CODY SUBRITZKY
Mortgage Brokers

First Home Buyers Guide

Everything you need to know about buying your first home in New Zealand, from getting ready to settlement day.

13 Sections
Complete process from readiness to settlement

Glossary + FAQs
Clear definitions and straight answers

NZ Specific
Written for New Zealand home buyers

cody@codysubritzky.co.nz
027 733 2782
Updated July 2026

codysubritzky.co.nz

Contents

01

Are You Ready to Buy?

Financial and lifestyle readiness

Buying your first home is a big step, and it is not the right one for everyone, or for every stage of life. That is completely okay. This guide is here for if and when the time is right for you.

Readiness is not just about having a deposit. It is about your full financial picture, your lifestyle, and where you are headed. This is not about putting you off, it is about making sure that when you do buy, you buy with confidence.

Financial Readiness

Lenders will assess your readiness across several dimensions. Getting a clear view of your finances before you start viewing properties means no surprises when you apply.

- **Savings:** How much have you saved, and how consistently? Genuine savings built over time are viewed more favourably than lump sums.
- **KiwiSaver:** If you have been a member for at least three years, you may be able to withdraw most of your balance toward your deposit.
- **Income stability:** Lenders want consistent, verifiable income. Self-employed applicants typically need two years of financials.
- **Existing debts:** Credit cards, car loans, student loans, and buy-now-pay-later facilities all affect your borrowing capacity. Lenders use the full credit limit, not just the balance.
- **Credit history:** Defaults, missed payments, or recent credit enquiries can affect your application. Check for free at centrix.co.nz or creditworks.co.nz.

Lifestyle Readiness

Buying a home is a long-term commitment. Ask yourself honestly:

- Are you planning to stay in this city or region for the foreseeable future?
- Is your employment situation stable, or are you likely to change jobs soon?
- If buying as a couple, are you both equally ready and aligned on what you want?
- Are you prepared for the ongoing costs, rates, insurance, maintenance, and repairs?

> **Our advice:** If something feels uncertain, a potential job change, plans to travel, or questions about where you want to settle, ***the right move is not to rush.*** Have a conversation with us first. We can help you figure out the timing that actually makes sense for your situation.

02

Understanding Your Numbers

Deposit, borrowing capacity, and true costs

Once you understand the numbers, the process becomes a lot less daunting. This chapter walks you through what you need to know before a lender will consider your application.

How Much Deposit Do You Actually Need?

Most lenders in New Zealand require a minimum deposit of 20% for a standard home loan. There are pathways to purchase with as little as 5% through the Kāinga Ora First Home Loan scheme, but reaching 20% unlocks better rates, avoids low-equity premiums, and gives you more lender options.

Your deposit can come from a combination of:

- Personal savings
- KiwiSaver first home withdrawal
- A gift from family (a gifted deposit)

You Might Not Need a 20% Deposit

A 20% deposit is what banks like to see, but plenty of first home buyers get in with less, and we help people do it all the time. Sometimes that is as little as 10% under the Reserve Bank's low-deposit lending rules, or even 5% if you qualify for a Kāinga Ora First Home Loan.

What most people do not realise is that banks can lend on a low deposit. The only catch is they have a limited number of these to give out each month. The good news is that this changes all the time, so while one bank might be full this week, another may have room. A big part of what we do is navigating that for you.

It is worth knowing that a smaller deposit can get you into a home sooner, but it usually costs a little more in interest until you reach the 20% equity mark. Under 20%, you are seen as higher risk, so you may pay a low equity fee or a slightly higher rate. We factor that in before we look at your options, to make sure the mortgage still stacks up in the short term.

If your deposit is the thing holding you back, come and have a chat and we will look at what is possible for you.

What Can You Actually Borrow?

Banks do not just look at your income. They assess the full picture, and they stress test it:

- **Gross income:** salary, wages, self-employment income, rental income.
- **Existing commitments:** credit cards, car loans, student loans, buy-now-pay-later. The full credit limit is counted, not just the balance.
- **Living expenses:** lenders use their own benchmark figures or your actual spending, whichever is higher.
- **Dependants:** the number of people in your household affects the assessment.
- **Serviceability buffer:** lenders test your ability to repay at a higher rate than you will actually pay.
- **Debt-to-income (DTI) ratio:** since July 2024, most lenders can lend no more than 6 times your gross annual income for owner-occupied purchases. Kāinga Ora First Home Loans are exempt from this restriction.

