

Research Investment Strategy

Ten-year horizon to 2035

Driving the changes we need





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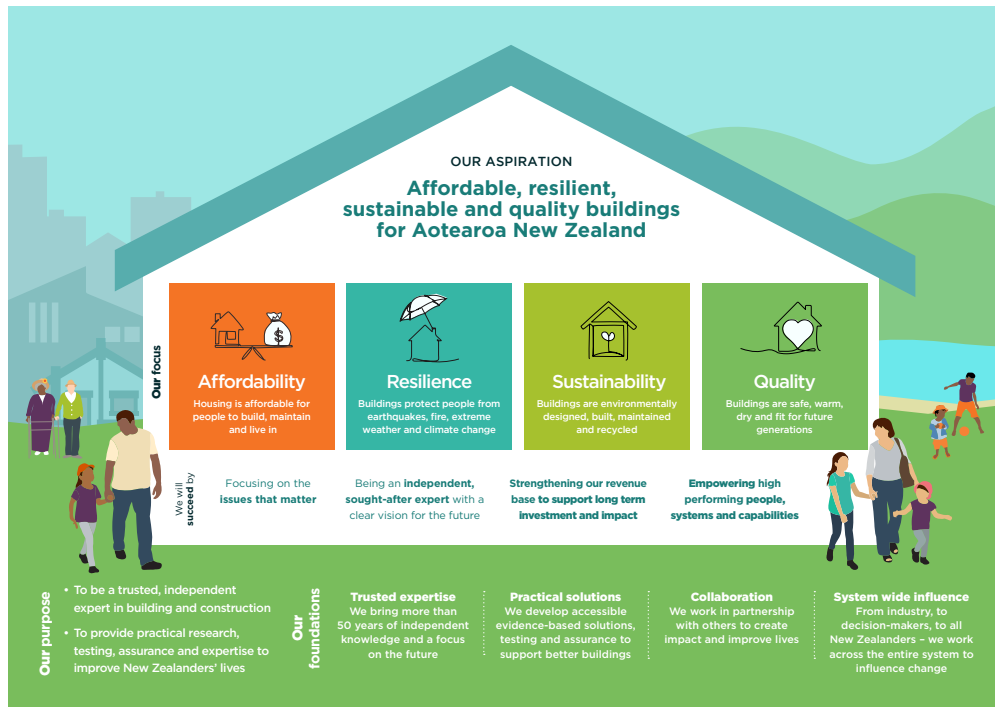
Our aspiration:
Affordable, **resilient**,
sustainable and **quality**
 buildings for Aotearoa
 New Zealand



A message from our CEO

Working together and investing for success

At BRANZ, our pūtake – the reason we exist – is to invest in practical research that has a positive impact on Aotearoa New Zealand’s building and construction industry.



For nearly 60 years, BRANZ has prudently managed the Building Research Levy (Levy), driving practical research to positively impact the building and construction sector. The Levy is our key lever for creating impactful change and achieving BRANZ’s overarching aspiration of ‘affordable, resilient, sustainable and quality buildings for Aotearoa New Zealand’.

Our team, together with our collaborative partners, are working to assist the sector to deliver better buildings that improve New Zealanders’ lives. It is as simple – and as complex – as that.

The big four

Earlier this year, BRANZ unveiled the four focus areas, also referred to as sector priorities, that will guide our work over the next decade: Affordability, resilience, sustainability and quality.

None of these are new areas or will come as a surprise, because the problems themselves aren’t new – they are complex and multi-faceted and require focus and hard work to shift.

BRANZ is not coming from a standing start. We have nearly 60 years of data, research, insights in hand which will continue to be used and accumulate over time as science is always evolving. However, in setting and clearly articulating these focus areas, BRANZ has renewed clarity around where our work can make the biggest impact.



Aligning investment with outcomes

With the focus areas established, BRANZ has turned its attention to how we invest for success.

After gathering insights from a range of sources from both the building and construction and research sectors, we have developed this portfolio-focused Research Investment Strategy.

