

LESS SPACE, MORE STYLE - TINY HOUSE LIVING MAGAZINE!

TINY LIVING

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Tiny House
Hub



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TINY HOMES GET A WIN, BUT GRANNY FLAT REFORM HAS A LONG WAY TO GO

By Sharla May – Tiny House Hub

The fight for better housing options in New Zealand has just scored a small victory. The Government's proposed granny flat reform, aimed at making it easier to build small secondary dwellings, has moved closer to recognising tiny homes as legitimate and flexible housing solutions.

The reform proposes two key changes: introducing a building consent exemption for granny flats up to 60 square metres under the Building Act 2004 and creating a national environmental standard to remove the need for resource consent for "minor residential units". While initially focused on traditional granny flats, public submissions revealed a strong appetite for broadening the scope to include tiny homes—and MBIE seems to have taken notice.

Out of the thousands of submissions on the proposed reforms, around 200 specifically called for tiny homes to be included. That might not sound like a huge number, but it sends a clear message: people want housing policies that reflect diverse living options, not just the cookie-cutter suburban model.

The consultation summary revealed several significant wins for the tiny home movement. Many called for the policy to cover more than just standalone granny flats, highlighting the potential of tiny homes, whether on wheels or as semi-permanent structures. The current requirement tying small dwellings to a larger primary home on the same site was another major sticking point. Submitters argued for more independence, suggesting tiny homes should be

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allowed to stand alone or share larger properties without needing a “Main” house nearby. Tiny homes were also celebrated for their affordability and flexibility. Submissions pointed out how they can provide homeowners with greater control over their living arrangements while significantly reducing costs.

For Māori housing, the potential benefits were particularly noteworthy. Current restrictions on whenua land often make it difficult to provide for multigenerational living or culturally significant housing arrangements. Tiny homes offer an innovative and cost-effective solution to address these challenges, and the consultation highlighted their ability to better support these outcomes.

MBIE (Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment) is now working on refining the proposals based on public feedback, with changes to the Building Act and new National Environmental Standards expected to come into effect in Mid-2025.

While this won't solve all the challenges tiny home advocates face, it's a clear step in the right direction. In the meantime, MBIE will be preparing guidance materials to help Kiwis understand and implement the changes when they become law.

This reform may not yet be a magic fix, but it represents progress. Tiny homes are finally being recognised as a real and necessary part of Aotearoa's housing landscape.

The fight isn't over—there's still work to do to ensure tiny homes are fully incorporated into district plans and given the flexibility they deserve—but this milestone is worth celebrating.

It's a reminder that persistence pays off. Change is coming, and tiny homes are one step closer to becoming a practical and widely accepted housing option.

So, let's raise a (tiny) toast to this milestone and keep dreaming big about living small. The future for tiny homes in New Zealand is looking brighter.

For a detailed look at the public feedback on the proposed changes, **[you can view the full Granny Flat Reform Submission Report here.](#)**

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Tiny House Hub



DON'T BE THIS PERSON

THE LAWN-MOWING DEAL THAT SPIRALED INTO A LEGAL NIGHTMARE

By Sharla May – *Tiny House Hub*

Leasing land for your tiny house is supposed to be the start of something amazing—a fresh, simple lifestyle that’s full of possibilities. But here’s the hard truth: without a proper agreement, what starts as a dream can quickly turn into a nightmare. Over the years, we’ve heard so many horror stories from people who thought a handshake deal would do the trick, only to find themselves stuck in toxic, stressful situation.

Take the landowner who swapped a land lease in exchange for a bit of lawn mowing and help maintaining the section. The tenant was all smiles at the start, saying how much they loved mowing. But as soon after moving in, the story changed. Suddenly, they felt too unwell to do the work, and the property was left to grow wild. What was once a casual verbal arrangement turned into a broken agreement and a big legal headache to evict them from the land.

