

# The Wellington Homeowner's Guide to a Stress-Free Painting Project

By the team at Ready to Roll

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## Introduction: The Difference Between a "Paint Job" and a "Painting Project"

We get it. The thought of painting your home can be stressful.

You're not just worried about choosing the right colour. You're worried about whether the painters will show up on time, if the quote will suddenly double, or if the final finish will be what you *actually* wanted.

For most people, the #1 fear is a project that descends into chaos—a half-finished job, a mess in your home, and a tradie who has stopped answering their phone.

This is the all-too-common "paint job." It's a transaction that feels like a gamble.

A **"painting project,"** on the other hand, is completely different.

A *project* is a properly managed, professional service from start to finish. It's built on clear communication, meticulous planning, and expert quality control. It's a process designed to protect your home and give you peace of mind, not just a coat of paint.

At Ready to Roll, we only do painting projects.

We created this guide as your "Expert Friend" to help you navigate the process. We want vibrant, healthy homes in our community, so we've created this guide to help you whether you use our services, use someone else or even do it yourself. We want to demystify the steps, empower you to ask the right questions, and help you achieve a beautiful, long-lasting result for your Wellington home—without the drama.

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## Part 1: The Planning Phase

Before a single brush is picked up, the most important work happens. Good planning is the secret to a stress-free project.

## Chapter 1: Defining Your Goal

Why are you painting? The answer will change your budget, your timeline, and your choice of materials.

- **Are you selling your home?** Your goal is a fast, high-return-on-investment refresh. You'll want to stick to neutral, crowd-pleasing colours (like whites and light greys) and focus on high-impact areas like the front door, kitchen, and living room.
- **Is it for maintenance and protection?** This is especially for exteriors. Your goal is long-term durability. The focus isn't just on colour, but on meticulous preparation and using premium, weather-resistant paints to protect your home from the elements.
- **Is it an aesthetic makeover?** This is the fun one! Your goal is to create a space you love. This is your chance to be bold with a feature wall, create a calm oasis in your bedroom, or finally update that 1990s colour scheme.

## Chapter 2: The Wellington Factor (How Our Climate Affects Your Paint)

It's not your imagination—painting in Wellington *is* different. Our city's unique climate is famously tough on buildings, and your paint is the first line of defence.

- **The Wind & Salt:** That famous Wellington wind carries abrasive salt and grime, especially in coastal suburbs. This "salt-burn" can break down paint and corrode surfaces. Your preparation *must* include a thorough wash to remove these corrosive salts.
- **The High UV Light:** Our clean air and angle to the sun mean we get very high levels of UV light. This UV radiation is what causes paint to fade and chalk. You must invest in a quality paint with UV inhibitors, especially for dark colours, which absorb more heat and fade faster.
- **The Damp & Damp:** From southerly spray to winter dampness, moisture is a constant battle. This can lead to mould, mildew, and paint bubbling or peeling. This is why using the right paint (e.g., mould-inhibitors for bathrooms) and painting on dry, well-prepared surfaces is non-negotiable.
- **The Older Homes:** Wellington is full of beautiful character villas and bungalows. This often means working with older timber (like native Rimu, which "bleeds" tannins) and dealing with decades of old paint. This requires specialised knowledge and, often, lead-based paint management.

## Chapter 3: A Crash Course in Colour

Choosing a colour can be overwhelming. Here's how to simplify it:

1. **Test, Test, Test!** This is the golden rule. Never, ever paint directly from a 2-inch square chip. Buy test pots and paint a large A2-sized card. Move this card around the room at different times of day (morning light, direct sun, evening). Wellington's light is clear and bright, and it *will* change how a colour looks in your space.

2. **Understand Sheen Levels:** The "shininess" of the paint (its sheen) has a huge impact.
  - **Matt (or Flat):** No shine. Great for hiding imperfections on ceilings or in bedrooms. Can be harder to clean.
  - **Low-Sheen (or Eggshell):** The most popular choice for interior walls. Has a very subtle, velvety glow and is much more durable and wipeable than matt.
  - **Semi-Gloss:** A noticeable shine. Perfect for trim, doors, windows, kitchens, and bathrooms. It's highly durable and easy to wipe down.
  - **Gloss:** Very shiny. Traditionally used on trim and doors, it shows every imperfection but is extremely tough.

## Chapter 4: DIY vs. Pro: A Realistic Checklist

We have huge respect for a good DIY-er. But it's important to be realistic about the time, skill, and tools a job *really* requires.

