can foster a more inclusive market that accommodates this growing demographic. As New Zealand's tiny house movement expands, it's clear that the appeal of tiny living crosses generational lines. With its focus on affordability, minimalism, and sustainability, the tiny house lifestyle offers retirees a unique opportunity to redefine their homes—and their lives—on their own terms.



“While lofted designs appeal to younger audiences, 56.6% of attendees prefer single-level layouts”



FROM TEARS TO CHEERS

How the Tiny House Expo Shattered Records and Captured Hearts!



SHARLA MAY

Director, Tiny House Expo

The 2024 Tiny House Expo was a record-breaking success, with 10,200 attendees, marking a 20% increase from last year. As the Expo Director, I couldn't be prouder of the growth, enthusiasm, and vibrant community the event continues to build.

This year was packed with unforgettable moments, impactful sales, a heartwarming charity auction, and exciting news about the expo's future!

Highlights from the 2024 Expo

Feedback from attendees and exhibitors was phenomenal. For the first time, a builder set a new record by selling 17 builds at the show! This impressive feat highlights the strong demand for tiny homes and the trust in our talented builders, who showcased their best work. The energy was palpable, from the packed seminar sessions to the buzzing exhibition halls filled with the latest designs and innovations.

One standout moment was a charity auction hosted by Unit2go with the support of Harveys Real Estate, which raised a remarkable \$90,000 for Blue Light NZ. Witnessing the community's generosity in action was inspiring, and knowing these funds will support youth programmes made it all the more meaningful. It was a special moment that truly reflected the heart of the tiny home movement.



Photo Credit - Tiny House Expo

We were thrilled to welcome several new builders to the expo this year, bringing innovative designs and fresh perspectives to the tiny house community. They were warmly received by attendees, who included visitors from the South Island, Australia, and the Pacific Islands—a testament to the tiny house movement’s growing international appeal.

The Demand for Knowledge

In response to increased demand, we expanded our seminar space this year, yet many sessions still saw standing-room-only crowds. Covering topics from financing tiny homes to navigating compliance, the packed room highlighted a genuine hunger for knowledge. Attendees want to make informed decisions and feel empowered on their journey toward tiny living.

A New Home for the Tiny House Expo

We’re thrilled to announce that, starting next year, the Tiny House Expo will be moving to Mystery Creek - Hamilton. Mystery Creek offers stability, more space, and affordability, with benefits like free parking and on-site accommodation options for motorhomes and tiny homes.

This central location will be more accessible to our expanding audience from regions such as Waikato, Bay of Plenty, and Taranaki, making it easier for more people to attend without the need to travel into Auckland’s busy suburbs. This move aligns with our goal to keep the event affordable, convenient, and in tune with New Zealand’s growing tiny home community.



Photo Credit - Tiny House Expo



Mystery Creek, Hamilton





Handy Cabins Team - Tiny House Expo

Looking Ahead

The Tiny House Expo's success is thanks to each of you—builders, exhibitors, attendees, and tiny house enthusiasts—who bring passion, curiosity, and an openness to explore alternative lifestyles. We're immensely grateful for your continued support and look forward to taking the expo to new heights at Mystery Creek next year (and celebrating our 10th event!). With a larger venue, and a commitment to accessibility, we're confident this move will help us better serve the tiny house community and inspire New Zealanders to consider the possibilities of tiny living.

Here's to the next chapter of the Tiny House Expo—one filled with growth, connection, and a shared vision for a sustainable, affordable future in tiny living.



Photo Credit - Tiny House Expo



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FREE Mini Course
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**WOULD YOU TRADE
SPACE FOR FREEDOM?**



This Family's Tiny House Adventure Will Inspire You!

For Nicky and Kane, the decision to downsize from a four-bedroom home in Hawke's Bay to a 20sqm tiny house wasn't made lightly. Yet, the desire to explore New Zealand's stunning off-grid locations while still enjoying the comforts of a cosy home led them to embrace the tiny house lifestyle. Kane, an experienced tiny house builder, and Nicky packed up their lives and embarked on a year-long journey in a tiny home they custom-built for life on the road with their two children.

"We were really excited but also incredibly nervous," Nicky shares, reflecting on the big change.

