

Winter 2020

THE RECOVERY ISSUE

COVID-19 Recovery

BOINZ Building Pulse 2020

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Building a Strawbale Passive House

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If you have any topics you would like to have covered in one of our online courses or interactive webinars, or have any questions at all please email Jason at training@boinz.org.nz



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INTRODUCING THE NEW BOARD

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MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Your Contribution is Helping

There is no doubt the world has changed dramatically in the last few months - locally, nationally, globally - with family, friends, colleagues, community - everything seems to have a somewhat different feel about it. And yet winter has started again (brrr), the NZ government election process is underway, kiwis are out travelling around Aotearoa again, and we are all professionally approaching our roles to improve the built environment - keeping people safe at home & at work.

I am incredibly proud to be a building official working in NZ, where we do have a great developing history of improving the quality and safety of our building stock. There continues to be innovation in building materials, construction methods and types of buildings, and we are ourselves always learning and adapting. For me personally I get a buzz out of seeing my BOINZ colleagues giving great service, working for the benefit of building owners and users. When we compare ourselves internationally these days, NZ is a great place to live and work with a caring attitude for our community.

It is thrilling personally to have been successful to be elected to your board again and particularly of course to be your president for this term. It was fantastic to see all the capable candidates put their hand up for the election which is really encouraging going forward for the Institute. I would like to give a huge thanks to Kerry Walsh for the substantial contribution he has made to the Institute over many years, and I know that his dedication will continue on for many more. Also, thanks go out to Craig White for his valued contribution to the board and over many years to his local branch. In terms of the current board we have an excellent spread of knowledge and expertise to work on behalf of members, and I am stoked we are all working well supported by an energetic and capable team at National Office.

So, onto a few things topical for your reading pleasure. I have just spent a weekend working on submissions to the legislative review package up for grabs in the current Building Bill, both on behalf of BOINZ, and my employer (Auckland Council), whilst also importantly thinking as an owner and user of buildings. I believe that as

building officials we have actually got the most balanced view of what is important. We are able to be “third party” independent reviewers, approaching what is important without “fear or favour” with the best interests of the performance of the building at heart. The role we do at BOINZ to advocate for quality buildings is so important, because it appears most (not all) other organisations are particularly focussed on their own benefits within the system.

Whilst there are some positive aspects to the currently proposed legislative changes I have to honestly say that I am somewhat disheartened by an increasing amount of the change that makes it through which “looks good” on a media release but fails to have the solid thinking and details behind the rhetoric. The most recent example of that is the process of announcing the “sweeping changes” to allow DIY to do more work, and not have the nasty council inspector bothering them. Unfortunately that’s not the real situation and the regulations haven’t even been written yet - earliest is end of August and even then possibly unlikely we will see much change in the volumes of work espoused at 9000 fewer consent saving

customers \$18m - really? Fundamentally the biggie in there is the 30m2 detached building but when you look at the detail on the MBIE website it still needs plans and construction by a registered LBP, or a Chartered Professional Engineer for a kitset build. So the devil will be in the detail and we all really hope customers don't get more confused and find themselves building in contravention of the planning rules, or too close to a boundary, or other pitfalls which get picked up in a simple consent process.

From a BOINZ perspective we have written to MBIE offering our professional assistance as a valuable resource to engage with, being able to bring together all of your expertise. I am optimistic that we will receive a much better engagement going forward with the new leadership at the helm of the BSP branch of MBIE.

Onto discussing the "New Normal" for what it means to be a member of BOINZ. I would like every member to think about what you can do as an individual to ensure your aspirations and needs are catered for within your professional organisation. Do you have something that you wish to give from your expertise and knowledge, either for your employer, at branch level or on national projects through one of our advisory groups. Is there something you can arrange for a branch site visit to lift the knowledge of your peers, is there a fun activity that we can share doing together? It is my honest belief that there is no better time to do those sort of things than currently - especially after a period where we have missed out on our normal Conferences or Branch meetings for a while -

we need to keep the professional interactions going again. I guess my message is - if you have the idea - raise it and help make it happen. There have been some wonderful advances with on-line meetings and the suite of training packages which our National Office team have been adding into the mix - they are very valuable, but we all need to make that bit more effort to come up with other enjoyable and rewarding ideas.

Hopefully, you will have all seen the exciting announcements over "Building Pulse 2020" which we will be holding in late September in Wellington. We have a great technical program to run through, definitely interesting speakers and topics, it will be only a week after the general election, and we will know just that bit more about how our recovery is looking. Whilst we acknowledge there are difficult times across the country, your board genuinely believes there is a strong need for sharing discussion of relevant topics and showing leadership hence the commitment to put this together at the earliest reasonable and prudent time.

There have been fantastic announcements about government funding for the next 2 years for the course costs for the NZ Diploma in Building Surveying (level 6) and the new NZ Certificate in Building Regulatory Environment (level 4). Your Institute has worked tirelessly, continuously and collaboratively to have these courses developed, regulated and delivered as they are the cornerstone of maintaining our profession with new people being attracted.

I headed up this article as

"your contribution is helping" because I am fortunate to see evidence of that in so many of your interactions around the country. Whether it is helping your employer or your family or your community through the professional work you do - it is noticed and appreciated.

From my experience BOINZ has always given more back to me than I have invested, and I see that same thing happening for others everywhere I go, so my challenge to everyone is to be involved even more than you have been already.

Peter Laurenson
President

**REGISTRATIONS
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Building Pulse 2020

24th & 25th September

INTERCONTINENTAL WELLINGTON

For more information visit www.boinz.org.nz



To the beat of the New Normal

Building Officials Institute of NZ



Nick Hill - BOINZ Chief Executive

MESSAGE FROM OUR CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Positioning for Uncertain Times

As I write this, it is a pleasant warm winter day. Its hard to imagine the world is still in the grasp of a global pandemic, while in New Zealand we have effectively dodged a virus bullet. We have not however dodged the economic bullet, the large impacts of which are yet to affect our businesses and economy.

One thing that has not changed is BOINZ's commitment to our membership and the mission-critical work to deliver the knowledge, resources and an environment to advance building surveying excellence. Supporting you, our members, during this time remains our top priority.

During our recent Board meeting, we reviewed the Institute's strategic direction and capacity to sustain momentum and services during these turbulent times and into the future. As we debated potential implications for our members and the Institute, the strategic platforms developed in February 2019 held strong.

As an organisation, we must be adaptable to quickly pivot and adjust. The Board knowing there is a need to navigate the impacts of our immediate and post COVID environment, also recognised initiatives for the future, some with a strong focus on the long-term vision.

The road ahead will, in my view, be a tough one for construction; no different in many respects from the 1987-92 and GFC recessions. New Zealand was then and is now on the receiving end of global economic implications delivering downward trending growth forecasts. With our borders closed and placing demanding impacts on our domestic economy, the flow on effects will reach design and construction fairly quickly. Expect to see "mum and dad residential investors" take increasingly cautious investment steps to housing, additions and renovations over the next few years.

The Government's "shovel-ready" response initiatives to support infrastructure projects having public value is a positive early step. However, the reality is that over 80% of New Zealand's build industry has a focus on the residential and small commercial sector. Government also appropriately moved to shore up trades and skills training. This will certainly have an immediate impact, while current work projects are ongoing, but it is support for ongoing work projects over 2021 and 2022 which will be needed to continue to sustain a reasonable rate of construction employment during these tough times.

As a member of the Construction Industry Council Executive, I recently had an opportunity to present to Treasury. This was an engaging opportunity allowing a frank and open discussion around Covid impact concerns and idea exchanges ensuring construction is viable in these uncertain times. I see incentives and support for small residential projects worthy

of consideration to encourage "mums and dads" to open wallets to lift public confidence and enable necessary continuity of work. This importantly will ensure we don't lose vital invested skills to emerging and faster recovering and growing international economies. These are the scenarios which have marked successive boom/bust cycles over many decades.

There won't be just one solution, whether government or industry led or by both, however assistance and incentives when considered should deliver on desired outcomes that include and not be limited to skills retention and capability, product compliance, build quality and build efficiency.

As we move towards the second half of this year, we need to consider the General Election scheduled for September. Many political ideas will flow, and money will be promised, but we must ensure sensibility prevails to guarantee our sector does not fall prey to wild ideas and ideologies that present problems for future generations. To that end BOINZ will be preparing some of our own Election Platforms to advise and educate political party representatives on our expectations on where the build environment can show improvement.

Taking long term positions is good strategy, good business, and delivers good outcomes. This is what BOINZ is about. We are in interesting times, so keep attuned as our environment could likely continue to change quickly.

Nick Hill - Chief Executive

2020 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING NEW DATE TO BE ANNOUNCED SOON

An update on the rescheduling of the Institute's Annual General Meeting will be sent out to members once the date and meeting format is confirmed.

We appreciate your patience and we hope to formalise this event shortly.

Please check in on our website:
www.boinz.org.nz



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NO FEES

This programme is fully funded by the Government under TTAF (Targeted Training & Apprenticeships Fund)

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Increase your team's capability & create career opportunities.

This programme has been designed for BCA and TA building regulatory administrative staff including those who support technical officers in plan processing, building inspections and quality assurance.

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Phone Gill Franklin 021 666 103 or Kavi Sewdayal 027 232 4483

APPLY ON-LINE:

www.futureskills.co.nz

QUALIFICATION	NZ Certificate in Building Regulatory Environment Level 4
START DATE	The first regional cohorts will start August/September 2020.
DURATION	20 weeks
NO FEES	This qualification has been approved to receive full government support via the Targeted Training & Apprenticeships Fund (TTAF). The Fund will cover all fees for enrolments occurring between 1 July 2020 and 31 December 2022 as part of the Government's post-COVID support for education and training for the construction sector.
IN-EMPLOYMENT STUDY OPTION	Students attend 2 x 3-day block courses. Remaining study is on-line (including by webinar). There are 360 hours of related work experience. Refer over page for details.
FURTHER STUDY	NZ Diploma in Building Surveying Level 6

ENTRY INFORMATION

Applicants must meet the In-Employment Admission conditions and either the General Admission or the Special Admission conditions.