We've carefully considered the challenges of affordability, resilience, sustainability and quality, creating a robust matrix of outcomes, goals and objectives that will drive our investment in research programmes and those of our collaborative partners over the next decade.

This Research Investment Strategy outlines our approach to identifying issues, making informed investment decisions, and tracking the research portfolio to ensure balance across all four focus areas and to deliver optimal outcomes. While we already have good investment process systems in place, this strategy enhances them further including through the appointment of a new Research Investment Advisory Group who will assess all research proposals received to support decision-making.

In short, this strategy provides a clear overview of BRANZ's approach to prudently invest the Building Research Levy. It will guide the development of BRANZ's annual Research Investment Priorities, signalling the requirements for each funding round. Each year, BRANZ will assess the portfolio and tailor funding to advance excellent research with impact, address knowledge gaps that help solve real-world issues.

The power of collaboration

All this work does not occur in a vacuum. At BRANZ, we deeply value the wide range of organisations and people we collaborate with every day, across the sector and within the research community.

The building and construction sector may be facing many difficult challenges, but there are dedicated people who – along with BRANZ – are working towards solving them.

Our research community and the industry share a common goal, to make buildings affordable, of better quality and more sustainable and resilient for everyone who calls Aotearoa New Zealand home. BRANZ, through this Research Investment Strategy, with our collaborators, is creating that change.

Ngā mihi nui



Chief Executive

Claire Falck

July 2025



The Research Investment Strategy

A clear purpose

BRANZ has developed this Research Investment Strategy to guide and streamline the research investment processes that underpin the four focus areas.

This strategy provides a framework where clearly articulated research investment outcomes, goals and objectives will guide the investment signals for our annual funding rounds.

A robust development process

In developing this strategy, BRANZ drew from our extensive horizon-scanning and engagement with researchers, industry representatives, and regulators in the building and construction sector.

We considered industry insights received from our regular meetings with the Building Research Advisory Council (BRAC) and held workshops across relevant research domains.

A focus on outcomes

This strategy outlines outcomes, goals and objectives, providing a ten-year perspective to direct our annual investment signals and highlight the most critical issues to support.

As one of BRANZ's key corporate documents, the Research Investment Strategy is designed to inform all our stakeholders of our intentions. Outlining our Levy investment plans, it shines a light on BRANZ's ambitious ten-year research investment trajectory to drive positive change across the building and construction industry.

Our unique research investment role

BRANZ supports the building and construction sector in myriad ways through investment and careful stewardship of the Levy:

- We *invest* in practical research directly relevant to the building and construction sector, ensuring outcomes will have knowledge, societal and/or enterprise impact for the sector.
- We *invest* in real-life outcomes that connect us with collaborators and stakeholders in design, building, construction, and regulation, supporting better decision-making across the life cycle of our buildings.
- We *seek* partnerships with co-investors to maximise the benefit and impact of our collective research investment.
- We *invest* in capabilities and infrastructure to support broader research investment in the building and construction sector.
- We *foster* exceptional individual students and researchers at all career stages and cultivate research independence with robust peer review processes.

For all our stakeholders

This strategy has been prepared for all of our stakeholders, from regulators, consenting authorities, councils and government agencies. It offers essential guidance on our funding priorities for our research staff, collaborators, and scholars.

Finally, this Research Investment Strategy is for the building and construction sector as a whole, to clearly illustrate BRANZ's focus on the issues that matter most.



Investing the Levy

We invest the Levy through three research investment functions:

- BRANZ-led research;
- Collaborator-led research; and
- Scholarships, that supports future researchers and leaders in the building and construction sector.

Our main investment mechanism is an annual funding round for BRANZ-led research, collaborator-led research and scholarships. From time to time, we also offer 'out-of-cycle' funding for one-off projects to respond to urgent and emerging issues from the industry.

These investment functions and mechanisms are implemented through a robust process by the following groups, working hand in hand to deliver real, lasting benefits for the building sector and all New Zealanders.

Subject Matter Experts

Our annual funding round for collaborator-led research and scholarships consists of two stages: Concept and Full Proposal.