The True Cost of Buying

Your deposit is only part of it. Budget for these upfront costs on top of your deposit:

Cost Item	Indicative Cost	Notes
Legal fees	Approx. $2,500	Varies by solicitor and complexity
LIM report	Approx. $400	Ordered from your local council
Building inspection	$400 – $800	Highly recommended for all properties

Registered valuation	$800 – $1,500	Required by some lenders
Moving costs	Varies	Get quotes early

Ongoing Costs of Ownership

- Mortgage repayments, budgeted at a conservative rate, not the lowest advertised
- Council rates and water rates
- Home and contents insurance
- Ongoing maintenance and repairs

> **Useful tool:** sorted.co.nz offers free budgeting and mortgage calculators. ***Use it to stress test your numbers before you commit.***

What Banks Actually Look At

Banks assess five things:

1. Income

Your gross income, employment type, and stability. Self-employed applicants typically need two years of financials.

2. Existing commitments

All current debts, personal loans, car finance, student loans, hire purchase, and credit card limits (not just balances).

3. Living expenses

Banks use your actual declared expenses alongside benchmark figures. They assess what you spend, not just what you earn.

4. The deposit

Where it came from, how long it has been saved, and whether any of it is gifted. Gifted funds are treated differently.

5. Credit history

Any defaults, missed payments, or credit enquiries on your record. A clean credit history matters.

> Important. ***Do not make any significant financial changes between pre-approval and settlement.*** Taking on new debt, changing jobs, or making large purchases can affect your approval, even after it has been granted. Notify us immediately if anything changes.

03

Building a New Home

How finance works when you build rather than buy

Building a new home, or buying a house and land package, works a little differently from buying an existing home, especially on the finance side. Here is what is worth knowing.

New Builds and Your Deposit

Good news first. New builds are treated more kindly by the lending rules. Because the Reserve Bank wants to encourage new housing, new builds are exempt from the usual low-deposit limits that apply to existing homes. In practice, that often means you can buy a new build with a smaller deposit, sometimes as little as 10%, with fewer of the restrictions banks face on existing homes. And if you qualify for a Kāinga Ora First Home Loan, a turn-key new build can be bought with as little as 5%.

It is worth talking through what your deposit could unlock on a new build, because the options are often better than people expect.

Turn-Key or Progress Payments

There are two main ways a build is set up, and they change how your finance works.

Turn-key: you pay a deposit up front, then nothing more until the home is finished and has passed its final inspection. Your loan is drawn down in one go at the end, and repayments start once you move in. It is the simpler option, and the most common for house and land packages.

Progress payments: with a full build contract, your loan is drawn down in stages as the build hits key milestones (foundations, framing, and so on). You pay interest only on the amount drawn so far, which keeps early costs lower, but it takes a bit more managing.

Knowing which one you are signing up for matters, because it changes your cash flow during the build and how we structure your lending.

A Few Other Things to Keep in Mind

- Builds take time. From finance to moving in can be many months, so your pre-approval and finance need to allow for that.
- Your KiwiSaver first home withdrawal can go towards a new build, the same as an existing home.
- A build contract is different from a standard sale and purchase agreement, so having your solicitor review it early is important.
- A fixed-price contract gives you certainty. If the contract is not fixed price, it is worth understanding what could change.

Buying a Section and Building on It

Some people buy a bare section and build from scratch. It can work well, but it is a bigger undertaking than a house and land package. You are effectively doing two things at once: buying the land and financing a build. Banks treat land lending differently and generally want a larger deposit for it, and a full build contract brings progress payments, consents, and more moving parts. It is doable, and we help people do it, but it needs planning. If it is something you are considering, talk to us early so we can map out what it would take.