Moving from a spacious home and strong community ties into such a small space – while travelling full-time with their children – was a daunting challenge. But the opportunity to have a flexible, mobile lifestyle won out.

"We wanted to be able to go to amazing locations off-grid and still have the comforts and atmosphere of a home," adds Kane.

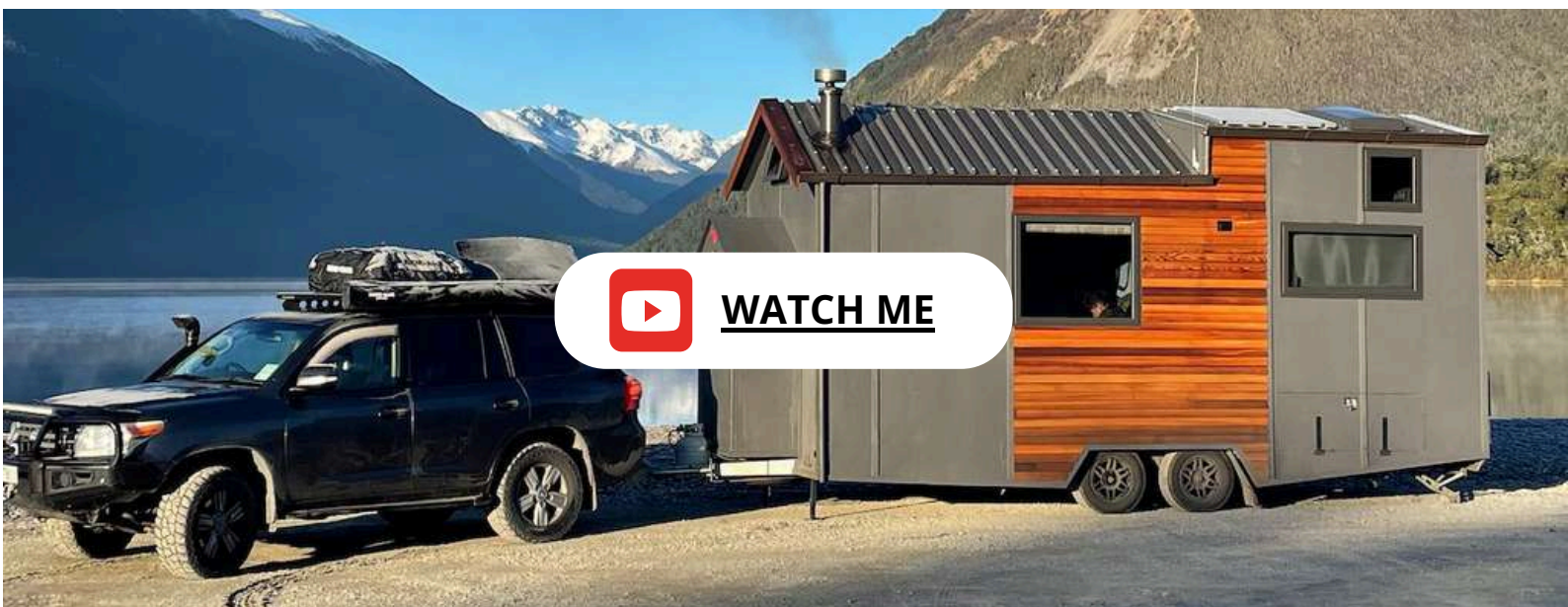
Their tiny house, which they designed and built from the ground up, wasn't just functional and stylish – it also captured the hearts of many. At the 2024 NZ Tiny House Awards, Nicky and Kane's home took home the prestigious People's Choice Award, a recognition that highlights the uniqueness and appeal of their design.

Fortunately, Kane's practical building skills came in handy when designing their tiny home. This wasn't his first build – it was his third in over 25 years – and his experience helped them create a home that was both functional and adaptable. "We designed the house with three separate bedrooms, which is a real luxury in a tiny house," says Kane. "It means everyone has their own space and privacy." Innovative features like airbag suspension on the trailer allow the family to set up quickly levelling the tiny house on uneven ground.