Concepts are reviewed by subject matter experts, selected for their expertise that aligns with our annual investment signals. This panel includes BRANZ staff and independent experts from across Aotearoa New Zealand, ensuring a thorough assessment process managed by our Research Investment Team.

Research Investment Advisory Group

Full proposals are reviewed by our independent Research Investment Advisory Group (RIAG), which includes science experts, iwi representatives, industry and members of the Building Research Advisory Council (BRAC). They evaluate shortlisted research and scholarship proposals with a long-term, cross-portfolio perspective, ensuring a balanced investment across all four focus areas to achieve our strategic goals.

The Board

The BRANZ Inc. Board sets the strategic portfolio balance and associated budget for research investment of the Levy. They make the final decisions on our research investments and allocate the Levy across the portfolio based on RIAG's advice.

The Research Investment Team

This dedicated team ensures the fair allocation, contracting, monitoring and evaluation of our research investments and its impact. They play an important role in the coordination, facilitation and advice to both the subject matter expert panel and the RIAG. The team also provides advice to senior leadership and Board around balancing the investment portfolio according to the annual investment signals. Serving as the primary link between BRANZ research staff, collaborators and industry, they effectively administer the Levy to benefit all New Zealanders.



A laser focus on what matters most

Research Investment Outcomes, Goals and Objectives

As stewards of the Levy, BRANZ understands the need to ensure that finite funds are invested fairly in research with a wide reach and maximum impact. Our choices matter. We have developed a clear framework of outcomes, goals and objectives that give us confidence that we can appropriately – and wisely – categorise and prioritise our research investment.

Title	Definition
Outcome	The desired changes and accomplishments or consequences we want to see in ten years – the why .
Goals	Our specific, measurable goals we aim to achieve in the medium-term – the what .
Objectives	Suggested approaches and research investigation we fund in the short, medium and long-term – the how .
Investment Signals	Specific topics relating to selected Objectives that are provided annually to clarify our research investment focus for any given year – not part of this document, but part of the annual Research Investment Priorities .

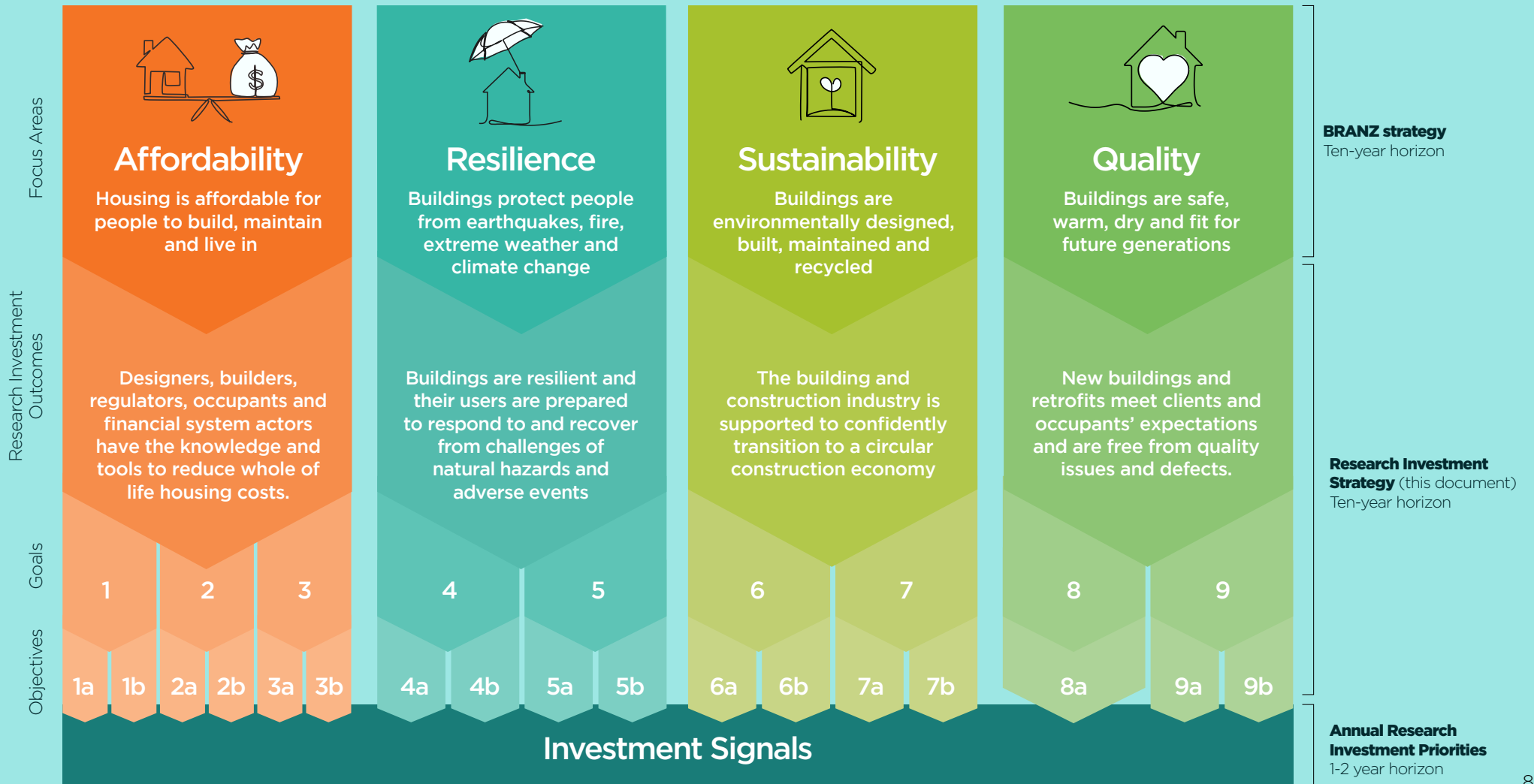
Research investment decisions are made ensuring that the outcomes strictly relate to affordability, sustainability, resilience and quality. In this way, BRANZ is confident that investment remains focused on the areas that will create the most value for Aotearoa New Zealand's building and construction sector.