Arrangements like exchanging labour for rent may sound appealing at first. They seem simple, fair, and a win-win for both parties. But as many have discovered, they can be a recipe for disaster. Situations change—illness, injury, or differing perceptions of the arrangement can leave both landowners and tenants frustrated and at odds. Without a written agreement, disputes can quickly escalate.

One way to avoid this potential pitfall is to reconsider the labour-for-rent approach altogether. Instead of relying on verbal promises and goodwill, it can be far more practical to charge a straightforward weekly rent. The money collected can then be used to hire a professional gardener or maintenance worker, ensuring the work is done consistently and to an acceptable standard. Not only does this eliminate misunderstandings and unmet expectations, but it also keeps the relationship between tenant and landowner focused on the lease itself, rather than additional obligations.

Everyone knows what they're responsible for, and the stress of micromanaging tasks is taken off the table. And then there's the heartbreaking case of a couple left homeless after a dispute over the tiny house on leased land. Despite all their planning and effort, a disagreement with the landowner spiralled out of control, leaving the couple homeless, with no place to go and their dream Tiny House life in shambles. These situations are a harsh reminder of how quickly things can fall apart when expectations aren't clearly spelled out and disagreements happen.

Family arrangements can feel like the safest option when it comes to leasing land for your tiny house. After all, who wouldn't trust their own family? But when emotions run high and a disagreement escalates, things can go south fast. We've seen situations where a family feud leads to someone being told to pack up their tiny house and leave, often with no warning. The sense of betrayal and stress from being uprooted so suddenly is devastating, especially when there's no written agreement to fall back on. These situations show that, even with family, clear terms and protections are essential to ensure everyone is on the same page and disputes don't leave someone homeless.

Even friendship isn't bulletproof. One tiny house owner split land with a friend, thinking it would be smooth sailing. But even the best friendships can be tested when money and living arrangements are involved. We've heard of situations where friends lease land to each other for a tiny house, only for misunderstandings or unmet expectations to sour the relationship. Whether it's disagreements over boundaries, maintenance, or lifestyle differences, things can escalate quickly. In one case, a simple dispute over noise and visitors turned into a full-blown fight, with the tenant being told to move their tiny house with little notice. The friendship? Left in ruins.

These stories all have one thing in common: a lack of a solid, written agreement, with clear expectations. In New Zealand, if you're leasing land for your tiny house, you're not covered by the Residential Tenancies Act, it specifically says - This Act shall not apply in the following cases: where the premises comprise bare land (with or without facilities) on which the tenant has the right under the tenancy agreement to place or erect a mobile home, caravan, or other means of shelter. That's why it's so important to set everything out in writing before you even park your tiny house.

A written land lease isn't just paperwork—it's your legal safety net. It lays out everything you need to know, like who's responsible for what, how much rent needs to be paid, and what happens if things go pear-shaped. Without it, you're relying on good intentions, and we all know how quickly those can fade when money or stress is involved. The great thing is, putting a lease together doesn't have to be a mission. Templates from Tiny House Hub make it easy to cover all your bases, from rent and maintenance to dispute resolution. It's a small investment for a whole lot of peace of mind. We Kiwis are all about giving it a go, but when it comes to leasing land for your tiny house, you've got to protect yourself. A good lease isn't just about avoiding trouble—it's about building trust and setting the foundation for a great relationship between landowners and tiny house owners.

If you're unsure where to start, grab our free guide, "[Am I Covered by the Tenancy Act When Leasing Land for My Tiny House on Wheels?](#)" It's packed with everything you need to know to lease land like a pro and avoid the dramas that come with winging it.



NINE TIMES OUT OF TEN IT LOOKS TACKY: INTERIOR DESIGNERS ARE SHARING THEIR HONEST TAKES ABOUT TINY HOUSE DESIGN TRENDS

Tiny homes promise simplicity, sustainability, and a chance to focus on what truly matters. But let's be real: not every design decision in the tiny house world is a winner. Interior designers are spilling the tea on some popular trends, and their insights are as eye-opening as they are practical.