A project is likely **Good for DIY** if:

- It's a single, simple interior room.
- It's a feature wall or a small touch-up job.
- You genuinely enjoy the work and have a full weekend (or three) to dedicate to it.
- You don't need to work at height.

You should **Call a Professional** when:

- It's an exterior project. (The safety risk, scale, and need for durable prep make this a pro's job).
- It involves high ceilings, stairwells, or roofs.
- The preparation is massive (e.g., sanding back an entire villa).
- You've just had a new baby, are working 50-hour weeks, or simply value your time.
- You are a busy professional who wants a high-quality, guaranteed result without spending your evenings and weekends covered in paint.

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## Part 2: The Hiring Phase

You've decided to hire a pro. Now, how do you find a good one and avoid the cowboys?

### Chapter 5: What to Look For (And the Red Flags to Avoid)

Your goal is to find a painter who isn't just good with a brush—they need to be a professional you can trust in your home.

**What to Look For (The Green Flags):**

- **Clear Communication:** Are they prompt in their replies? Do they listen to you? Is their communication clear and professional?
- **A Detailed, Written Quote:** (More on this in Chapter 6!)
- **Proof of Insurance:** Ask for a copy of their Public Liability Insurance. This protects you and your home if something goes wrong.
- **Real, Local References:** A good painter will be proud to have you speak to their last few clients or show you a gallery of their local work.
- **A Professional Process:** Do they talk about their process for quality control, communication, and protecting your property?

### The Big Red Flags:

- **Vague Quotes:** A one-line email with just a price. Run.
- **"Cash Only" or "No GST" Deals:** This is a huge red flag for an unprofessional, uninsured, and untraceable operation.
- **Extreme Low Price:** If one quote is dramatically cheaper than the others, it means they are cutting corners—usually on preparation, quality paint, or insurance.
- **High-Pressure Sales:** "You have to book today to get this price." A true professional will be busy and will give you the time to make a considered decision.

## Chapter 6: Decoding the Quote (How to Compare "Apples with Apples")

A painting quote isn't just a price; it's the blueprint for your project. A cheap quote that's missing details will almost certainly become an expensive, stressful project.

When comparing quotes, make sure they *all* include these three things in writing:

1. **The Specific Scope:**
  - **Vague:** "Paint 3 bedrooms."
  - **Good:** "Prepare and paint all walls (2 coats), ceilings (2 coats), trim, doors (6), and window frames (3) in bedrooms 1, 2, and 3."
  - *Why it matters:* "Vague scope" is the #1 way you get hit with extra charges later.
2. **The Detailed Preparation:**
  - **Vague:** "Prep and paint."
  - **Good:** "Includes protecting all floors/furniture, washing all surfaces, filling all cracks and imperfections, sanding surfaces, and priming all repaired areas."
  - *Why it matters:* This is the most important part of the job. A painter who skips this in the quote will skip it on the wall.
3. **The Materials Specified:**
  - **Vague:** "Includes paint."
  - **Good:** "Includes Resene Zylone Sheen (walls, 2 coats, 'Alabaster'), Resene Ceiling Paint (2 coats, 'White'), and Resene Lustacryl (trim, 2 coats, 'Alabaster')."
  - *Why it matters:* This ensures you're not paying a premium price for cheap, builder-grade materials.

## Chapter 7: The 5 Questions You Must Ask Your Painter

Before you sign, call them and ask these questions. Their answers will tell you everything.

1. **"What's your full preparation process for a job like mine?"** (They should be able to answer this in detail, reinforcing what's in the quote).
  2. **"How will you protect my home, furniture, and landscaping?"** (Look for a clear plan: "We use drop cloths on all floors, plastic-wrap furniture, and cover sensitive plants.")
  3. **"How will you communicate with me during the project?"** (You're looking for an answer like, "You'll have my direct number," or "We'll check in with you at the end of each day.")
  4. **"What does your warranty cover, and for how long?"** (This should cover workmanship—peeling or flaking caused by poor prep—not just the paint manufacturer's warranty.)
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## Part 3: The Project Phase

You've hired your painter. Now the work begins. Here's what a professional project should look like.

### Chapter 8: Preparation is 80% of the Job

We're saying it again because it's that important. A \$100 pot of paint on a badly-prepped wall will look worse and fail faster than a \$30 pot of paint on a perfectly-prepped wall.

This is the part of the job that is often skipped by cheap painters because it's time-consuming, and you (the client) may not notice until it's too late.