The Why

This strategy outlines the key strategic investment trajectory of our Levy. If successful, we will have invested in research generating data, insights and impact, and in ten years we will have achieved the following four interconnected Research Investment Outcomes:



The line of sight





The What: Outcomes, Goals and Objectives

Every outcome needs a plan for how it can be reached or realised. The BRANZ approach to research investment in our four focus areas has now been codified with a road map of goals and objectives to support those outcomes.

The following research goals and objectives have been developed to guide our research investment in affordability, sustainability, resilience and quality over the next decade. Each goal is supported by multiple objectives that will help define the key research areas required to achieve the outcome in the longer-term.

While these goals and objectives are not yet prioritised, the BRANZ annual Research Investment Priorities will outline the objectives for that particular year and provide investment signals to clearly guide researchers seeking funding.



Affordability

Outcome Designers, builders, regulators, occupants and financial system actors have the knowledge and tools to reduce whole of life housing costs.

Goal 1	Tools and technologies are available and used to drive efficiencies and productivity gains across the building and construction system leading to more affordable solutions.
Objective 1a	Create relevant and interoperable models and data to complement and feed into the current Build Insights tool for coherent and confident decision-making in the sector.
Objective 1b	Explore and create practical incentives for new financial models that offer flexibility for developers, homeowners and tenants that lead to more affordable housing.
Goal 2	Key factors that contribute to total housing cost over the life of the home are understood and options for reducing these costs are developed.
Objective 2a	Deliver solutions that address the opportunities, costs and challenges of building and renovating more affordable homes.
Objective 2b	Offer approaches and solutions for reducing operational housing costs over time.
Goal 3	The different housing needs of our diverse population are understood, and solutions are tailored and delivered to meet these needs.
Objective 3a	Examine the national and regional impacts on housing affordability and different cultural expectations in Aotearoa New Zealand, identifying key issues, barriers, opportunities, and options.
Objective 3b	Explore models for building designers, developers and regulators to make informed choices about affordable current and future housing options (incl. renovation and maintenance).



