

Multigenerational housing a major trend to watch

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The number of households where adult children will move back in with their parents, or ageing parents will move in with their children, is set to increase exponentially within the next few years.

That's the word from Rudi Botha, CEO of SA's biggest mortgage originator BetterBond, who says multigenerational housing will be one of the biggest property trends of the next few years.

Writing in the BetterNews newsletter, he quotes the findings of a new survey just conducted by US homebuilding company PulteGroup, which revealed that among respondents with children aged 16 to 30, some 14% already had at least one of those children back living with them after leaving home, and that another 31% expected at least one child to "boomerang" within the next five years.

"In addition, among respondents with living parents, 15% already had parents living with them, and another 32% expected to be sharing their home with at least one parent within the next few years.

The survey also found, he says, that although financial pressures were still the main driver for the trend towards multigenerational homes, nearly half of survey respondents stated that family bonding is the best reason for living with extended family - 46% for having children living at home again and 48% for having parents move in.

"And although we have no similar survey statistics for South Africa, we expect a very similar trend to emerge here, not least because of the difficulty that young people have now in qualifying to buy their first home, and because of the rising costs of home ownership which are especially difficult for retirees to contend with."

The trend, Botha says, will have a significant effect on the real estate market.

"A very large percentage of the survey respondents who said they were already accommodating additional family members or planning to do so in the future also said they were planning to either renovate their existing home or buy a new one to provide the extra space they needed.

"That translates into a lot of people who will be providing work for additions and alterations contractors, and a lot who will be looking for a larger home in the next few years."

And what additional space will these homeowners want most? Survey respondents said that the most important features to comfortably support an extended family included separate living spaces, such as a "granny suite", additional bathrooms and bigger living rooms.

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011-516-5500