> i Building can be one of the more achievable ways into your first home, because ***the deposit rules are kinder and the home is brand new.*** If a house and land package is on your radar, come and have a chat and we will look at what is possible for your situation.

04 The Home Loan Basics

How mortgages work and how to structure yours

A mortgage is simply a loan secured against your property. Understanding how they work will help you make better decisions and avoid costly mistakes.

How a Table Loan Works

The most common mortgage in New Zealand is a table loan. Your repayments stay the same each period, but the split between interest and principal changes over time. In the early years most of your repayment goes toward interest. As you pay down the principal, more of each repayment reduces your actual debt.

Fixed vs Floating Interest Rates

Rate Type	What It Means	Best For
Fixed rate	Locked in for a set term (e.g. 1, 2, or 3 years). Predictable repayments.	Certainty and budgeting. Protection if rates rise.
Floating rate	Moves with the market. Repayments can go up or down.	Flexibility, useful if you expect to make lump sum repayments.
Split rate	Part fixed, part floating. A common and practical approach.	A balance of certainty and flexibility.

Splitting Your Mortgage

Most New Zealanders split their mortgage across two or more fixed terms, for example, half on a one-year rate and half on a two-year rate. This manages interest rate risk so you are never entirely exposed to rate movements at any one time.

> i **Example.** On a $600,000 mortgage, you might fix $300,000 for one year and $300,000 for two years. When the one-year portion rolls over, ***you reassess the market and choose the best available term at that point.***

The Truth About Interest Rates

There is a widely held belief that you can play banks off against each other to secure a better rate. This is largely a myth, and it is worth understanding why.

Banks operate on tiered rate structures with set criteria. If you meet the criteria for a tier, you get that rate. If you do not, you do not. Banks rarely discount beyond these tiers regardless of what a competitor is offering.

There is also a timing problem. The mortgage process takes weeks. By the time you reach the point of locking in a rate, the market may have shifted entirely. Banks are highly competitive, and at any given time

Our approach is different. We focus on finding the lender that is the right fit for your situation, based on lending policy, how they assess your income and expenses, and how well they service clients like you. ***The path of least resistance almost always delivers a better outcome than chasing a rate that may change tomorrow.***

Loan-to-Value Ratio (LVR)

LVR is the percentage of the property's value that you are borrowing. Buying a $700,000 home and borrowing $560,000 means your LVR is 80%.

- Most standard home loans require an LVR of 80% or lower (i.e. a 20% deposit)
- Some lenders charge a Low Equity Premium or Margin on loans above 80% LVR, typically 0.25% to 1.00% added to your interest rate
- Discounted rates and cash-back incentives are typically only available at 80% LVR or lower
- Banks have limited availability for high-LVR lending, which can restrict your options
- From December 2025, banks can lend up to 25% of new lending above 80% LVR (up from 20%), giving slightly more availability for low-deposit borrowers
- Kāinga Ora First Home Loans are exempt from standard LVR restrictions

05 Government Schemes and Support

KiwiSaver, First Home Loan, and what's changed

The New Zealand government offers a number of schemes to help first home buyers get onto the property ladder sooner. Understanding what is available and whether you qualify could make a significant difference to your deposit and borrowing position.

KiwiSaver First Home Withdrawal

If you have been a KiwiSaver member for at least three years, you may be able to withdraw most of your balance toward your deposit. You must leave a minimum balance of $1,000.

- Have been contributing to KiwiSaver for at least three years
- Be purchasing your first home, or meet the criteria to be treated as a first home buyer
- Intend to live in the property. This cannot be used for investment properties

Your KiwiSaver provider manages the withdrawal. Apply at least 4 to 6 weeks before your settlement date.

> **KiwiSaver contribution update.** From 1 April 2026, the minimum employee KiwiSaver contribution rate increased from 3% to 3.5%. ***If you are saving for a deposit, check how this affects your take-home pay and adjust your budget accordingly.***

First Home Grant, Closed

> ***The First Home Grant, which previously provided up to $5,000 for an existing home or $10,000 for a new build, was closed by the New Zealand government in May 2024*** and is no longer available to new applicants.