Take barn doors, for example. Sure, they're the wow factor of some tiny house enthusiasts, praised for their space-saving charm. But let's face it—they're everywhere. Overusing them can make your space look like it's auditioning for a farmhouse-themed reality show. "While barn doors are practical, they often clash with modern or minimalist interiors," says interior designer Sophie Patel. "Pocket doors or sleek sliding panels offer the same functionality without feeling overdone." And then there's the accent wall craze. Who doesn't love a bold, statement-making mural or some eye-catching wallpaper? But in a tiny house, it's easy to cross the line from stylish to sensory overload. "The key is balance," advises

designer Liam Hart. "A stunning accent wall can be the star of the show, but it needs a supporting cast of neutral tones to keep the space feeling calm and cohesive."

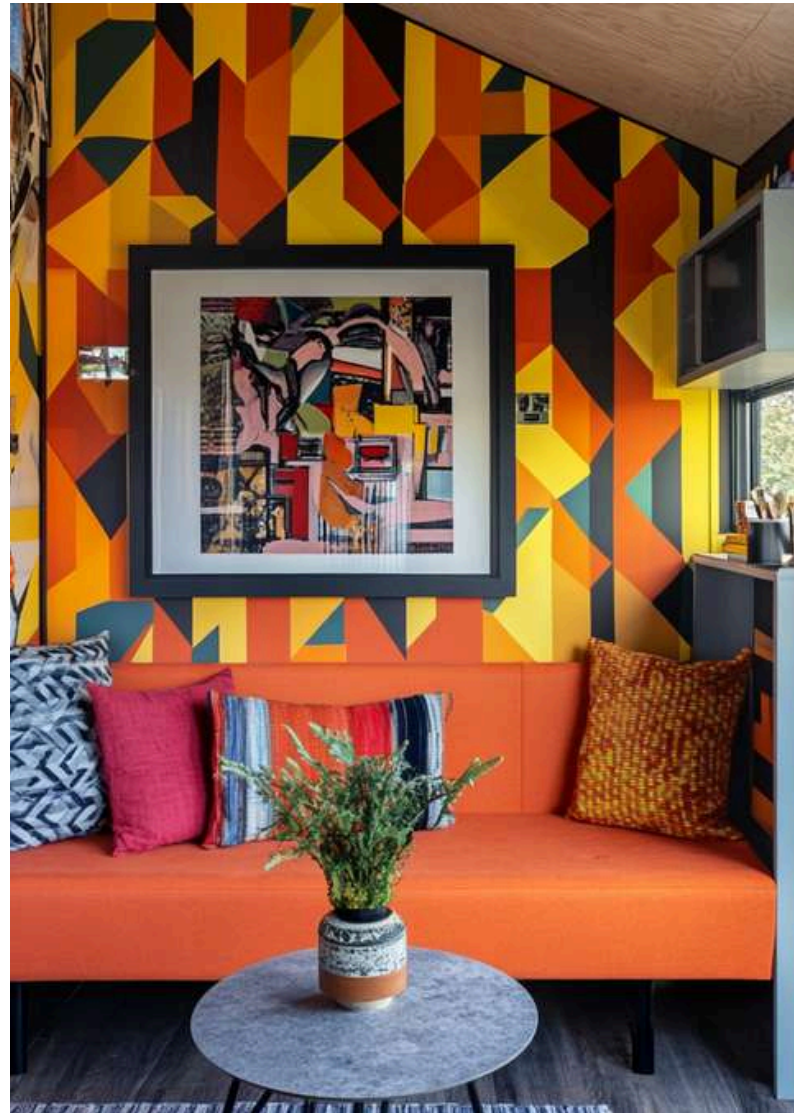
Speaking of trends that can go overboard, let's talk industrial vibes. Exposed pipes and Edison bulbs have their charm, but too much industrial can make your tiny house feel more like a warehouse than a warm, inviting home. "There's a fine line between chic and overbearing," explains designer Emily Ross. "Blending industrial elements with softer textures and natural materials can create a space that's both edgy and cosy."