Applicants must provide evidence of: NZ citizenship or residency, or Australian citizenship or residency.

IN EMPLOYMENT ADMISSION

Applicants must:

Provide confirmation from their employer that they are currently working in administration or a support service role either as an employee or intern within a Building Consent Authority, Territorial Authority or similar regulatory environment, performing a building regulatory function; and

Provide confirmation that the employer will allocate them hours of work and relevant duties in order for the applicant to complete the work experience required hours and learning outcomes for the programme; and

Have been trained to meet their employer's health and safety requirements for entering a building site and use personal protection equipment including a hard hat, hi-viz vest, capped boots and safety glasses.

GENERAL ADMISSION

Applicants must have either:

- 6 months confirmed experience in a building regulatory environment;
OR
- A minimum of 4 years secondary education and a minimum of 10 NCEA credits in English and 10 NCEA credits in Mathematics at level 1 or above, OR an equivalent;
OR
- An appropriate qualification at Level 3 or above.

SPECIAL ADMISSION

If your employee does not meet any of the general admission conditions they may still be eligible to enrol under Special Admission conditions. Please contact us to discuss.

DISCLAIMER

While every effort is made to ensure that this sheet is accurate, Future Skills reserves the right to amend, alter or withdraw any of the contained information.

IN-WORK STUDY REQUIREMENTS

All students must complete 360 hours of work or authentic work experience in a building regulatory environment.

This must include checking and assessing the completeness of documentation for:

- building consents (100 hours), and
- Code Compliance Certificates (100 hours)

PROGRAMME COURSES

CREDITS

Regulatory Environment and Key Stakeholders	15
Regulatory Support Processes in Building Control Operations	15
Regulatory Certification and Communication	30

GRADUATE PROFILE

Graduates of this programme will be able to:

- Communicate effectively with the public, customers, and colleagues to provide appropriate customer service
- Check building regulatory documentation for completeness, within predetermined parameters, and to receive, resolve, and escalate enquiries
- Apply knowledge of the relevant aspects of the regulatory framework within the building and/or building regulatory environments
- Operate effectively in a support role within the building and/or building regulatory environment including related government departments, industry bodies, and stakeholders
- Apply the relevant technical and administrative aspects of the building regulatory process to support approval processes.



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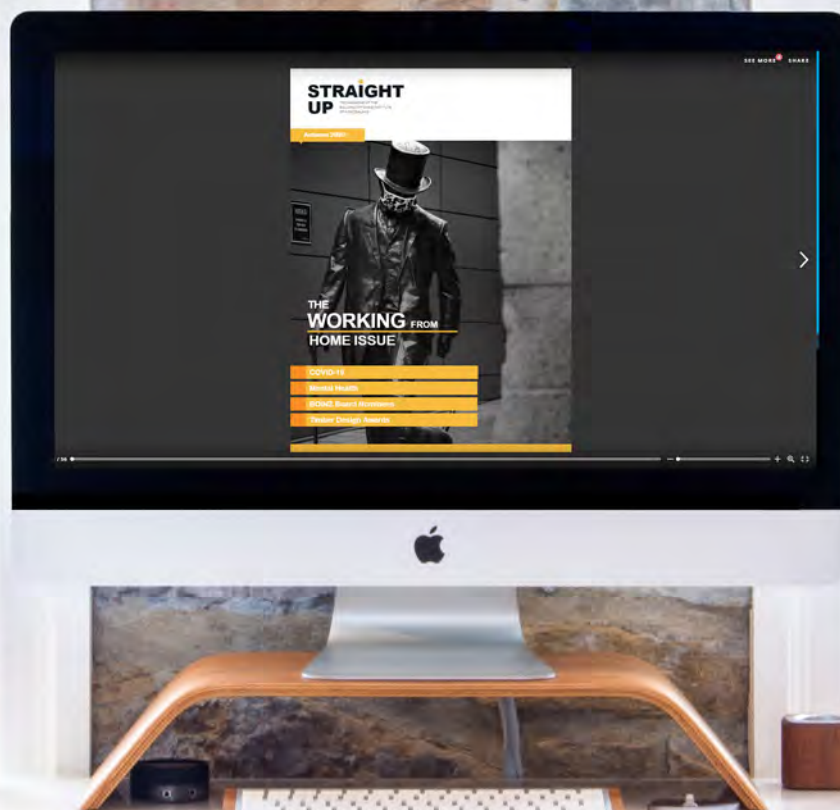
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AFTER LOCKDOWN

RETURNING TO WORK

Not too long ago I wrote to you in shock over how our lives had been flipped upside down and we found ourselves doing what many thought impossible: working from home.

But we did it! A massive congratulations must be given to every single person reading this article for surviving the country's largest simultaneous remote working test.

I also like to quietly think to myself that maybe my previous article might have helped getting you through this but hey, who knows.

So here we are. Many (but not all) are returning to work and I am currently writing this new article from the office. So, what do we do next? How do we get back to normal when we all know that the world has changed? Do I even remember where I used to go to get real coffee? (Oh my god, remember real coffee?)

Well, first, there is no normal anymore. The world has changed in a big way and isn't going back. So here are a few tips on how to get back into the working flow of things.

Prevent

Look, I know that we all like a hug and a cheeky high five when you see your work BFFLTF (Best Friends For Like Totally Forever, duh), but we need to keep the Government's rules in place. Lockdown level two calls for social distancing and smart thinking. Not only does that mean no high fives, but no sharing food, increasing gaps between desks, and even staying home if needs be.

Some of this should go without saying but it's always important to refresh: Cover your face when you cough or sneeze. Into the crook of your arm is good, into a tissue is better. Wash your hands. Sharing is no longer caring. Download the contact tracing app and make sure to scan it whenever you go into a store.

And most importantly: If you are ill. Stay home. No excuses. If you go to work ill, you won't be winning any brownie points with your office mums.

Control

Keep communicating with each other. Whether you're in the office or at home, make sure that you stay talking with your family, co-workers and employers. I said it last time and I will say it again, it's social distancing not emotional distancing. Remember that in this whirlwind of negatives there are a lot of positives to be found out of this, we had more time with our families, we were able to save on travel costs, I even learned how to cook basic meals without starting fires.

Our work habits will now have changed, and we need to consider new alternatives to things we took for granted. Is a zoom meeting better than having a face to face meeting? Do we have a mail drop off point? Maybe you have learned that you work far more effectively from home and need to consider this as a new option. This is our opportunity to re-evaluate our processes and see how we can do things better.

Recover

Now is the time where we can pick up the pieces of working life, re-engaging with our colleagues and trying to remember where our desks are located. It is important though to prepare for the future. Remember that we are not out of the virus laden woods yet and we need to hold onto the lessons that we learned. It could be tomorrow that we find ourselves back in lockdown. It seems almost ironic where once we worked to make our offices feel more homely, now we need to make our homes feel more like the office.

Be aware that the news is dreary and full of things that can only lead to stress. It's important to be aware of what is going on but try to limit the amount of negative news you're digesting. Take a moment to find a feel good story on something positive in the world.

Once again, congratulations to you for making it through. Stay safe, be kind.

By Henry Cassin - Membership Relations Coordinator

TALKING TRADE

The Old ‘Switcheroo’

By Russell Pederson, Winstone Wallboards Technical Support and Training Manager

On the GIB® Technical Helpline there isn't a day that we don't get asked about substituting components in our systems. I mean, what's the difference between these screws? Why can't I use this other branded hold down bracket? You may be surprised to find that the answer is actually: Yes, you can. - It's not quite that simple though, there is a catch.

We have a statement, almost like a team motto, that hangs on the wall above every desk in the Technical Support office. It reads like this:

If you choose to substitute a component within a tested system, the responsibility lies with you to verify its suitability in every regard.

The key thing to point out here is that our systems are tested and verified. This means when we go to one of our testing sites, we use a specific list of components, this list is recorded by BRANZ and we measure the performance of a specimen based on the sum total performance of all the parts. If you choose to substitute one of these components, you could potentially change the performance. If the component you choose has an equal or higher performance then this isn't a problem, all you need is to back this up with some form of verification for certification. This should be readily available from your supplier.

GIB® plasterboard is made, and tested, right here in New Zealand. This means when you specify and buy a GIB® system, the same people that carried out the testing are answering the phone and offering support. We aren't passing you around different sub-suppliers and passing the buck.

Being the start of a new year, we are planning our testing regime for the year ahead. Many of the tests we will be conducting have come about from inquiries and real life problems put to us by customers like yourself.

Every test is planned out meticulously, every part and component designed specifically to solve these problems and we are here to help the systems be specified and installed as we designed them.

Quite simply: Tried. Trusted. True.



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SPOTLIGHT ON A MEMBER

Cecil Ray Smith (Ray)

Ray Smith has been a member of BOINZ and its predecessor organisation the New Zealand Institute of Building Inspectors (NZIBI) since 1967, our founding year, being member number 67. He was elected President of NZIBI in 1983 serving 3 years during a contentious period in respect of building legislation and industry change. He represented NZIBI at the Saskatoon 1984 World Organisation of Building Officials (WOBO) convention. He was awarded Fellow status of the NZIBI in 1986. As dedicated supporter of BOINZ all his life, Rae was subsequently honoured again with a Life membership in May 2016.

On becoming the President of the NZ Institute of Building Inspectors (a predecessor of BOINZ) in the 1980's, what was the most challenging part of your role?