Their custom-built wood burner not only keeps the house warm but also heats water through a clever water jacket system. In-floor storage, separate table tops, and strategic lighting make the space both practical and comfortable. The house was built to keep them cosy during the winter months while offering flexibility during warmer seasons.

Living in 20sqm with four people certainly has its challenges. "If one of us is having a bad day, everyone knows about it," Nicky laughs. "But we've learnt to address things quicker because we're all in such close quarters."

They admit that homeschooling the kids on the road has been one of their biggest ongoing struggles. "Becoming a teacher overnight hasn't been easy," says Nicky. But they've taken it all in stride, focusing on the positives: their tiny house gives them the freedom to explore New Zealand, change their view every few days, and spend more quality time together as a family. "We're really understanding what makes each other tick," Nicky adds, which has been one of the most rewarding aspects of their journey. Their tiny house adventure hasn't just been about fun and exploration; it's also been a financially savvy decision. Renting out their



home in Hawke's Bay has enabled them to fund their travels, and they're proud to share that the entire tiny house build cost just \$45,000 – not including Kane's labour, of course. Living tiny has also made them more mindful of their consumption. "We have less food waste, and we really think twice about buying anything new," they explain. "Living with less has been incredibly freeing." For those considering the tiny life, Nicky and Kane offer some sage advice: "Simplify in stages. Have a big garage sale and live with less before making the jump." And perhaps most importantly, "Make sure your bed is comfortable! Sleeping well is key to enjoying tiny living."

Looking back, the couple says the most rewarding part of their journey has been realising how little they need to live well. "We've spent less time maintaining property and more time exploring New Zealand with our family. That's what really matters." While their adventure is still ongoing, Nicky and Kane are already thinking ahead. In 2025, they plan to sell the custom build plans for their tiny house. For those interested in following their journey or learning more, they can be found on Facebook and YouTube under "Travelling Tiny NZ."

For Nicky, Kane, and their family, tiny living has been a big adventure – one that's opened doors to new experiences, deeper family connections, and the freedom to explore New Zealand in a way they hadn't imagined possible. While tiny house living isn't without its challenges, the rewards have far outweighed them. Could this lifestyle be the key to your next adventure?



Wondering how to find land for your tiny house or motorhome?

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



NEW

LAND FOR LEASE



Land Lease Opportunity for Tiny House in Ararimu, Auckland!



ARARIMU

 [Click here to view the full listing](#)

 \$170 per week

- **Available:** 9th Nov
- **Site foundation:** Grass
- **Driveway foundation:** A gravel driveway will be provided
- **Water connection:** No
- **Power connection:** No
- **Off-street parking:** Yes
- **Pets:** No
- **Child Friendly:** Yes
- **Smokers:** No
- **WiFi connection:** No
- **Private location:** Yes

Nestled in nature, this 1500sqm north-facing land is an off-grid haven for eco-conscious, community-minded individuals. Ideal for those ready to embrace rainwater collection, solar power, and sustainable waste management. A private entrance and well-planted borders ensure peace, with abundant birdlife and space for keen gardeners eager to expand an established organic veggie garden. Located on quiet, no-exit Markham Road, this land share offers a shared woodlot, orchard, and several site options, including an elevated spot. I live nearby in a small earth home, sharing the land with three friendly dogs. If you value peace, nature, and a sustainable, freedom-loving lifestyle, this could be your sanctuary.

NEW

LOOKING FOR LAND

Volunteer Fire Fighter, Builder, Chef & Gardener seeks spot for Tiny Home



Matakana, Leigh,
Omaha, Warkworth

 [Click here to view the full listing](#)

Looking for:

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

I'm a clean, tidy, and friendly single male in my early 40s, half Kiwi, half Italian. A volunteer firefighter, builder, chef, and gardener who enjoys community, gardening, and long walks. I'm looking for a peaceful, rural spot with good access for my fully off-grid 11x3m tiny home, a converted 12x2.4m trailer deck, a 2x2.4m tool shed, and parking space.

All I need is space; I'm fully self-contained with solar, gas, and a composting loo. Ideally, I'd love room for a veggie garden and fruit trees to cultivate. If this sounds like a fit, I'd love to connect!



Leasing land for a tiny?

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