Now, let's get real about those "Pinterest-perfect" designs. Floating shelves, anyone? They look amazing in photos, but in the real world of tiny living, they often sacrifice precious storage space. "Floating shelves are a classic case of form over function," says Patel. "In a tiny house, every inch matters, and you need storage solutions that work as hard as they look good." Minimalism is another

cornerstone of tiny living, but going too minimal can leave your space feeling more sterile than serene. "A home, no matter the size, should reflect your personality," says Hart. "Add some flair with artwork, a few plants, or a cosy throw blanket. It's those little touches that make a tiny house feel like a big deal."

And let's not forget functionality. In a tiny house, multitasking furniture is your best friend. "A well-designed pull-out couch or a hidden dining table can make a significant difference in usability without sacrificing style," says Ross. "Custom furniture that maximises space is often worth the investment."

Here's the bottom line: trends are fun, but your tiny house should be as unique as you are. "A timeless design sprinkled with a few trendy touches will always outshine a space that tries too hard to be 'in,'" says Patel. Interior designers agree: the best tiny homes blend form and function in a way that feels personal and authentic.



The tiny house movement is all about embracing innovation and community, and there's so much to celebrate. Yes, there are challenges—designing small spaces is no easy feat. But with creativity, intention, and a dash of personality, your tiny house can be a masterpiece that's both stylish and liveable. After all, good design isn't just about how a space looks—it's about how it makes you feel. And when you get it right, there's nothing tacky about that.

Leasing land for a tiny?

Protect your interests with a land lease agreement by the Tiny House Hub

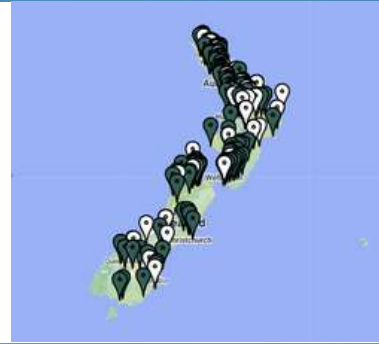
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 **Tiny House Hub**



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NEW

LAND FOR LEASE



Tiny House Land Opportunity in Whangārei



WHANGĀREI

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

 \$140 per week

- **Available:** March/April
- **Site foundation:** Metal
- **Driveway foundation:** Metal
- **Water connection:** No
- **Power connection:** No
- **Off-street parking:** Yes
- **Pets:** Yes
- **Child Friendly:** No
- **Smokers:** No
- **WiFi connection:** No
- **Private location:** Yes

Looking for a peaceful, long-term site for your road-legal tiny house on wheels?

This private, north-east-facing site offers rural views, morning sun, and a tranquil setting near the end of a no-exit road. Just 5 minutes from Whangārei CBD, it combines convenience with serenity. Ideal for a single woman or couple who values clean, healthy living, privacy, and reliable tenancy. Pets welcome (dogs must be contained). Smoking/vaping and children-free.

Expressions of interest are open—share your details, timeline, and tiny house info to secure this spot!

NEW

LOOKING FOR LAND

Doc looking for tiny home parking spot



HAMILTON

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Looking for:

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

Hi, I'm Chloe, a doctor moving to Waikato in January for work at Waikato Hospital.

I'm seeking a pet-friendly site for my off-grid tiny home, as I have two small, well-behaved dogs. A spot with water access is preferred, and power is a bonus, though I have solar.

I've loved off-grid living in Dunedin for the past year and am committed to a sustainable lifestyle. I'm quiet, respectful, and will treat your land as my own.

If you have a suitable site, I'd love to connect and discuss how I can fit into your space!



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