At that time every council operated under a set of Building Bylaws; and most councils amended them! These Building Bylaws were produced by the Standard Association of New Zealand. SANZ would send these documents out to each Council before they became legally enforceable, allowing councils to adopt them as part of their Model Building Bylaw.

The Model Building Bylaw consisted of 11 parts, and this really changed the way Building Officials worked and made it a lot simpler compared to today's Code. It also made it easier for the councils to check if work was compliant. Onsite, if there were amendments to be made, we would work with the builder to establish what needed to be done, often noting down the changes on our copy of the plans; compared to the very long winded procedures of today of having to resubmit plans and having them rechecked.

From a bureaucratic point of view, these old Bylaws worked very well, although a downside, if there was a downside, was some councils amended parts of them at the whim of usually the Chief Building Inspector.

A Chief Building Inspector would make a recommendation to Council, we then had what we call a plethora of different interpretations across councils throughout New Zealand. It was this confusion that had people saying that on one side of the street a council would allow a building interpretation or system while on the other side a completely different council required something else.

This was the biggest complaint of the system at the time and a main reason why in 1992 the government at the time revoked all Building

Bylaw regulations and introduced the 1992 Building Act.

From an Institute perspective we had to try and drag out all these differing opinions from all the councils and bring them together under one cohesive system.

On becoming President, the first objective I had was to try and bring everybody together.

My goal was to create uniformity, not an easy task considering three levels of Councils (by size) who often didn't see eye to eye - all claiming the moral high ground! Some councils would even go as far as discouraging their Building Inspectors from joining the Institute.

I was attempting to do something that had never been done before. We organised meetings in Wellington and invited different Councils, associations and government departments to come together to get some consensus - Building Research Association, Master Builders, Ministry of Works, and counties to name a few. I wanted and needed them to look upon us a bit kinder; to see us as professionals and the value we added. I slowly convinced them and that pathed the way for change.

Was it challenging to inspire the councils to educate their Building Inspectors?

Building Inspectors coming to the Institute's membership were predominantly builders having had experience coming up through building industry; there were very few non-industry people involved as Building Inspectors. The worse side of that environment was councils not seeing they had a vital role to provide or facilitate training of Building Inspectors in the complexities of their roles; a step beyond that of where they had come from. They recruited and saw their Building Inspectors as someone in the industry and who should know their trade like the back of their hand – basically 'here's the Building Code, now go do your job'. It was very hard to inspire change back then, as many in the council hierarchy pretended, we didn't exist. However we were resilient and eventually things did start to change. I understand the approach to training in BCA's today still has many of the same issues.

What was your legacy as President?

I was determined to leave the Institute in better shape than when I started. I was an ambitious young beggar, I must admit! I wanted to see the institute thrive and the role of Building Officials professionalised. I was President for two years and then asked to stay on for a third. It was hard work but most rewarding.

How did you become the editor of the BOINZ Publication?

The editor in those days were volunteers from within the organisation. I took over from Kell Diffey from the Hawkes Bay. I had wanted to stay involved in the organisation and industry, I thought I could do the role – I'll give it a crack. I initiated a 'letters to the editor' section which created quite a stir and started the ball rolling for some quite controversial questions for which I was happy to answer.

EDITORIAL

Hello, I m Ray smith of Timaru - your new Editor. I hope there is something interesting, innovative and educational for everyone in this issue.

Our multi-discipline organisation is going from strength to strength with the inclusion of 500 plus building related personnel joining up with 200 plus members previously specialising in plumbing and drainage. At our office multi-functioning is going extremely well, with all staff now indoctrinated and doing their best to deal with far greater variety of skills.

Moreover, remuneration levels increased to recognise additional responsibilities.

There will be a new emphasis in future journals and I know Kel and Maxine will be



pleased about that as they certainly bought new ideas to us over 10 years and 40 journals ago.

Change is good for us all, but we are now competing for a market share against other slick publications all of which have professional staff driving their news before limited audience.

How can a "one man" band compete in this highly competitive market? With everyone's help I'm prepared to give it a go, and "thank you" to those persons who have already supplied informative articles.

I am looking forward to my new role and your assistance.

Ray Smith

In those days there was no internet so answering questions could take a month to reply!

In respect of articles, I'd write about what I'd learnt and what was coming up in the industry, but I mainly loved to write about 'thought provoking' subjects to wake people up and set them in the right direction.

What advice would you give to the Building Surveyors of today?

New Zealand Building Official Magazine cover 1996



If you would like to read more about Ray and his experiences, we published an article in the March 2017 Straight Up edition. Available through My BOINZ.

To embrace change, and to know their code without having to refer to the book all the time. To have a good attitude and to respect the people in the industry – you will then always receive respect in return. Don't be a bully to get what you want.

To support BOINZ and contribute as that organisation is the backbone of your professionalism.

I've had the most wonderful life as a Building Official, if I had the opportunity to do it all again I most definitely would.



LEGISLATION

NEW BUILDING CONSENT EXEMPTIONS

New types of building work will no longer require a building consent, saving homeowners up to \$18 million a year and reducing the number of consents by about 9,000 (if lodged separately).

New building consent exemptions are being added to the Building Act. Building consents will no longer be needed for a number of new or expanded types of low-risk building work, like sleep-outs, sheds, carports, outdoor fireplaces and ground-mounted solar panels.

The new exemptions will save building owners time and money, by not having to go to their local council for consent for common, low-risk building work. This reduction in building consents will also allow Councils to focus on building work that is higher-risk, helping to boost productivity.

This package of new exemptions adds to the work that can already be done without a building consent, outlined in Schedule 1 of the Building Act. Some of the new exempt building work can be done without the help of a professional, while others require the involvement of

a Chartered Professional Engineer or Licensed Building Practitioner. A Chartered Professional Engineer can review or carry out the design or Licensed Building Practitioner can carry out or supervise design and construction.

Building work that does not require a building consent must still comply with the Building Code and other legislative requirements, such as those under the Resource Management Act 1991, the Electricity Act 1992 and the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015.

The new exemptions are expected to commence at the end of August.

Before carrying out exempt work, it's important that people completing exempt work follow the MBIE guidance correctly. New guidance will be issued before the new exemptions commence in August. MBIE will also provide education resources to help people understand what does and doesn't need a consent and information on how to ensure exempt work complies with the Building Code. MBIE will be in touch with Building Officials in August once the guidance is available.

For a summary on the new building consent exemptions, visit www.building.govt.nz





FULL PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR STANDARDS NEW ZEALAND

Standards NZ continues to support businesses and organisations in the building and construction sector while working remotely, including continuing with a full programme of standards development.

An update to the New Zealand standard NZS 4541 Automatic fire sprinkler systems has just been released and is available on the Standards NZ website. It provides up-to-date specifications for the design, manufacture, and installation of sprinkler systems. NZS 4512 Fire detection and alarm systems in buildings is currently undergoing development.

When complete, it will provide the latest specifications and guidance for the design, manufacture, installation and maintenance of fire detection and alarm systems.

Additionally, the revision of NZS4514 Interconnected smoke alarms for houses sets out the requirements for the installation and commissioning of externally-powered interconnected smoke alarms. This standard also provides information on the selection, installation, and maintenance of smoke alarms.

Value Add RFI open for Innovators

Standards NZ continues to seek entrepreneurial partners to help deliver New Zealand standards content to users, through their Value Add Programme. Their first partnership in the innovation space was with document automation company, LawHawk, last year.

The project has demonstrated how much of the grunt work that goes into legal documents and processes in the construction, property, and commercial sectors can be relieved.

The aim of the programme is to make standards content more useful and increase their traction. Standards NZ offers a low-cost supportive path through the copyright system to help entrepreneurs manage their ideas into commercial viability.

An RFI is now open on their website to third parties who have ideas for offering standards content in

innovative ways, including in the building sector.

Seeking feedback on new digital formats

Standards NZ are also keen to hear which formats users will find most helpful in the future – particularly in the light of a distributed workforce under COVID-19. Standards are currently provided in hard copy and as pdfs, but they are interested in hearing whether they would be useful as eBooks, or in html or other digital formats.

They have created a short online survey to gauge user feedback:

<http://www.research.net/r/snzformats> or you can respond to valueadd@standards.govt.nz



**MINISTRY OF BUSINESS,
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BUILDING ACT

NATURAL HAZARDS AND THE BUILDING ACT

Acting for building consent authorities all around the country, we think that we have, at one point or another, encountered questions involving almost all sections of the Building Act 2004.

There isn't much we haven't seen.

However, over the past few months, we have noticed a recurring theme of questions from our local authority clients relating to the application of ss 71 to 74 of the Act. The natural hazards provisions.

These sections are engaged when building on land that is subject, or likely subject, to "natural hazards" and will no doubt be familiar to, and frequently applied by, any person involved in consenting under the Building Act.

Depending on your district, these hazards sections of the Building Act can have wide application, particularly as knowledge about the nature, extent and location of natural hazards continues to develop. At the very least, they require councils to consider two questions when processing building consent applications for all new buildings and major alterations:

1. Is the land on which the building work is to be carried out subject to, or likely subject to, one or more natural hazards?
2. Is the building work likely to accelerate, worsen, or result in a natural hazard on that land or any other property?

In our experience, these provisions, and many of the concepts posed within them, are some of the most frequently misinterpreted and misapplied sections of the Act. Particular questions we have encountered include:

- The relationship between ss 71 and 72.
- How to assess whether "adequate provision for the protection of land" has been provided under s 71(2).
- Whether liquefaction is "inundation" for the purposes of s 71(3).
- When, if ever, it is "reasonable" to grant a waiver or modification of the Building Code under s 72.

