

News Release

For release: 25 September 2019

Smart Sheep Set for School Trial

A smart sheep, whose horns unfurl and nose turns blue when a room is cold and damp, is helping students at an Auckland school understand the benefits of healthy homes.

Mr Humfreez, a model sheep with hygroscopic horns and a nose painted with thermochromic ink, is the centrepiece of a trial led by Dale Bailey, a former Director of Collections Research and Learning at Te Papa.

Mr Humfreez's horns point upwards when the relative humidity level exceeds 65% and his nose turns blue when the temperature drops below 18°C - standards set by the World Health Organisation for a healthy home.

"In New Zealand we're a little in denial about just how cold our climate gets, preferring to tough it out. Through Mr Humfreez we hope to get Kiwi kids thinking more about the climate we live in and how that impacts our homes," says Mr Bailey.

Mr Humfreez was recently enrolled in Hub 12 at Stonefields School and will stay there for a month. If successful, the vision is for Mr Humfreez to become part of a healthy homes curriculum module that can be rolled out in classrooms nationwide.

"Mr Humfreez helps children learn about science, technology and design as well as what makes a home healthy," Mr Bailey says. "When that happens, they're more likely to go home and have a discussion with their parents about what they learnt."

Sam Archer, Director of Market Transformation at the New Zealand Green Building Council, says innovations like Mr Humfreez makes the cold and damp homes visible so people can take action.

"New Zealand winters are cold and we have lots of old, draughty villas yet almost half, 47% of all homes still lack adequate levels of insulation," Mr Archer says.

"We're often unaware there's a problem because we can't always see it."

The development of Mr Humfreez was commissioned and supported by ANZ as part of its drive to improve the health of Kiwi homes.

ANZ Managing Director, Retail and Business Banking, Ben Kelleher says: "Our research told us 59% of people didn't know what level of humidity is healthy so we know a greater awareness of what constitutes a healthy home is needed.

"We're committed to helping Kiwis enjoy healthier homes and believe Mr Humfreez can help us do that. We've already created a range of initiatives such as a \$5,000 interest free home loan top-up for heat pumps and insulation and pledged \$100 million of this interest-free lending to help warm up Kiwi homes."

Mr Humfreez is the latest in a range of ANZ initiatives to help Kiwis into healthier homes.

For more information and to register for the chance to get one of the first 100 Mr Humfreez, visit the [ANZ Healthy Homes website](#).

Who is Mr Humfreez?

Mr Humfreez is a sheep, powered by nature and sustainably made using Canadian wood, New Zealand wool and ink. He was created by Professor David Correa and his team from the University of Waterloo in Canada.

His hygroscopic horns absorb moisture and fully uncurl when the relative humidity level exceeds 65%. His nose is painted with thermochromic ink that turns blue when the temperature drops below 18°C - standards set by the World Health Organisation for a healthy home.

ANZ has developed an initial 100 Mr Humfreez to give away and plans to produce more for next winter. Visit anz.co.nz/healthyhomes for more information.

What is hygroscopic wood?

Wood is a naturally hygroscopic material, which means it takes on and gives off water to balance out with its surrounding environment.

What is thermochromic ink?

Thermochromic ink is a type of dye that changes colour when temperatures increase or decrease and is often used in thermometers.

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