



# research, renovate, recycle



Renovating a house is a huge undertaking, with many plans and decisions to be made.

Until fairly recently, considering what happens to the waste materials that get ripped out hasn't been much of a priority for builders or homeowners. This is a fact clearly demonstrated by the huge amount of waste the industry contributes to our landfills – a hefty 17%. Happily, this state of affairs is changing, with the emergence of more recycling operators and a growing awareness among builders and home renovators of waste-reducing measures. Did you know that with a little research and some planning, you could reduce the load in your skip by a whopping 60%?

So, where to start? For sound advice and practical tips, take a look at [www.rebri.org.nz](http://www.rebri.org.nz), the website of Resource Efficiency in the Building and Related Industries. One of

the first suggestions it makes is really a call to action. It asks you to make a conscious decision to re-use and recycle as much of your waste material as possible, and to incorporate this ideal as an integral part of your renovation plans.

Firstly, it suggests, discuss things with your builder and make it clear you care about the environment and the ever-increasing landfills. Once that is established, your next job is to make an inventory of all the types and quantities of materials that you might be able to recycle. You'll be surprised at quite how much can be salvaged.

Concrete can be crushed and used as hardfill. Brick can be re-used, or crushed and used as landscape cover or fill. Asphalt can be recycled. Wood – depending on whether it

has been treated or not – can be recycled, re-used or sold as firewood. Windows and doors can be re-used. Metal can be separated for recycling or re-using. And electrical and plumbing fixtures can be re-used.

Have a look on [www.trademe.co.nz](http://www.trademe.co.nz), under building and renovation, for a taste of what people salvage. It's all there, from ranchsliders to bags of door hinges. Clearly, though, only so much can be sold that way; for the majority, you will need to approach a waste recycling company.

An efficient way of finding the right one of these is through [www.ronz.org.nz](http://www.ronz.org.nz), the website of the Recycling Operators of New Zealand. It holds directories of recycling operators for the Auckland area, Hamilton and Christchurch. Simple drop-down menus allow you to search under material type and then match this with a service provider.

You can also make use of waste exchanges, which match new end users of materials with those who wish to dispose of them free of charge. There are 14 of these in the New Zealand – log on to [www.wasteexchange.org.nz](http://www.wasteexchange.org.nz) to find the one closest to you.

Once you know what you can rescue out of the process, ensure you've got somewhere safe and dry to store your salvaged items as your renovation gets under way. Planning is essential here; make sure you know where and how each material will be stored until it can be sold or passed on to a recycling operator.

Debbie and Steve Irwin completed a total renovation of their 1920s bungalow last year and worked hard to reuse or recycle as much of the waste material as possible.

"My builder was extremely helpful and gave us lots of advice on what we could sell or re-use. We were amazed at how much we sold on Trademe – our old chimney bricks and window frames, for example. Our old timber was untreated, so we sold that as firewood with an advert in Trade and Exchange and even put a notice out on the street one weekend, which worked a treat," Debbie explains. "It was great, too, that we could use our old roof tiles as backfill in the garden, which saved us time and money."

Before demolishing any part of your building, consider whether it could be deconstructed. This is generally kinder to the environment and may net you a surprising dividend, as Debbie and Steve found out.

"Instead of demolishing our worn and weary aluminum conservatory, we carefully dismantled it and sold it through the Herald to a guy who carted the lot off in his truck for use at his bach. We were \$800 better off," Debbie enthuses.

At the end of their renovations, they also made use of their local Resene PaintWise collection centre to recycle the many empty paint containers they had accrued. More than 40 Resene ColorShops will accept any unwanted paint or paint containers, no matter what the brand (a small charge applies for non-Resene paint and trade).

So, in a nutshell, treat the fabric of your house just like you might do your contents. Re-sell, recycle, re-use, give to your community, or dispose of responsibly. The environment certainly benefits and so will your pocket. **H**



For more information on the Resene Paintwise service see [www.resene.co.nz/paintwise.htm](http://www.resene.co.nz/paintwise.htm).

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