The Building Act definition of "natural hazards" is an effects-based definition that identifies erosion, falling debris, subsidence, inundation and slippage as the relevant hazards for the purposes of ss 71 to 73. While the definition does not make specific reference to certain hazard events, such as earthquakes, we see this as being of little consequence as the most common effects of earthquakes are captured by reference to slippage, subsidence, falling debris and/or inundation.

However, in practise, the way in which the definition has been crafted makes a building officer's task a little more challenging and involved than might otherwise be the case. This is because the available hazard information has often been prepared with other regulatory processes in mind (for example, consenting under the Resource Management Act 1991) and may not clearly identify the particular effect(s) of a hazard to the extent required to enable a building officer to properly consider and apply ss 71 and 72.

If we take liquefaction as an example, the proper application of s 71 will come down to an understanding of likelihood. How likely is it that the land is subject to earthquake risk? And how likely is it that the occurrence of an earthquake will result in liquefaction that will, in turn, cause inundation?

That in itself is no easy assessment. The Courts and the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment appear to have adopted a relatively low threshold for the meaning of “likely”, in that there needs to be more than a mere possibility that the hazard will occur but it does not need to be more likely than not.

The other somewhat perplexing question that councils are encountering is when, if ever, it would be reasonable to grant a waiver or modification of the Building Code under s 72(c). In the absence of judicial guidance on this point, a council will need to have regard to the purposes of the Act, in particular the risk to life safety, the extent of the waiver or modification when considered against the relevant Building Code objectives and performance criteria, and any mitigating factors that have been proposed to reduce the elevated risk.

To even consider granting consent under s 72, the council must have stepped through s 71 and decided that adequate provision has not been made to protect land, building work or other property (that is, the exemption in s 71(2) does not apply). Granting a waiver or modification of the Building Code under s 72 should therefore not be a decision that is made lightly and, depending on the particular hazard at play and the nature of the application, it may be that when considered against the purpose of the Act there are very few circumstances in which a waiver or modification would be considered reasonable.

In our experience, these are by no means straightforward provisions to navigate and apply and, a stepped, case-specific approach that, where appropriate, seeks guidance and input from suitably qualified persons is the only way to ensure their proper application.

If you have any specific questions, please let us know.



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COVID-19 RECOVERY

MiTek® - INVESTING IN NEW ZEALAND COVID-19 RECOVERY

In a recent article written by Julien Leys from the Building Industry Federation (BIF) which appeared in BRANZ Build Magazine (<http://www.buildmagazine.org.nz/articles/show/the-supply-chain-and-recovery>), Julien raised the awareness that the Building Industry needs to rethink the supply chain, as a result of COVID-19.

In this article Julien mentions “the globalised world where manufacturing roads lead to China has forced a rethink of what percentage of the supply chain should be dependent on one locality”. He goes on to say, “that supporting local manufacturing is essential for New Zealand’s recovery as this supports and generates employment and training of New Zealanders”.

MiTek® has for over 50 years contributed to the New Zealand economy, and building industry. With our manufacturing and support offices in Auckland and Christchurch as well as our satellite employees across the country. MiTek® continually promotes innovation, productivity, and employee growth to ensure MiTek® deliver building solutions for today while continuing to invest in New Zealand’s future.

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STRAIGHT UP ARCHIVES

FIRE AT PARLIAMENT BUILDING 1992

Previously printed in the *Official Journal of the New Zealand Institute of the Building Inspectors*. Volume 23, No. 4 1992

The fire at parliament buildings developed slowly. Contained within three false ceilings venting into the lightwells, its extent remained undetected for some time.

In a career spanning 34 years with the Fire Service, Fire Commander Roger Gilroy (Divisional Commander with the Wellington Fire Brigade) has attended several major fires. None however in a building with such historical significance and heritage value to New Zealand.

Fire Commander Gilroy, who arrived at the scene just after 0800 hours when a third alarm was transmitted, filed the following report.

Parliament Building

The original Parliament Building was destroyed by fire in 1907, although the facade was retained for the structure that is now known as the Parliament Library. The current Parliament Building was constructed over a 10-year period starting in 1912. The three floors and basement with brick walls and timber interior have a total floor area of 17,750 square meters. Since this construction

was completed there has been various modifications and extensions using construction material and technology of the day, usually wooden products, and systems. The result is a labyrinth of offices, corridors, and interconnecting walkways with little means of firestopping.

The basement of the building is sprinklered, the rest being covered with heat detector system. The way in which the building evolved resulted in some spaces being unprotected, such as the ceiling void, where the fire originated.

Before the fire

In the week prior to the fire, Parliament Building had been vacated and handed over to the contractors for major restoration work. Work had not started on the project. However, security had become the contractor's responsibility and they had fitted company locks.

Normal security by the parliamentary services had therefore ceased. Security staff had been withdrawn from the building and relocated to the Beehive Building adjacent to Parliament Building. The alarm sounders were inaudible in the Beehive office. The New Zealand service head not being advised of the security changes.

The Parliamentary complex is three structures, and included the 'Beehive' adjacent to, and south of, the old Parliament Building and the library building which is adjacent to the latter and the North. The complex together with underground car parks and the surrounding grounds as categorised as a high risk multi floor building.

The Wellington Fire Brigade has an operational procedure for Parliament Buildings, which is a pre-determined attendance on a stepped "alarm" basis of:

1. First Alarm: 3 Pumps, 1 Turntable ladder
2. Second Alarm: 2 pumps, 1 Rescue Tender, 1 Snorkel, 1 Hose Layer, 1 Breathing Apparatus Tender, 1 Command Unit. Divisional Officer.
3. Third Alarm: 2 Pumps, 1 Turntable ladder, Divisional Commander.
4. 2 Pumps, Chief Fire Commander

Report on the Fire

The morning of Sunday 26 July 1992 was a cold with persistent rain, driven by a strong gusty northwesterly wind of 30 knots. The initial call to the fire at the Parliament Building was received at the regional control room by private alarm at 07.38.29. The first alarm response arrived within four minutes. No sign of fire was evident and the internal alarm for the old building was operating.

Access to the building was delayed for about 12 minutes because of the recent changes made to securing the building. During the attempts to gain access, smoke was seen in the vicinity of the roof at the front of the building. A second alarm was immediately transmitted.

On gaining entry fire crews equipped with breathing apparatus, high rise kits and breaking in gear, made their way up the main stairs to the third floor. Fire was clearly evident in a corridor extending north from the main foyer.



Lobby control was set up on the 2nd floor foyer, a delivery was established to attack the fire and a third alarm was transmitted at 07.58.09.

Initial crews arriving at the scene knocked the visible fire within minutes and began checking surrounding rooms with the ceiling void for any fire spread. Residual smoke hampered the search, but no sign of fire was evident apart from hot spots.

It was assessed at 08.22.43 that the fire was surrounded, and salvage was about to commence.

By 08.34 several appliances had been released from the incident. Ten minutes later it became apparent that the fire was still burning and escalating.

Over the years the ceiling has been lowered three times to the current height of three metres from 4 metres. These undivided and accessible spaces had concealed fire which had gained a firm hold in the strong wind that prevailed. The unknown structural modifications disguised the real fire situation.

The appliances which were returning to their stations were recalled. A fourth alarm was transmitted at 08:51. At that time, it was advised the blue asbestos was present at the fire floor which added to the firefighting risk.

The fire had originated in addition to the structure at roof level dating from 1940. Building plans, when finally located, provided vital information for planning the overall attack strategy. They showed that no fire stopping existed in any ceiling spaces throughout the roof area of the entire structure, except above a firewall on the northern side of the structure. The contractor suspected that wall did not extend to the roof- it didn't.

The fire attack strategy was to restrict the fire to the area of origin, which at the time involved an area measuring about 8 metres by 20 metres at the front face of the building.

The Chief Fire Commander arrived and took charge shortly after 09.27.

Whilst the primary fire attack was made from the main stairs into the area of origin, other deliveries were directed to those points identified as being paths for fire spread. The hydraulic platform was used to lift crews and equipment to the fire floor on the North face of the building, where four deliveries were put to work.

Ceiling hooks and chainsaws were used to gain access to ceiling spaces both from within the building and from the flat roof. Two jets from turntable ladders were directed to the main fire area when the roof collapsed. Due to the possible presence of blue asbestos, breathing apparatus was needed by all firefighting crews throughout the incident. It was later confirmed that the asbestos was in fact white and therefore not a hazard.

The firefighting effort continued under

arduous conditions until about 11:00 when it appeared the fire was surrounded and spread was completely restricted. Fifteen deliveries, two aerial monitors and 300 breathing apparatus sets were used in the firefighting operation. Mopping up continued unabated. The STOP messages were transmitted at 12:53.

One Senior Firefighter sustained a broken shoulder when a wooden frame containing lights fell from the ceiling in the corridor of the fire floor, trapping him in a mass of blazing timber and debris, his partner who was unhurt raised the alarm.

Summary

A supposed cause was immediately sought with assistance from the New Zealand Police. Incendiary/suspicious reasons were discounted because of the building security which had been neither externally nor internally breached. It was finally determined that the supposed cause was a defect in electrical wiring which ignited combustibles within the upper ceiling void and the 1940 addition on the third floor.



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ACRS UPDATE

ACRS certification during COVID-19 Emergency, and ACRS Stage 2 Certificates use BCAs

In this update, Philp Sanders, CEO of ACRS answers questions recently received from NZ Building Officials, engineers and building contractors regarding the scope and application of ACRS certification and claims regarding the equivalent acceptability of alternative approval mechanisms.

ACRS Certification: Facts Vs Misconceptions

Myth 1: “ACRS only certifies steel mills, so I used other certification for the structural welded sections.”, or “I only use ACRS certified steels in fabricating my welded sections, so I don’t need ACRS Stage 2 certification.”