First Home Loan (Kāinga Ora)

The First Home Loan scheme is available through selected lenders and allows eligible first home buyers to purchase with a deposit of as little as 5%, rather than the standard 20%. To be eligible:

- Be a New Zealand citizen or permanent resident
- Meet income caps, currently $95,000 for a single buyer with no dependants, or $150,000 combined for two or more buyers. Always confirm current limits at kaingaora.govt.nz as these are reviewed periodically
- Be purchasing the property to live in, not as an investment
- Meet lender credit criteria

A lender's mortgage insurance premium applies under this scheme.

Good to know. House price caps were removed from the First Home Loan scheme in 2022. ***There is no purchase price limit.*** Kāinga Ora First Home Loans are also exempt from standard LVR and DTI restrictions. We work with this scheme regularly and can quickly tell you whether you qualify.

06 Getting Pre-Approved

What it is, what you need, and how long it takes

Before you start seriously looking at properties, getting a mortgage pre-approval is one of the most important steps you can take. It tells you roughly how much you can borrow, gives you confidence when making offers, and shows vendors and agents that you are a serious buyer.

What Pre-Approval Is (and What It Isn't)

A pre-approval is an indication from a lender that, based on the information provided, they would be willing to lend you up to a certain amount. ***It is not a guarantee of lending.*** Final approval is always subject to full assessment, the property being acceptable to the lender, and your financial circumstances remaining unchanged.

Pre-approvals are typically valid for 90 days. If your search takes longer, you may need to renew it.

What Documents You Will Need

- Proof of identity, passport or driver's licence
- Proof of income, recent payslips, employment contract, or tax returns if self-employed
- Bank statements, typically the last three months
- Details of existing debts, loans, and credit cards
- Evidence of your deposit, KiwiSaver balance, savings statements, gift letter if applicable

The more organised your documents are upfront, the faster this process moves. We will guide you through exactly what is needed for your situation.

How Long It Takes

From the time we receive all your documents, preparing and submitting your application typically takes one to three working days. Lenders generally take five to ten working days to assess once submitted. Allow two to four weeks from start to finish.

! Important. ***Once you have pre-approval, do not make any significant changes to your financial situation.*** Taking on new debt, changing jobs, or making large purchases can all affect your final approval. Notify us immediately if anything changes.

07

Finding and Buying a Property

Due diligence, property types, and sale methods

This is the exciting part, but it is also where careful thinking and due diligence matter most. Taking the time to investigate a property properly before committing can save you from significant stress and cost down the track.

Working With a Real Estate Agent

Remember. A real estate agent is ***engaged by the seller*** and acts on the vendor's behalf. A good one will still be helpful and straight with you. But for independent guidance on whether a property is right for your situation, that comes from your own team: your solicitor, building inspector, and mortgage adviser.

Due Diligence, What to Get Done

Before going unconditional, complete the following. Your offer should include conditions that give you time to do this properly.

LIM Report

Issued by the local council. Contains key information about the property including consents, zoning, drainage, and any known hazards. Cost: approximately $400.

Building Inspection

A qualified inspector assesses the physical condition and identifies defects, deferred maintenance, or potential issues. Cost: $400 to $800.

Registered Valuation

Required by some lenders, particularly for higher LVR lending or unusual properties. Cost: $800 to $1,500.

Legal Review

Your solicitor reviews the sale and purchase agreement, title, and any encumbrances or easements. Engaging a solicitor before making an offer is strongly advisable.

Insurance Check

Confirm that insurance is available for the property on terms acceptable to the lender before going unconditional. Some properties can be difficult or expensive to insure.

Sale Methods

Properties in New Zealand are sold in several different ways, each with different rules around conditions and timing:

Method	Key Points
Auction	Unconditional from the moment the hammer falls. Finance, due diligence, and legal review must all be completed before auction day.
Tender	Offers submitted by a deadline. Can be conditional, but vendors often prefer unconditional offers.
Deadline Sale	Similar to tender with a set deadline. Sometimes allows earlier offers.
Private Treaty	Most flexible method. Offers made and negotiated directly. Conditions can be included to protect your interests.

