
IF WE NEED HOUSES – WHY DO WE BUILD SILOS?

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An increasingly common refrain amongst commentators and policy makers is that Auckland faces a deepening housing crisis¹. Innovation and an increase in our productivity are heralded as solutions to this challenge. However, the reality is that we face an uphill struggle to break free from our 'business as usual' shackles.

Using lessons learned from a case study of a recent Off Site Manufactured house build project at Hobsonville, this paper explores the disconnect between many of the professions in the building industry – from planning and design through to engineering and construction. Many of the actors involved in residential construction operate within relatively isolated silos. Not enough thought is given to the impact that seemingly small decisions in one area can have on final building costs, performance and timeframes. Not only is this industry wide disconnect causing time, cost and construction delays – but it is so ingrained that it is simply 'accepted' as the way we build houses.

Solutions are harder still – and this paper does not pretend to have the answers, but a critical awareness of the scale of the challenge and reframing us to have a more holistic view of the development process may assist us in unlocking some of the present roadblocks to better housing for New Zealand.

References:

Auckland City Council, 2013 The Auckland Plan,
<http://theplan.theaucklandplan.govt.nz/aucklands-housing/>

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¹ <http://theplan.theaucklandplan.govt.nz/aucklands-housing/>