Fact: ACRS certifies both steel mills and the structural welded sections made from that steel to AS/NZS 5131 and other associated standards such as AS/NZS 3679.2, and both Stage 1 and Stage 2 certificates are required.

ACRS has issued certification for welded beams since 2012, and other fabricated welded sections (e.g. to AS/NZS 5131) since 2018, as part of its fully integrated, 2-stage system designed to ensure conforming steels are used in the as-built structure. You cannot do this by only certifying “at mill gate” (What ACRS calls “Stage 1”), as

fabrication of welded sections may turn even ACRS Stage 1 certified steels into nonconforming steel. Further, ACRS Stage 2 certification covers steel traceability back to manufacture to ensure only ACRS certified mills have supplied materials. ACRS “Stage 2” certification of structural welded sections is therefore essential.

If the structural welded section producer is not ACRS “Stage 2” certified, the ACRS “chain of certification” has been broken and the sections supplied cannot claim reliance on ACRS certification. A supplier can of course claim coverage under another certification scheme instead of ACRS.

However, this may breach supply requirements if ACRS certification has been specified, unless the Authority explicitly accepts the offered alternative scheme in lieu of ACRS. Remember, two different product certification schemes are not automatically equivalent, even if both are JAS-ANZ accredited.

Any alternative needs to be carefully considered. In one case reported to ACRS, ACRS certification of the structural welded sections had not been enforced and alternative certification was accepted. Supply was made under AS/NZS 5131 with only “partial traceability” claimed, and steel was supplied from unverified sources despite the specification still including a requirement for all steel to be from mills certified by ACRS (i.e. ACRS Stage 1 only). Unfortunately, in such instances it becomes a matter of caveat emptor for the purchaser.

Note: For general (non-structural welded) fabrication ACRS Stage 1 certification of the steel mill is valid on its own, as there is no change to metallurgical properties. ACRS does not certify general fabrication, which is covered by other certification systems such as SCNZ’s SFC scheme.

Myth 2: “ACRS is not JAS-ANZ accredited to certify to AS/NZS 5131, so I used other certification to AS/NZS 5131.”, or “I’ve been given welded steel sections with other certification that’s equivalent to ACRS”.

Fact: ACRS is JAS-ANZ accredited to AS/NZS 5131. Also, different certification schemes assess to different scopes (i.e. what they do) and levels of rigour (i.e. the degree to which they do it). You need to verify any claim of “equivalence” very carefully and specifically accept the differences. So does the engineer and customer.

This myth is one of the most dangerous, as whilst it looks like a valid technical reason that might seem persuasive at first sight – after all there are different ways of certifying steel – the argument is false for two important reasons.

Firstly, the ACRS Scheme was by JAS-ANZ accredited to AS/NZS 5131 in January 2018 – the first scheme to be accredited, and AS/NZS 5131 is listed on the relevant ACRS certificates - all of which show the JAS-ANZ logo.

Secondly, ACRS’ scheme includes in both stages 1 and 2, independent sample selection, testing, reporting, and verification of sites, processes, products and traceability.

This is important because AS/NZS 5131 is a unique standard in construction covering the full range of structural steelwork supply from steel manufacture to delivery and erection. Just as the ACRS specialist certification of steel and welded sections made from that steel does not replace the fabricator schemes covering more generally the full scope of AS/NZS 5131 (such as SCNZ’s SFC scheme), these acceptable alternative schemes do not in turn replace ACRS certification. In fact, the ACRS scheme and general fabricator

schemes are complementary, providing necessary levels of assurance to consumers across the full scope of AS/NZS 5131.

Myth 3: “I can’t find ACRS certified steels (or, “ACRS steel is more expensive”). So, I used other steel the supplier said meets AS/NZS Standards.”

Fact: ACRS certified firms are reported to supply over 70% of structural steels supplied to AS/NZS standards. So, ACRS certified materials are widely available.

ACRS issues 200 certificates, covering almost 300 sites, in 24 countries, and over 80 steel companies. ACRS certification includes local suppliers including Pacific Steel, Infrabuild and Bluescope, as well as premium overseas suppliers such as Nippon Steel, Posco, and Hyundai. Additionally, as documented in a recently released Australian Anti-Dumping Commission report, ACRS certification demonstrably does not affect the “cost” of steel supply; quality and conformity does.

So, whilst you might find cheaper steel, will your Authority accept steel that may be noncompliant?

Myth 4: “My project uses just-in-time procurement. So, even though ACRS certification is in the specification, I have to take whatever steel I can get to keep the project moving.”

Fact: With ready availability of ACRS approved steels, there is no expected delay in supply. Just in time (JIT) procurement offers many advantages. However, JIT is not an excuse to ignore the specification.

If the specification issued months ago requires ACRS certification, then looking to source steel only at very short notice is not meeting a reasonable duty of care. Putting

steel procurement on the critical path and locking-in suppliers with a proven capacity to deliver ACRS certified steels is both a realistic option and a reasonable expectation – especially when, as noted above, most steel available locally is ACRS certified, and ACRS certification does not add to the cost of conforming steels.

ACRS is continuing to work with affected parties to ensure appropriate specification of steel and verification of delivered materials.

ACRS is an independent, expert, third-party product certification body for construction steels and associated material supplied to New Zealand and Australian standards set up to provide consumer-facing certification and advice for public benefit.

If your staff have any questions regarding steel compliance, please email ACRS for assistance at info@steelcertification.com, or call +61 (0)2 9965 7216.

Philip Sanders, CEO, ACRS





breathe

MENTAL HEALTH

GET RID OF THAT OVERWHELM ONCE & FOR ALL

Have you been feeling a bit overwhelmed during these past few months?

All that information, all those changes, cancellations, postponements, trying to keep ahead of what's ahead, constantly switching between online and offline, implementing new ways of working, delays, all that ongoing advice, changing regulations...all while hanging out for certainty?

It's not uncommon to start feeling overwhelmed and yet at other times you think you've got this whole thing under control.

Regardless of what's going on out in the world, you can quickly become overwhelmed or overloaded in your world.

So...what's the difference between being overwhelmed and overloaded?

Overloaded means too many tasks to do, for example, the number of jobs on the go, projects to complete, enquiries to respond to, meetings to attend, things that are external to you. Overloaded reflects the amount of work you have to do.

Overwhelmed, on the other hand, reflects your ability to do that much work. You are feeling emotionally stretched due to the sheer number of tasks to do. This is an internal job.

There are so many decisions to be made, and at times there's too much change and possibility to deal with.

I work with people in business...self-employed contractors, owners, leaders, managers and team members who feel stretched, overwhelmed and tense, and who think there's no easy solution to the overwhelm they're experiencing... that overwhelm is actually caused by over-thinking.

So, what happens when you take back control of your mind, when you implement strategies to regain resumption of a useful thought process, and when you know how to respond to those outside circumstances thereby reducing stress on your inside, and minimizing any fallout as a result?

“
Since all our feelings come from thought, and not from our circumstances, I know that overwhelm is actually caused by over-thinking
”

You use your own judgement, skills and knowledge to tap into all of your common sense and wisdom, allowing you to avoid overwhelm and that fear of losing control. How do you avoid feeling overwhelmed... how do you hold it all together?

By conquering any F-E-A-R you may feel.

Here's a F-E-A-R conquering system you can use to start tackling the overwhelm:

F = Focus instead of freaking out: Connect to the present by paying all your attention to your breath, going in and going out. Focus on what you can control. Avoid the gloom and doom of the news broadcasts, check it in the morning and then focus on you and your world today.

E = Execute instead of escaping: This is a time to give yourself the opportunity to discuss your fears, your feelings give yourself a break. Talk to someone who can support you, a business colleague, trusted friend, mentor or professional.

A = Action instead of avoiding: List 3 things you can take action on today, write them down, start doing them and tick them off when completed. Taking action is a powerful way of operating in the present rather than the future.

R = Resource instead of refusing to pay attention to your signs of stress. Resource

yourself...do what you know reduces your stress, for example, physical activity, good meals cooked from scratch, regular meal-times & time schedules, time out with the family, creative activities... then repeat. Normal worrying is okay; overwhelm, excessive worrying, negative self-talk, stress or anxiety, or your mind constantly trying to cover all bases is not.



About the Author, Linda Wells:

Linda Wells is a sought-after Motivational Speaker, Trainer and Consultant.

As the Business Stress Specialist, Linda has innovated a unique method of action specifically for people who need to deal to their stress levels.

She is the Author of a book, titled 'Transforming Your Stress Into Business Success' which is packed full of strategies and techniques you can implement straight away.

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EARTH BUILDING

First published in Earthbuilding – the Journal of the Earth Building Association New Zealand

STRAWBALE PASSIVE HOUSE

Where did the story begin? If I had to draw a line in the sand, it would be the first sketches Ben and I did of a small strawbale house before we were married. It was 2007 and Ben was doing his carpentry apprenticeship and I was a sustainable building consultant, and we lived in a lovely but freezing house in Wanaka (the kind in which you need three duvets on the bed plus hats and thermals at night). Things stalled for five years or so due to travel, marriage and children, but sometime in 2012 we sat down to design the house afresh. 2012 was also the year I did the Certified Passive House Designer training. I had first learned about the standard in 2004 as part of my master's in environmental architecture in the UK, where at that time it was politely dismissed as some weird German idea... I then flirted with the idea of making our house Passive House, but abandoned it, thinking it would not fit with the natural, hand-crafted ideal that we still hold dear.

years. As it was a garage and only 'temporary' there was no bathroom until we added one on four years later, and in the interim we made do with a shed in the garden in which the pipes froze during winter. It was in the building of this little dwelling (48 square metres downstairs and a loft office/bedroom upstairs) that we came to our senses and realised that we could never afford, neither in financial terms nor in emotional energy, the house as it was designed.