08 Making an Offer and Settling

Conditional vs unconditional, and settlement day

Making an offer is one of the most important moments in the buying process. Understanding the difference between conditional and unconditional, and what it means to go unconditional, is critical.

Conditional vs Unconditional Offers

A **conditional offer** means you are agreeing to buy the property, subject to certain conditions being met within a specified timeframe. Common conditions include:

- Finance approval, giving you time to obtain unconditional lending approval
- LIM report, allowing you to review the council's information on the property
- Building inspection, giving you time to have the property assessed by a qualified inspector
- Solicitor's approval, typically three working days for your solicitor to review the agreement

An **unconditional offer** means you are committing to buy with no conditions attached. This is common at auction, and sometimes required in competitive markets.

Going Unconditional

Going unconditional is a significant and binding commitment. Once all conditions are satisfied, you are legally obligated to complete the purchase. There is no turning back without serious legal and financial consequences.

Before going unconditional you should have:

- Written confirmation of unconditional finance approval from your lender
- Reviewed and accepted the LIM report findings
- Reviewed the building inspection and are satisfied with the property's condition
- Received sign-off from your solicitor on the title and agreement
- Confirmed that insurance is available on the property

> ! ***Do not go unconditional based on verbal assurances.*** Wait for written confirmation. If you have any doubt about the property, the finance, the inspection results, or the insurance, do not go unconditional until you are certain. Once you are in, you are in.

Settlement Day

Settlement is the day ownership of the property transfers to you. Your solicitor handles the mechanics, coordinating the transfer of funds, signing of documents, and registration of title in your name.

- Your solicitor will confirm the settlement amount and arrange the transfer of funds
- Complete AML/KYC identity verification with your lender and solicitor before settlement
- Keys are typically released once settlement is confirmed, usually mid to late afternoon
- From settlement day, all ongoing costs of ownership become your responsibility

09

Common Mistakes to Avoid

The ones we see most often

Buying your first home is a learning curve. Some of the most costly mistakes are also the most avoidable.

01 Skipping the building inspection

It feels like an easy saving when you are already stretched. But a building inspection costing $400 to $800 can uncover issues worth tens of thousands of dollars. Never skip it.

02 Going unconditional too quickly

Once you go unconditional, you are legally committed. Make sure your finance is fully approved, your LIM reviewed, your building inspection done, and your solicitor satisfied. There is no going back.

03 Underestimating the total cost

The deposit is only part of it. Legal fees, LIM reports, building inspections, valuations, moving costs, and immediate repairs can add $5,000 to $15,000 or more. Budget for these from the start.

04 Changing jobs or taking on debt before settlement

Your financial position is assessed at approval and again at settlement. Changing employers, taking on a car loan, or applying for a new credit card can jeopardise your loan. Talk to us before making any financial changes during this period.

05 Choosing a bank based on rate alone

Rate shopping feels logical, but rates may shift before you can lock in. The right bank is the one whose policy suits your situation and who will actually approve your application. We do this work for you.

06 Not engaging a solicitor early enough

Many buyers wait until they have an accepted offer. Engaging one earlier means they can review your offer before you sign, not after, which is where the real protection lies.

07 Assuming pre-approval means the property is approved

Pre-approval confirms your financial position. It does not mean every property you look at will be acceptable to the lender. Properties with unconsented work, certain construction types, or insurability issues can still be declined.

10

Your Action Plan

Step by step, wherever you are in the journey

Buying your first home is a journey, not a single event. Use this action plan to stay focused and on track, wherever you are in the process right now.

Right Now

- Check your KiwiSaver balance and confirm your eligibility for first home withdrawal
- Pull together three months of bank statements and recent payslips
- Check your credit report for any surprises, free at centrix.co.nz or creditworks.co.nz
- Set up a dedicated savings account for your deposit if you haven't already
- Start tracking your spending, your actual numbers, not a rough guess. Lenders will go through your bank statements line by line.