- **Proper Interior Prep:** Involves protecting all floors, moving furniture and covering it, removing all hardware (handles, light switches), filling every crack and hole, sanding those fills, and spot-priming.
- **Proper Exterior Prep:** Involves a thorough house wash (often with a mould treatment), scraping and sanding all loose/flaking paint, or completely stripping paint off, filling imperfections, gapping (filling the seams between timbers), and priming all bare timber and repaired areas.

### Chapter 9: The "Ready to Roll" 8-Step Process

When you have a defined process, you eliminate surprises. To show you what a truly stress-free project looks like, here's the 8-step process we've perfected for our Wellington clients.

1. **Simple Enquiry:** It starts with a simple, low-friction enquiry.
2. **Prompt Response:** We get back to you via your preferred channel.

3. **On-site Consultation:** We visit the site to understand your goals and assess the work.
4. **Detailed Plan:** We produce a detailed estimate and clear project plan. No vague one-liners.
5. **Clarification:** We give you time to ask questions so you're 100% clear.
6. **Scheduling:** On acceptance, we schedule your job and take a deposit.
7. **Job Execution:** The work begins! We provide proactive progress updates, rigorous quality control, and even communicate with close neighbours about any potential inconveniences.
8. **Final Walk-Through:** We walk the site with you to ensure you are 100% happy before signing off and sending the final invoice.

## Chapter 10: Your Role in the Project (How to be a Great Client)

A great project is a partnership. Here's what you can do to make it go smoothly:

- **Communicate Clearly Upfront:** Before the team arrives, let them know about any quirks—the tricky lock, the cat that *must* stay inside, or the kids' nap schedule.
  - **Clear the Space:** If you've agreed to it, move small, breakable, or personal items from the rooms being painted.
  - **Let Them Work:** Trust the process and the professionals you've hired.
  - **Raise Concerns Early:** If you see something you're worried about, bring it up immediately and calmly. A good painter will be happy to address it. Don't wait until the last day to mention something that's been bothering you for a week.
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## Part 4: The Finish Line

You're almost there! The house looks amazing. Here's how to wrap up the project like a pro.

### Chapter 11: The Final Walk-Through

A professional painter won't just send an invoice. They will ask to do a final walk-through with you to ensure you are completely satisfied. This is your time to be detailed.

- **Look in good natural light.**
- **Check the "cut-in" lines:** Look where the walls meet the ceiling and trim. Are the lines sharp and straight?
- **Check the finish:** Look at the walls on an angle to check for consistent sheen.
- **Check for tidiness:** Are all paint spots off the windows? Is all hardware back on?
- **Don't be afraid to point things out!** A true professional will be happy to fix a small touch-up and will *want* you to be 100% happy.

### Chapter 12: Care and Maintenance

You've invested in a beautiful finish. Here's how to keep it looking great:

- **Let it Cure:** Paint may be "dry to the touch" in a few hours, but it takes 2-4 weeks to *fully* cure and harden. Be gentle with it during this time—don't scrub it or hang heavy pictures.
- **How to Clean:** For marks on low-sheen walls, use a soft, damp cloth. You can use a tiny bit of mild dish soap, but never use abrasive or solvent-based cleaners.
- **Keep Your Touch-up Pots:** Your painter should leave you clearly-labelled test pots for small touch-ups in the future.
- **Wellington Specific:** For exteriors, an annual house wash is a great investment. It removes the build-up of salt and grime and can significantly extend the life of your paint.

## **Conclusion: Your Home, Transformed, Without the Drama.**

A painting project should be exciting. It's a chance to protect your biggest asset and create a space that feels truly *yours*.

It should not be a source of stress and anxiety.

The difference, every single time, is in the process. By choosing a professional partner who values clear communication, meticulous planning, and high-quality work, you can guarantee a project that feels easy, confident, and controlled. You can have your home transformed, without the drama.

## **About Ready to Roll**

At Ready to Roll, we built our business to solve the exact problems we've talked about in this guide.

We are a customer-facing, project-managing team founded for busy Wellington professionals who value reliability, quality, and clear communication. Our model is simple: we provide an "Expert Friend" to manage your entire project, from the detailed quote to the final, satisfied walk-through. We use teams of skilled, experienced painters to deliver the quality, while we provide the high-touch customer service and project management that busy homeowners deserve.

If you're ready for a stress-free painting experience, we'd love to talk. **[Book Your Consultation]**