

Eco Design Advisor

Customer Survey Results - *Summary*

Years 2014-2015

The Eco Design Service was established in 2006. It was initiated by BRANZ Ltd in response to the need for well-targeted, independent, personalised, and expert information on environmental-building available for residents, designers/architects, builders and building industry. The Eco Design Advisor service has provided expert advice, at no charge, on how to best use energy, water and materials on home improvement, building and renovation projects, to ensure better use is made of resources. A free two-hour eco-design visit is offered to residents of Auckland, Hamilton, Palmerston North, Kapiti Coast, Hutt, Nelson and Invercargill. Free phone and email advice is available in another five centres.

Methodology:

- Third survey in this series; held every 2 years (previously 2013 and 2011).
- 698 customers were asked to participate in the 2015 survey, 253 responses were received. The response rate was 36%.
- 95% confidence level and 5 per cent margin of error for the population size (698).
- 35% respondents from Auckland.

Participant Characteristics:

- 61% of respondents were female.
- 53% of respondents were aged between 40 and 64 years (middle-age group). Senior respondents (65+) at 23%. 25 to 39 years were 22%.
- 82% 'Pakeha', 7% 'Maori', 3% 'Asian', 1% 'Pacific Islander', 6% Other.
- 90% Retrofit or renovation.

Summary of Findings

"I think it is a fantastic service & we have recommended it to many family & friends. [The Advisor] was wonderful & had some great suggestions which we have implemented."

This respondent statement sums up well the overall perception and impact of the service, as reflected in the survey results.

In general, respondents find the service very useful, promote it by word of mouth (the highest form of endorsement) and implement the advice given.

"Energy efficiency" features as the top motivation for using the service, followed by a "warm house". 73% of respondents found the service very useful, curtains/blinds, ceiling and/or underfloor insulation and home heating being the most useful advice given.

88% of respondents made direct changes as a result of the advice within 2 years of the visit, including curtains/blinds (40%), installing ceiling insulation (38%) and draught proofing (36%). Respondents also intended to make further changes, suggesting the advice given changes the long term understanding of home performance.

94% of respondents also changed their behaviour as a result of the advice given. 43% now close curtains prior to sunset, 32% dry clothes outside and 27% turn off lights when leaving the room.

As a result, the respondents feel they have benefitted in the following ways: 55% said it was a warmer house, 40% felt the house was more comfortable to live in, 30% had less mould/moisture in house and 23% had lower water/energy use/bills.

Nearly 4 in 10 found no obstacles to implementing the advice; however for those that did find an obstacle, cost of products/services was the main barrier (45%).

Promoting the service more widely was seen as the major way to improve the service, with 25% hearing about it through word of mouth.

The 2015 survey reinforces earlier results and confirms with high probability that the EDA service provides a high quality, customer-centric experience, which results in both high levels of user intervention and behaviour change. The service delivers across a range of Council, regional and local board aspirations and plans. The programme could benefit from further promotion and capacity.

Statistical Summary

Top 4 motivations for using the EDA service

- 75% Energy efficient house
- 73% Warm house
- 46% Reducing running costs
- 26% Reduce environmental impact

Usefulness of EDA service

- 73% Service very useful
- 22% Useful

Most useful advice

- 60% Curtains/blinds
- 59% Ceiling and/or underfloor insulation
- 50% Home heating
- 44% Ventilation/causes of moisture
- 40% Draught proofing doors and windows
- 37% Double/secondary glazing

Usefulness of Information (materials)

- 59% Very useful
- 37% Useful

Changes made as a result of advice (more than one choice possible)

- 88% Undertook some changes
- 40% Curtains/drapes/roman blinds
- 38% Ceiling insulation

- 36% draught proofing doors and windows

Changes respondents intend to make as a result of advice (more than one choice possible)

- 14% Ceiling insulation
- 14% Curtains/drapes/roman blinds
- 13% Vapour barrier/polythene groundsheet
- 13% Underfloor insulation

Changes to behaviour as a result of advice

- 43% Close curtains prior to sunset
- 32% Dry clothes outside
- 31% Use windows/doors to vent rooms
- 27% Turn off lights when leaving room
- 26% Turn off appliances at wall
- 25% Use extractor fans
- 20% Limit shower time

Benefits received as a result of advice

- 55% Warmer house
- 40% Feels more comfortable to live in
- 30% Less mould/moisture in house
- 23% Lower water/energy use/bills

Obstacles to implementing advice

- 37% No obstacles

Of those that indicated an obstacle

- 45% Cost of products/systems
- 12% Sourcing products/services
- 11% Finding suitable tradespeople

Finding out about the service

- 23% Word of mouth
- 16% Show/presentation
- 15% Council staff
- 12% Council publication
- 10% Media article
- 10% Council website

Improvements to the Programme

- In 2 main categories: promoting the service and improving the service.
- *“Make the service better known. The information is practical, beneficial and free. Every home owner should know about it.”*
- *“Promote it! This is a fabulous service, but I don't think many people know about it. I only stumbled across it by chance”*
- *“The challenge is that it is not a product like gold plated taps that makes others envious. A house built or changed as a result of eco advice needs to advertise the fact and make it a desirable feature - perhaps gold, silver or bronze stars on the letter box depending on the overall uptake and performance.”*
- Further topics that should be added to the programme included: food production/community gardens (57 responses), Civil Defence (25), Community resilience (21)

This summary is an extract from the **Eco Design Advisor Customer Survey Results Report** for Years 2014-2015. Full results at www.ecodesignadvisor.org.nz.

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