In the Next 30 Days

- Book a conversation with us. We will tell you exactly where you stand and what needs to happen next
- Get a clear picture of your deposit, savings, KiwiSaver, and any gifted funds
- Set a realistic budget at sorted.co.nz and stress test it at a rate 2% above where rates are today
- Identify the areas and property types you are interested in and start tracking actual sale prices, not asking prices
- Engage a solicitor early, before you start making offers, not after

Once You Are Ready to Buy

- Obtain pre-approval before attending open homes or auctions
- Research the market and understand what properties are actually selling for
- Always include appropriate conditions in your offer, finance, LIM, building inspection
- Do not go unconditional without written confirmation of finance approval and solicitor sign-off
- Arrange insurance before settlement. Your lender will require it

Settlement and Beyond

- Complete AML/KYC identity verification with your lender and solicitor before settlement
- Confirm settlement date and ensure funds are in place
- Arrange a pre-settlement inspection of the property
- Set up automatic mortgage repayments from the day settlement occurs
- Review your insurance cover to make sure it reflects the full replacement value

- Start thinking about equity and what comes next. Your first home is also your first step toward a portfolio

11 Frequently Asked Questions

Straight answers to the questions we hear most

How much deposit do I actually need?

The minimum deposit for most first home buyers is 5%, provided you are eligible for the First Home Loan scheme through Kāinga Ora. Outside of this scheme, most lenders require a 20% deposit for a standard loan. That said, many buyers do get in with less than 20%, sometimes around 10% under the Reserve Bank's low-deposit lending rules, so it is worth checking what might be possible for you. At 20% or more, you access better interest rates, avoid low equity premiums, and have more lender options. Your deposit can come from savings, KiwiSaver, and in some cases gifted funds from family.

Can I use my KiwiSaver to buy my first home?

Yes. If you have been a KiwiSaver member for at least three years, you can withdraw most of your balance toward your deposit. You must leave a minimum of $1,000 in your account. The withdrawal includes your contributions and your employer's contributions. Apply through your KiwiSaver provider at least 4 to 6 weeks before your settlement date.

What is pre-approval and do I need it?

Pre-approval is an indicative confirmation from a lender that they are willing to lend you up to a certain amount, based on your financial position. It is not a guarantee. It remains subject to full assessment and the property being acceptable to the lender. While not legally required, it is strongly recommended before you start making offers.

Do you shop around to get us the best rate?

Before a single application goes anywhere, we look at your deal in full. We look at your situation, your goals, and the specifics of your lending, identify which lender is the best fit, and follow the path of least resistance to get you approved on the best terms available to you.

Sending applications to every lender at once actually works against you. Banks track broker completion rates closely, and a broker who fires off applications carelessly quickly loses the attention and service levels that get deals across the line. Multiple applications also leave a trail of credit enquiries that can hurt your position.

Being selective also protects your options. If we run into an unexpected issue with one lender, we still have room to move. Our job is to give you the best shot at approval, on the right terms, with the right lender for your situation.

What costs are involved beyond the deposit?

Budget for: legal fees (approximately $2,500), LIM report (approximately $400), building inspection ($400–$800), registered valuation if required ($800–$1,500), and moving costs. These costs are payable regardless of whether the purchase proceeds, so factor them into your budget from the start.

What is a LIM report and do I need one?

A LIM (Land Information Memorandum) is a report prepared by your local council that summarises all the information they hold about a property, including building consents, zoning, drainage, flood risk, and any issues on record. We strongly recommend getting a LIM on any property you are seriously considering. It can reveal issues not visible during a standard inspection, and some issues can affect your ability to get insurance or finance.

What is a building inspection and is it worth it?

A building inspection is carried out by a qualified inspector who physically assesses the condition of the property, leaks, rot, structural issues, unconsented work, and hazardous materials such as asbestos. Yes, it is absolutely worth it. Discovering a significant defect after going unconditional, or after settlement, can cost tens of thousands of dollars.

What does conditional and unconditional mean?

A conditional offer means your agreement to purchase is subject to certain conditions being met. If the conditions are not met within the agreed timeframe, you can withdraw from the agreement. Going unconditional means all conditions have been satisfied and you are legally committed to buying the property. Never go unconditional without written finance approval and advice from your solicitor.