Sometime around 2016 we decided metaphorically to throw those plans in the bin and start afresh with three main drivers: It should be affordable, it should be two storey (the views are much better higher up here, and I grew up in multi-level houses and have always loved stairs) and it should be Passive House. These three drivers turned out to be surprisingly compatible.

The first design, which was consented in 2014, was one and a half storeys, strawbale downstairs and timber frame upstairs, relatively complex in form and we loved it. We sensibly (we thought) designed a large strawbale garage which we intended to live in "while we built the house." It was sensible but not in the way we had intended. Louis turned two the day we moved into that house and it served us well over the next five years. The Garage House was an exercise in frugality. It cost us less than \$100,000.00 and comprised strawbale walls (still with no finish coat inside to this day) a solid earth floor and reclaimed timber windows which we retrofitted with double glazing, one by one, over several



If Passive House and affordability seem to be mutually exclusive concepts - think again. The simple rectangular form was born out of both. Simple, we have come to realise, is the cornerstone of affordable. Having worked on several complex Passive House projects since, I can say that the KISS principle – Keep it Simple, Stupid - really does apply here too.

The concept for the new house took only a couple of hours to design. The detailed design and Passive House design, as you can imagine, took a bit longer. With the fearlessness and expertise of our engineer, Paula Hugens – also a Passive House Designer - at our disposal, we set about designing what we had come to believe was the ideal marriage of low carbon construction (strawbale) and low operational energy (Passive House). At the time there had been one house in the UK that had targeted Passive House certification in a traditional strawbale house, but they had failed to achieve the stringent air permeability standard. (There are a handful of strawbale Passive Houses around the world but at that time they all used membranes to achieve the required level of airtightness). With help and advice, we decided that it should be possible to use the internal plaster as the airtight layer. After all, plasters are frequently used as the airtight layer in masonry Passive Houses. The airtightness turned out to be a challenge, as I will explain later.

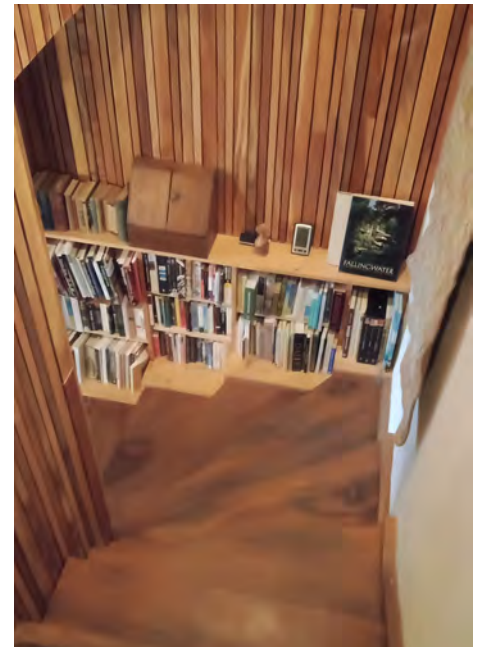
One of the reasons we had abandoned the Passive House idea was that initially Ben had wanted to make the windows himself. Slowly we let go of this idea. The Garage House had taught us that good things take time

- a lot of it - and we did not want to add three months or more to the project just for the windows. These windows would have to be triple glazed, and airtight. Ben had the idea of consulting an old friend for advice, a joiner in Germany with whom Ben had made some windows for a client while we lived in London. Stefan also had experience installing Passive House standard windows (just know as 'windows' in Germany) and he found us a 'small' (350 employees) local supplier and organised the export of some reasonably priced timber triple glazed windows.

We finally lodged our second set of building consent documentation late in 2017. Queenstown Lakes District Council (QLDC) have some inhouse expertise in strawbale building, not to mention a relatively large number of strawbale houses in the district, and they were not averse to the idea. In January 2018, Ben began on site, while I watched longingly from my office in the Garage House.

Ben was keen that we should repeat what had turned out to be a successful experiment with the Garage House: build the second level on the ground and crane it into place. Mostly he loved the intrigue this caused, but it also saved on scaffolding, and reduced the amount of time going up and down ladders and was therefore safer. Building on the ground also made it easier to protect the bales, so that the roof could go on quickly afterwards. By mid-2018 we had two storeys of strawbale walls, and a roof.





Then the fun really began. One of the aspects of Passive House design is thermal bridge free design. Generally speaking, strawbale construction is very well aligned with this philosophy, being for the most part a monolithic material with little timber framework to break the continuous insulation. The tricky part was the window installation detail. We worked terribly hard on a set of thermal bridge free details (I spent so long on this that in 2017

I gave a paper on the topic at the European Strawbale Gathering) and maybe we over did it in the end. Certainly, next time we would replace the polystyrene we used to insulate the structural posts at the openings, with a natural product like wood fibreboard. Interestingly, if one ditches the curved reveals that characterise a strawbale interior, achieving a thermal bridge free detail is much easier. The curve reduces the insulation at just

the point you need it most. The strawbale walls are perfect Passive House walls, being 15% more insulating than the recommended R-value for a Passive House wall in a cool temperate climate. The plaster is inherently airtight; the challenge was in the junctions. A concrete slab on ground is easy to make Passive House standard, and a timber framed roof only needs an additional insulated 'services cavity' on the inside.



By the end of 2018, the windows were in, and Ben was working on erosion testing for the finish plaster. Ben pumps his plaster, and he has invested many hours perfecting a mix that is both durable and easily pumpable.

2019 was dedicated (around other work commitments) to services, airtightness and the interior. Ben also worked with Ara - the polytechnic and training institute - in Christchurch on a moisture monitoring project; sensors which are embedded in the walls at various points around the building.

Our design philosophy has always been to keep the architecture simple and let the materials speak for themselves. However, I had

difficulty limiting myself to a sensible palette for the interior as I had so many ideas stored up after thirteen years of dreaming and planning. I was lucky to have the sage advice of an interior designer from Sweden, my cousin's partner, who helped me to rationalise my crazy ideas - as well as coming up with a few herself. One of the best decisions we made was the stainless-steel kitchen. Although high in embodied energy, it is zero emission and both recycled and recyclable, and highly durable.

The services were some of the last things to be completed. The house has two small 1 Kw radiators, one upstairs and one downstairs. These are heated with a hot water heat pump which also heats the domestic hot water. We have 3kWp of Photo Voltaic (PV) panels on the roof. We installed these as soon as we could when the roof went on in Winter 2018, so we could have free power for the building process. We had long been fans of solar hot water

but after much research and debate we decided on the PV-heat pump combination for the following reasons: We have an electric car and wanted to utilise free solar power during the day to charge it.

The PV could also power the heat pump, which is on a timer and only runs during the day. The warmer ambient air temperature by day increases the heat pump's efficiency, giving us a greater efficiency than using the PV only for water heating - an idea we had actually discounted along the way. Because we have such a low space heating demand, the heat pump could also be used to heat the radiators, which wouldn't have worked with solar water heating unless we had sized the whole system for Winter optimisation, which is wasteful in the Summer. The extremely low primary energy demand of the house, coupled with the renewable generation, pushed us into the Passive House Plus category. The

heat Mechanical Ventilation Heat Recovery system (MVHR) is essential for Passive Houses, not only for air quality but also for their ability to reduce space heating demand. In recovering between 80 and 90% of the heat between the outgoing and incoming air, the heat is utilised again and again. In my experience of modelling houses in our cold climate, the specification of an MVHR can reduce the space heating demand by more than 50%. Obviously, this does not preclude us from opening the windows; in fact, we've noticed how little the temperature drops when we've had the doors open for extended periods. A few weeks ago I made soap, a process which needs a lot of ventilation. I had had the windows open for a couple of hours (the temperature outside was about 9 degrees) and the temperature only dropped by 1 degree (from 23 degrees to 22). I attribute this to the high level of thermal mass we have in the building: an earth floor



on concrete slab, and 40mm of lime plaster on all the strawbale walls gives us a Specific Heat Capacity of 21,000 Watt hours per Kelvin (Wh/K.)

We undertook our first blower door test (the standard method for measuring airtightness) in October 2019. At this stage, the walls were plastered with only a body coat. As mentioned before, the airtightness was more challenging than in a more 'conventional' Passive House. The plaster was our main airtight layer: This was joined to the other airtight elements – the slab, the roof membrane and the windows - with tapes, meshes and a product from Pro Clima called Contega PV – a product that combines mesh with tape. At the midfloor we lapped a strip of airtight membrane around the joists (we used open web joists called PosiStruts) and then connected this to the plaster on both sides. Our tester and friend, Nigel Murray of Seechange, assisted us in locating all the unseen leaks in the plaster; in a thinner layer of plaster behind an internal wall, in the plumbing penetrations and in the corners around the windows where the curved reveals meet. Our first result was around 0.9 air changes at 50 pascals, 50% higher than the PH limit of 0.6. Test 2, a few

weeks later, came in at 0.65, a mere 0.01 of an air change over the limit, which is technically 0.649 thanks to Swedish rounding. Fortunately, this was revised down to 0.59 after a lengthy and thorough recalculation of the internal air volume. I must admit I was cursing all things Passive House at this point, as that tiny difference in air volume could have made the difference between a pass and fail of the goal we had worked so hard towards for so many years! A few months later Nigel came back to retest. As it had been so close, we wanted to check that it hadn't gone up, and even hoped that it would go down now that all the finish plaster was complete. The result of this test was 0.59 air changes at 50 pascals: still a pass but no better than before, which shows that the body coat provides a sufficient air barrier and the finish coat adds little, if anything, to the airtightness of the plaster.