Resilience

Outcome Harm to buildings arising from the range of natural hazards and adverse events is minimised to enable faster recovery.

Goal 4	Our buildings are designed and built to withstand the multi-hazard environment and minimise risk to occupants.
Objective 4a	Understand system-wide risks, develop and enable fit-for-purpose ways to protect property, maintain operational safety, improve resilience and reduce vulnerabilities (existing buildings).
Objective 4b	Deliver evidence, insights and/or solutions to support improved decision-making for 'building the right building in the right place' (new buildings).
Goal 5	Our buildings are repaired and rebuilt quickly, appropriately and cost-effectively to ensure social, community, and business continuity.
Objective 5a	Explore ways to reduce risk to people's property and support community response to protect buildings during and after events, ensuring recovery with minimal disruption.
Objective 5b	Investigate and develop approaches to help re-build, maintain and/or repair buildings after an event.



Sustainability

Outcome The building and construction industry can confidently transition to a circular construction economy and meet Aotearoa New Zealand's zero carbon goals.

Goal 6	The building and construction industry develops and adopts capabilities to support the transition to a circular construction economy.
Objective 6a	Develop and promote access to capabilities that enable industry, homeowners, and decision-makers to adopt low-carbon and circular construction practices.
Objective 6b	Support sector capabilities and initiatives, through evidence and guidance, that lead the transition to a circular construction economy.
Goal 7	Circular construction practices become integrated as standard across our building and construction industry.
Objective 7a	Investigate and deliver solutions (including those informed by mātauranga Māori) for low-carbon and circular construction practices within the building and construction sector.
Objective 7b	Measure and evaluate the adoption of low carbon and circular construction practices and solutions.



Quality

Outcome New buildings and retrofits meet clients and occupants' expectations and are free from quality issues and defects.

Goal 8	The building and construction industry has the capability and uses tools and technologies to deliver high quality buildings.
Objective 8a	Support the adoption of appropriate tools, technologies and construction practices to ensure quality issues are addressed and defects are eliminated.
Goal 9	Designers, developers and builders consistently deliver beyond regulatory requirements.
Objective 9a	Support and enable the uptake of tools and methodologies that enable the building and construction industry to deliver beyond regulatory requirements.
Objective 9b	Provide information and support to enable increased consumer demand for building quality.



The What: Our cross-cutting enablers

Given the interconnected nature of the issues faced by the sector, we evaluate broader research impacts to prevent investing in one area in isolation. Our aim is to also support research that emphasises learning from others, collaborating with iwi, regional, national and international partners and utilising open data and tools for maximum benefit, in line with our mandate.

The following five cross-cutting enablers will be considered in conjunction with our specific outcomes, goals and objectives:

1. Collaboration and co-funding

We invest in research that fosters collaboration among national and international researchers, policymakers, iwi, and industry. We support joint research funding and initiatives aimed at promoting excellence in building and construction materials and practices that benefit all New Zealanders and integrates international knowledge into the Aotearoa New Zealand context.

2. Impact and research excellence

We have an expectation that impact is considered before, during and after a research project. This ensures adoption of research through impact and change and includes available and easy-to-use tools. At BRANZ we have invested in a programme called Amplifying Research Impact (ARI) to enhance BRANZ capabilities to translate research findings into real-world impact. For BRANZ, research excellence covers two connected aspects, integral to all our investment. The first is about the right science solving the sector's key issues, resulting in practical solutions that have a positive impact now and into the future. The second is about creating new knowledge that is trusted and of high quality.

3. Te ao Māori lens

We continue to advance our te ao Māori journey - a key strategic aspiration. We want to build on our role as hosts of the Building Better Homes, Towns and Cities | Ko ngā wā kāinga hei whakamāhorahora National Science Challenge that finished in 2024, and the body of knowledge generated through this decade-long effort. We want to enhance our research and impact, fostering innovation and building authentic partnerships with Māori communities and organisations. To progress this aspiration, we invest in mātauranga Māori, where appropriate, to support our research investment and impact in the building and construction sector. We support mātauranga Māori informed approaches to enrich and diversify our reach and impact.