How long does the mortgage process take?

From initial conversation to settlement, the full process typically takes 6 to 9 weeks: document collection (1–2 weeks), application preparation (1–3 working days), lender assessment (5–10 working days), conditional through to unconditional approval (several days to a few weeks), and unconditional through to settlement (1–3 weeks). Starting the process early gives you the best chance of a smooth settlement.

Can I make extra repayments on my mortgage?

It depends on your loan structure. Fixed rate loans typically restrict extra repayments or charge a break fee for doing so. Floating rate loans generally allow unlimited extra repayments. If paying your mortgage off faster is a priority for you, discuss this when structuring your loan. It will influence how your mortgage is set up from day one.

When is the best time to get in touch?

The best time is when you decide buying is your next goal. An early conversation can shorten the gap between thinking about owning a home and actually getting there. It also helps you understand what a bank looks at when it assesses a home loan, so you can move with more confidence. There are a lot of moving parts to getting approved and buying, so talking early lets us get a clear picture of where you are, help you narrow down your next step or steps, point out what you are doing well and what needs a bit more attention, fill any knowledge gaps, and be a sounding board for your ideas.

Do I need a solicitor?

Yes, absolutely. A solicitor is essential when buying property in New Zealand. They review the sale and purchase agreement, carry out title and property searches, liaise with your lender on loan documentation, and manage the transfer of funds and ownership on settlement day. We strongly recommend engaging a solicitor before you make any formal offers.

12

Glossary

Straightforward explanations of key terms

AML / KYC

Anti-Money Laundering / Know Your Customer. Identity verification required by lenders and solicitors before settlement can occur. You will need to provide photo ID and proof of address.

Building Inspection

An inspection carried out by a qualified building inspector to identify defects, damage, or unconsented work. Provides an independent assessment of the property's physical condition.

Conditional Offer

An offer to purchase a property that is subject to certain conditions being met, such as finance approval, a satisfactory LIM report, or a building inspection. You can withdraw from the agreement if conditions are not satisfied within the agreed timeframe.

DTI (Debt-to-Income Ratio)

A measure lenders use to assess borrowing risk. Since July 2024, most New Zealand lenders can lend no more than 6 times your gross annual income for owner-occupied purchases. Kāinga Ora First Home Loans are exempt from this restriction.

Due Diligence

The process of thoroughly investigating a property before committing to purchase. Includes reviewing the LIM report, building inspection, title, insurance availability, and any other property-specific issues.

Fixed Interest Rate

An interest rate that is locked in for a set period (e.g. 1, 2, or 5 years). Your repayments stay the same during the fixed term, giving you certainty and predictability.

Floating Interest Rate

An interest rate that can move up or down at any time in line with market conditions. Floating rates typically allow extra repayments and lump sum payments without penalty.

First Home Loan

A Kāinga Ora scheme that allows eligible buyers to purchase with as little as a 5% deposit. Subject to income caps (currently $95,000 single / $150,000 combined) and lender participation. Exempt from standard LVR and DTI restrictions.

KiwiSaver First Home Withdrawal

Allows eligible first home buyers to withdraw their KiwiSaver contributions (and employer contributions) to put towards a deposit. Must have been a KiwiSaver member for at least three years and leave a minimum balance of $1,000. Apply at least 4–6 weeks before settlement.

LIM Report

A report from your local council summarising all the information they hold about a property, including consents, zoning, flood risk, drainage, and any issues on record. A must-have before purchasing.

Low Equity Premium / Margin

An additional interest rate margin charged by lenders on mortgages above 80% LVR, typically 0.25% to 1.00% added to your interest rate. This applies until you have built enough equity to refinance at a standard rate.

LVR (Loan-to-Value Ratio)

The percentage of the property's value that you are borrowing. A lower LVR generally means better interest rates and fewer lender restrictions.

Pre-Approval

An indicative approval from a lender confirming they are willing to lend up to a certain amount, subject to finding a suitable property. Not a guarantee of lending. Remains subject to full assessment and property acceptability.

Registered Valuation

An assessment of the property's market value carried out by a registered valuer. Required by some lenders, particularly for higher LVR lending or non-standard properties.

