

# Leaky buildings: where the parties stand



## ROTTING HOMES

### LABOUR

Rejected a full independent inquiry because it would take too long. Instead, it asked the government administration select committee to inquire into the concerns raised in the Building Industry Authority report. Its terms of reference include looking at the level of detail about weathertightness provided with building consent applications, the inspection regime, the split responsibility of building certifiers and territorial authorities, the decline in building industry skills and any other matters. The Government does not believe it is liable and says it should not have to pay compensation. It has advised affected homeowners to pursue the matter through the courts.

### NATIONAL

Has called for a full, independent inquiry. If it cannot get that, National believes the terms of reference for the select committee inquiry should be broadened to include questions about liability and health. It also wants the select committee to hold hearings in Auckland, where most affected homeowners live. National has suggested setting up a fast-track dispute resolution panel whose findings would be binding on both parties to avoid costly, time-consuming court cases.

### NEW ZEALAND FIRST

Believes the problem is of such a magnitude that only a full independent inquiry can resolve it. NZ First believes the terms of reference for the inquiry must be specific enough to allow the process to be thorough but speedy. The party believes a full inquiry would take only six months if the terms of reference were specific enough.

### ACT

Had asked the commerce select committee to hold an inquiry, but the Government opted for the government administration committee. Act believes a full public inquiry would be too expensive and time-consuming. A select committee hearing would have the power to require ministers to front up and could start immediately. Act would like to see the committee specifically address the issue of compensation.

### GREENS

Support the need for an inquiry but agree with the Government that a Royal Commission would take far too long. The party questions whether the government administration committee should carry out the inquiry, because it has only five members from Labour and National. It suggests a special committee with representatives from all political parties. The terms of reference need to be expanded to look at liability.

### UNITED FUTURE

Internal Affairs spokesman Marc Alexander believes the Government should help families affected by leaks and rot in the short-term by allocating money from the Consolidated Fund in the form of suspensory loans so people can afford much-needed repairs immediately. The money could be recovered from those held ultimately responsible. Mr Alexander believes there is a need for a small, limited-scope, Government inquiry, focusing on liability. He says that at first glance, it seems the builders responsible for constructing the homes and the local authorities which

The questions of liability and compensation for owners of leaky homes head the list of concerns raised by parties outside the Government.



PICTURE / GLENN JEFFREY

## HAVE YOUR SAY

Submissions to the select committee inquiry on leaky buildings close on October 21. Information is available from the committee on (04) 470-6752. Guidance on making submissions can be found at [www.clerk.govt.nz](http://www.clerk.govt.nz)

## Repairs taking 11 months

Repairs at one of Auckland's biggest leaky building developments, Summerfield Villas in Grey Lynn, are expected to last almost a year.

Builders yesterday removed rotting canopies from the two-year-old apartments at the corner of Sackville St and Richmond Rd.

John Clemas-Williams, who handles residents' concerns for developer David Gaze, said work on the 93 units had begun in February and was expected to last until Christmas.

He said water was leaking through the rooftop parapet flashings between apartments and rotting the timber wall framing below for up to half a metre either side. However, the building's structure is sound.