We celebrated Christmas 2019 in the house, with no lights and no running water, but we felt it needed to be done. We wanted to thank our amazing family and friends for helping us to achieve this crazy project. Finally, on Louis' 7th birthday, we moved in. While I complain about how long it took to build, I need to remind myself that it took almost as long to

design, and Ben managed to plaster and help build three other strawbale houses during that time!

The prolonged process has made us infinitely grateful for the final result, which despite our intimate involvement as designer, builder, PH consultant and client, still feels like magic. At the end of April and the start of the frosts, while all our neighbours are lighting their fires, we have needed no heating as yet and the temperature has not dropped below 21.5 degrees, nor risen above 24. Holed up in lockdown, we have been able to appreciate it even more deeply.

My next job is to calculate the embodied carbon and to figure out how we can reduce it further, next time. We are working with an architect and their client in the North Island on a strawbale Passive House with a timber framed floor, which will reduce the carbon cost associated with a concrete foundation significantly.

While this house is not perfect – there were plenty of compromises along the way – it is pretty close to perfect for us and we are so proud of our 'third child' as we have described it in the past. It certainly was a labour of love.

By Jessica Eyeris - Photos by the author.



A graphic for a podcast series. At the top left, the name "RICE SPEIR" is written in a stylized font, with "RICE" in white and "SPEIR" in white, and the letter "E" in "RICE" and "S" in "SPEIR" highlighted in orange and blue respectively. Below the name are three people: a woman with short blonde hair and glasses wearing a black blazer over a white top, a man in a grey patterned blazer over a white shirt, and a man in a light blue button-down shirt. At the bottom, the text "STAYING LOCAL" is written in a large, bold font, with "STAYING" in white, "LOCAL" in white, and the letter "A" in "STAYING" and "L" in "LOCAL" highlighted in orange and blue respectively. Below this, the text "click here for our podcast series" is written in a smaller white font.

RICE SPEIR

STAYING LOCAL

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SUSTAINABILITY

CONCRETE INDUSTRY ON TRACK TO MEET EMISSIONS REDUCTION TARGET



Rob Gaimster - Chief Executive

The New Zealand concrete industry is halfway towards meeting its target of a 30 percent reduction in carbon dioxide emissions by 2030.

Concrete New Zealand (NZ) Chief Executive Rob Gaimster says the industry is fully committed to becoming net carbon neutral by the Government's target date of 2050.

A review last month by an independent auditor, Australian sustainability consultancy Thinkstep, found the New Zealand concrete industry is

well placed to meet climate change commitments the New Zealand government signed up to under the Paris Agreement.

"The independent review confirmed that the New Zealand concrete industry has reduced its emissions from cement by 15 percent between 2005 and 2018.

"The emissions reduction occurred against a 13 percent increase in demand, which demonstrates how committed we are to sustainability," Rob Gaimster says.

"We are pleased that our initiatives to reduce cement's carbon footprint have avoided about 400,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions in 2018 alone."

The reduction in emissions has been achieved through a range of measures, including the use of waste products such as wood biomass and vehicle tyres to fuel cement kilns.

Concrete NZ's Sustainability Committee has recently met Climate Change Minister Hon James Shaw to share the ThinkStep results and discuss how concrete is part of the transition to a net zero carbon New Zealand by 2050.

A game-changer for the industry here in New Zealand is that we

have available naturally occurring minerals that can be used to replace a percentage of cement clinker, which is the main ingredient of concrete production associated with carbon dioxide emissions.

"Waste from other industries can also be used to lower the cement clinker content in concrete and help to significantly reduce concrete's carbon footprint.

"At the same time, moving to new technologies, such as more energy efficient equipment and vehicles to produce and transport concrete, is part of our plan to be net carbon neutral by 2050."

Rob Gaimster says concrete is the second most consumed substance in the world after water and is central to supporting communities and economies around the world.

"Our kids walk to school on concrete footpaths, they learn in schools that rest on concrete foundations, we receive healthcare in hospitals built from concrete, and many of us work in concrete buildings.

"Concrete also underpins our water and sewerage systems and will be crucial in the development of low energy infrastructure that includes electricity generation and public transport."

“As we adapt to climate change and our planet warms, concrete will offer protection against fire and floods, while its mass will help regulate the internal temperature of buildings to reduce our reliance on energy intensive air conditioning.”

Rob Gaimster also points out that the environmental benefits of concrete are significant.

“Concrete structures act as carbon sinks, they can also be recycled, re-designed and repurposed. Concrete structures require little maintenance, and don't rot or burn.

“Our industry knows how important concrete is to everyone's future well-being. That's why we're working so hard to reduce our carbon footprint and maximise the benefits of concrete,” he says.

Media Contact

Rob Gaimster
Concrete NZ
021 928 651
rob@concretenz.org.nz

Background

Concrete NZ represents a membership of more than 700 corporates and individuals who collectively account for a significant proportion of the building and construction sector in New Zealand.

The New Zealand cement and concrete industry employs 11,000 people and generated \$1.8 billion in GDP in 2017. Its asset base of close to \$3 billion includes 190 concrete plants, and 22 cement manufacturing / distribution facilities.

It annually supplies and uses about 1.5 million tonnes of cement in New Zealand, which equates to around 4

million cubic metres of concrete for new residential, commercial and infrastructure construction.

Concrete is essential to renewable electricity generation, public transport infrastructure and the thermal performance of buildings. It is infinitely recyclable and easily repurposed, as well as offering fire and flood resistance and acoustic separation. Portland cement clinker is a dark grey nodular material made by heating limestone and clay at a temperature of about 1400 °C. The nodules are ground to a fine powder to produce cement, with a small amount of gypsum added to control setting.



Wood waste (biomass) at Golden Bay Cement's Portland works is used as a partial replacement for coal as kiln fuel.

PAST PERSPECTIVES

A RETROSPECTIVE VIEW FROM RETIRING MEMBER BARRY HOLSTED



I started as a Building Control Officer back in 1996, after having been made redundant. I was asked if I would like to join the dark side (having been a plumber for most of my working career) and become a Building Inspector, as it was called back then.

I joined Auckland City Council and soon found this to be a very rewarding occupation.

I was put through a building control course which allowed me to not only carry out plumbing and drainage inspections, but also do building inspections. (ACC) Auckland City Council (as it was then) had a separate processing team, so onsite visits was my roll and I inspected every type of building there is from a small garage to multi high rise apartments and hotels.

In those days we used to sign the back of the approved plans, using red ink for a fail. If a builder had a few fails it was noted, often the signed plan would end up on the shed floor with dirty footprints over it to make it illegible and they would argue the failed inspection had been re-inspected.

To counter this ACC took a couple of us aside and we designed a check list for inspections, to confirm what was viewed and all signed a duplicate book so both Council and the builder had a copy of what was inspected/approved. It is nice to know those check sheets have been adopted, although slightly changed they are still used today, both manually and electronically.

Fourteen years ago, I moved to Invercargill and joined Invercargill City Council, a much smaller Council than Auckland. Here not only do Building Control Officers do inspections, but they also do the processing of plans. This was a whole new experience and something, I believe every officer should do. I learned a lot and realized how much more is involved at the beginning rather than just at the end.

The challenges within the roll have been varied, from changes to the codes and how we go about enforcing them. The industry relies on Building Officials to teach them, rather than

builders, plumbers, architects etc learning for themselves. Then to electronic processing and inspection recording. We old chaps never had computers when growing up. As Building Control Officers, other duties are also required of us, such as when illegal work is reported. An officer is required to investigate. I have been threatened, attacked, and had a dog set on me, but thankfully I am still here!!

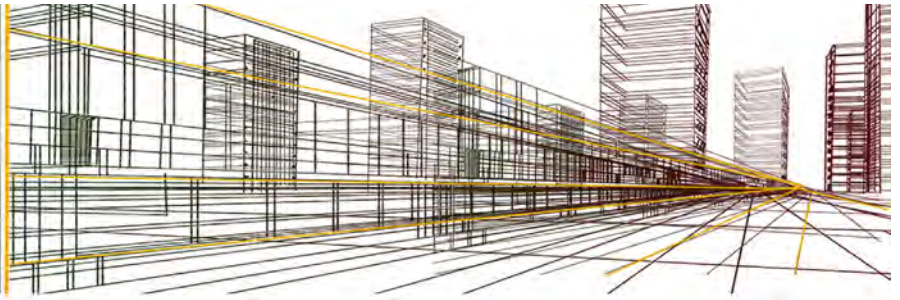
One challenge I rather enjoyed was doing the Building Control Surveying (Small, Medium and Large Buildings) Diplomas as these were not options when I started. Being in my 60s and having to relearn and think differently was something I had not had to do for about 25 years, but well worth it. BOINZ needs more credit for getting these qualifications in place

I joined BOINZ in 1997 and have found being a member a huge benefit, as mixing with my peers and discussing issues has over the years helped with carrying out my duties. Being both Secretary and later Chairperson of the Southern Branch has been extremely satisfying and rewarding.

Barry Holsted.

ONLINE COURSE:

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Target Audience:

All individuals working in the building industry including but not limited to; building consent officers, building owners, engineers, architects, designers, subcontractors and builders.

Course Content:

- *Understand the role of the Building Code
- *Describe the structure of the Building Code
- *Describe the content of the Building Code
- *Understand and describe the ways of complying with the Building Code

For More Info email Jason : training@boinz.org.nz



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NO FEES
 This programme is fully funded by the Government under TTAF (Targeted Training & Apprenticeships Fund)

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QUALIFICATION	NZ Certificate in Building Regulatory Environment Level 4
START DATE	The first regional cohorts will start August/September 2020.
DURATION	20 weeks
NO FEES	This qualification has been approved to receive full government support via the Targeted Training & Apprenticeships Fund (TTAF). The Fund will cover all fees for enrolments occurring between 1 July 2020 and 31 December 2022 as part of the Government's post-COVID support for education and training for the construction sector.
IN-EMPLOYMENT STUDY OPTION	Students attend 2 x 3-day block courses. Remaining study is on-line (including by webinar). There are 360 hours of related work experience. Refer over page for details.
FURTHER STUDY	NZ Diploma in Building Surveying Level 6

CONNECTIONS

DEFLOCK AND VERTICAL DEFLECTION

Seismic actions come in all directions and although as an industry we mostly account for horizontal deflections, in some instances vertical deflection needs to be taken into consideration.