Revolving Credit

A mortgage that works like an overdraft. Your salary is deposited directly into the account, reducing your balance and the interest you pay. Suits disciplined borrowers who want flexibility.

Serviceability Buffer

The additional interest rate margin lenders use when testing whether you can afford your mortgage. Designed to ensure you can still repay if rates rise.

Settlement

The final stage of the property purchase. Your solicitor transfers the purchase funds to the vendor's solicitor and ownership of the property is formally transferred to you. Settlement day is the day you get the keys.

Solicitor's Approval Clause

A condition in a sale and purchase agreement that gives your solicitor a short window (typically three working days) to review the agreement after it has been accepted.

Table Loan

The most common mortgage structure in New Zealand. Regular repayments cover both principal and interest. Repayments stay the same throughout the term, though in the early years most of your payment covers interest.

Unconditional Offer

An offer with no conditions attached, or where all conditions have been satisfied. Once unconditional, you are legally committed to purchasing the property.

13

About Us

Who we are and how we work

Small team, by design.

We're a husband and wife team based in Kerikeri, Northland, working with clients right across New Zealand. Staying small is deliberate. It lets us stay close to every deal, understand the full picture, and step in early when something needs attention. We're also raising five kids in a blended family and renovating a villa, so the realities our clients face (time, money, priorities, long-term planning) are the same ones we're juggling ourselves.

Our focus is on the right outcome for your situation. We look at every deal in full, find the lender whose appetite fits, and manage the process properly through every stage so things keep moving. We take care with our work, because we love what we do.

Cody Subritzky

Mortgage broker / Financial adviser

Cody is the sole adviser at CSMB, which means he's the person you'll work with from the first conversation right through to settlement. He's FAP-licensed with 15 years across financial services and a background in sales and negotiation. His style is direct and easy to deal with. He gets to the point fast but takes the time to explain his thinking. You'll understand the why, not just the what. Cody's a natural problem solver. The deals he gravitates to are the ones that need working through. Self-employed income, non-standard situations, bank declines. He'll look at every angle until he finds the one that works.

Melika Subritzky

Marketing & operations

Melika runs brand, marketing, and the operations behind CSMB. Think social media, blog content, campaigns, and the systems that keep the practice ticking. She's the reason the brand feels considered and the practice runs smoothly. Clients won't deal with her directly, but they'll feel her work in how things are communicated, how the business is presented, and how nothing falls through the cracks.

How we work

We look at the bigger picture.

Lending is only one part of the property picture, not the whole thing. We look at how each deal fits into where you are now and where you want to be.

We're problem solvers.

Cody is a natural problem solver. He looks at every angle of a deal, especially the tricky ones. Straightforward or complex, we'll work through it with you.

You won't chase us for answers.

Most deals stall because communication stalls. Cody runs a zero-inbox workflow, so answers come back fast, and you'll always know where things stand.

Start with a Conversation.

The easiest way is a chat. Tell us where you are and what you want to do, and we'll come back honestly on whether we can help and what the path looks like.

p: 027 733 2782

e: cody@codysubritzky.co.nz

Important Disclosure

This guide is intended to provide a high-level overview of what to expect when buying a property in New Zealand. The information is general in nature only and does not constitute personalised legal, financial, tax, or property advice.

No representation or warranty is given that the process, steps, or timeframes outlined will apply to every transaction. The actual process may vary due to lender requirements, third-party involvement, property-specific issues, market conditions, or individual circumstances. We are not responsible for any loss, delay, or outcome where information is incomplete, inaccurate, changed, or inadvertently missed. You must rely on your own enquiries and obtain independent professional advice before making any decisions or entering into any binding agreement.

Our role is limited to assisting with the arrangement of lending. We do not provide legal, tax, accounting, property condition, or valuation advice. Always seek independent legal, financial, tax, and property advice from professionals qualified to provide it before committing to a purchase.

For budgeting and repayment tools, we recommend visiting sorted.co.nz.

Cody Subritzky Mortgage Brokers · New Zealand · codysubritzky.co.nz