4. Capabilities

We invest in developing and strengthening current and future building research capabilities through research and initiatives, providing solutions, tools and support for the sector's workforce. This builds a strong talent pipeline for our future research leaders and delivers lasting impact for the building and construction sector.

5. Tools, data and infrastructure

We fund initiatives that utilise, develop, or innovate with data to support the building and construction industry. Our investments focus on research that creates tools for measuring, monitoring, and reporting on relevant initiatives to ensure system-wide impact and change. We apply the FAIR Data approach (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reuseable), inspired by the European Union Open Science Directive, to our research investments.



The How: Project assessment and balancing the portfolio

Now that we have a ten-year outlook of where we want to invest the Levy and the outcomes we want to achieve, it is crucial to get the research selection right. As outlined above, BRANZ has already got rigorous processes in place that will support the implementation of this strategy.

Project Assessment

Our Assessment Criteria will be our key tool for reviewing individual projects during our annual funding round.

At a project-level, our subject matter experts will use a set of Assessment Criteria when reviewing individual proposals. Those Assessment Criteria are:

- **Strategic alignment** – the research is aligned with the Outcomes, Goals and Objectives as well as some cross-cutting enablers of this Research Investment Strategy and with our specific annual investment signals outlined in the Research Investment Priorities.
- **Impact and value of research** – research findings translate into actionable outputs and outcomes with a defined benefits for the sector across Aotearoa New Zealand. There is clear evidence that the research has not been done before or does not duplicate efforts that could be adopted to the New Zealand context.
- **Research excellence** – high quality research fills important knowledge gaps, is well-conducted, innovative, where applicable, and makes significant contributions to our industry.
- **Delivery confidence** – the research team's capability, capacity and access to research facilities and data needed to conduct the proposed research is evident.

- **Inclusivity** – where applicable, research is conducted in a transdisciplinary way, with diversity of perspectives, considering Aotearoa New Zealand's unique culture and associated knowledge systems.
- **Partnering and co-funding** – Strong and evident commitment from partners by co-funding the research project. Proposals with investment partners will be prioritised. (Not applicable to scholars.)
- **Drive** – The students' personal drive to learn and grow is evident; they explore novel approaches and show commitment to solving the issues of the building and construction sector. (Only applicable to scholars.)

Balancing the portfolio

At a portfolio-level, BRANZ is tasked with balancing the overall portfolio, using the following Balancing Criteria:

- Strategic coverage across the four Research Investment Outcomes.
- Timing and phasing of research across the portfolio.
- Balance between incremental progress and high-risk, high-potential impact.
- Ensuring research impact is balanced across testing, measuring, data, insights, and action.
- Diversity of disciplines – transdisciplinary approach across expertise and people.

Both, Assessment and Balancing Criteria, will be our key tools going forward when making investment decisions across our research portfolio for the Levy.



On the right track - measures of success

We have developed success measures to support this overarching Research Investment Strategy:

- There are demonstrated and measurable shifts against the outcomes and goals in this strategy.
- Our research investment portfolio is appropriately balanced across the four outcomes (past, current, and into the future).
- We have transitioned to a research investment approach that takes a multiple-year lens on current and future investments.
- Others align their research investments with us, and we initiate and invest in research that is co-designed and delivered.

Call for collective action

With this Research Investment Strategy, we have set out a clear path to drive impact through the adoption of improved practices, tools and technologies. Ultimately this will support the building and construction sector to accelerate affordable, resilient, sustainable and quality buildings in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Our focus on whole of life housing cost, preparedness for adverse events, transitioning to a circular construction economy, and moving beyond regulatory requirements aligns with BRANZ's organisational strategy and global trends.

Strategic collaboration across industry, government and the research system in Aotearoa New Zealand, and with international partners, will be essential to unlock impact at scale. Looking ahead, sustained and targeted research investment will play a pivotal role in shaping a building and construction sector that delivers economic, environmental and social values for generations to come.

Get in touch

If you are interested in finding out more, please [visit our website](#)

For any questions, [contact us](#)



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