Vertical deflection has traditionally been taken up in the head track of a wall system, where a deflection head track slips over the steel studs but is not connected to the studs or plasterboard.

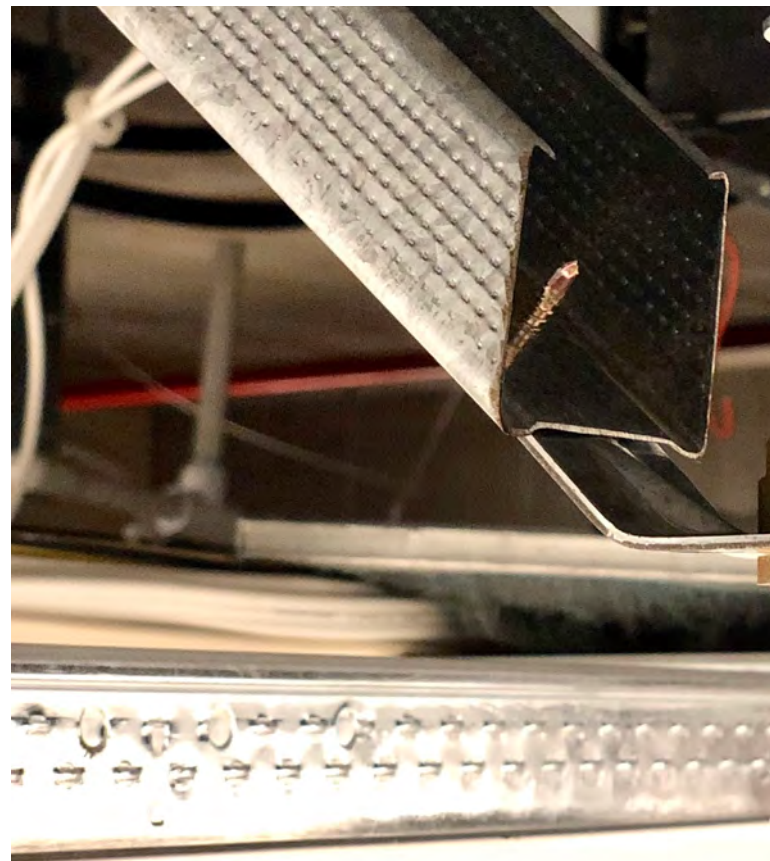
This allows the head track to move up and down relative to the rest of the wall, allowing for +/- 20mm of vertical deflection, which is arguably more than enough in most cases

Traditionally vertical movement from the floor or structure above is accounted for in this way, stopping damage occurring to the top of the wall.

Certain projects require more vertical deflection allowance than a deflection head track is capable of providing for. The reasons for vertical action include high wind or snow loading on purlin roofs, seismic conditions in the area the building is situated or where a project has been engineered to a high vertical deflection requirement.

TRACKLOK® Flat has provided an simple and robust way to deal with vertical deflection issues, by bracing walls against each other and not connecting to the structure over, allowing for

unlimited vertical deflection. Since 2017, our technical design team have been working with our engineering team and industry professionals to develop the DEFLOK® vertical deflection solution.



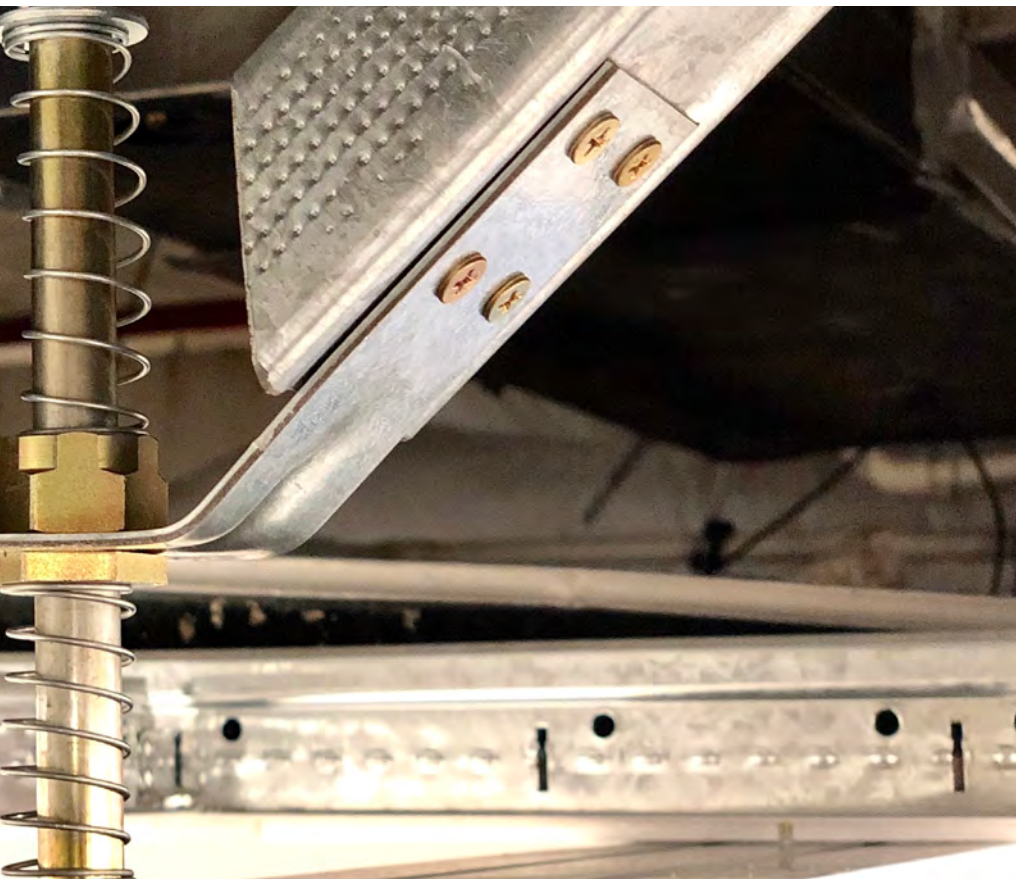
The DEFLOK® solution is an elegant and proven way of accounting for +/- 35mm of vertical movement.

DEFLOK® has been physically tested to have 241 KGF of capacity through the full range of the unit's vertical movement. DEFLOK® can take all lateral loading the industry has come to expect from the TRACKLOK® range of wall braces, while operating at the full extension of the brace.

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LEGAL

Straight Up Answers

Rosemary Gibson from Rice Speir answers the tough legal questions facing our industry



Will some resource consents be fast-tracked under Covid-19?

Answer: Extraordinary times calls for extraordinary measures and it looks likely for certain projects.

The Covid-19 Recovery (Fast Track Consenting Bill) will go before Parliament in June 2020. If implemented the legislation will fast track consenting processes under the Resource Management Act 2002 (RMA) for major works projects that can boost employment and the economy in the wake of the pandemic.

It is proposed that for a period of two years, in order to speed up the consenting process, public and council input will be removed from the consenting process and projects will instead be vetted by a panel of experts to be chaired by an Environment Court judge (or a retired Environment Court Judge).

Each panel will have a person nominated by the relevant local councils and by the relevant iwi authorities. The new process is intended as a short-term process only and after two years the legislation will automatically be repealed.

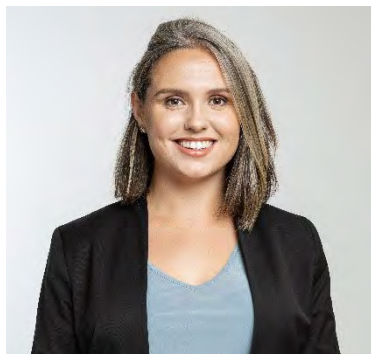


“Major works” or “shovel ready projects” will benefit from faster consenting and largely bypass the normal consenting and approval processes. Environment Minister David Parker has said the sorts of projects captured by the fast track process include, “roading, walking and cycling, rail, housing, sediment removal from silted rivers and estuaries, new wetland construction, flood

management works and projects to prevent landfill erosion” (<https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/fast-track-consenting-get-shovel-ready-projects-moving>).

The list of affected projects appears wide and developers will be keen to use the new processes to get projects up and running faster. The criteria to determine which projects are fast tracked, the criteria under which the panels will make their decision and the processes relating to that decision is not yet clear. Decisions on resource consenting applications would be processed and issued by an Expert Consenting Panel within 25 working days after receiving comments on the application (this can be increased to 50 days for large scale projects).

There will be no formal public consultation and the ability of councils to have input into whether projects proceed and will limit appeal rights to points of law and judicial review, with one further right of appeal to the Court of Appeal.



Rosemary Gibson
Senior Associate
Rice Speir

“

We look forward to analysing the detail of the Bill and will be working with a number of councils that will be affected by the changes. Building Officials need to also understand the developments and as to whether subsequent consenting processes will similarly be altered for these projects – please contact us if you would like more information.

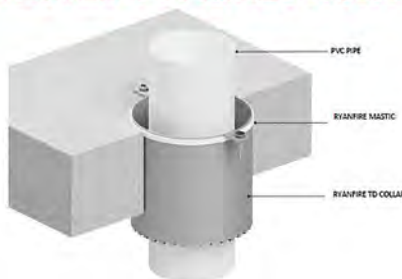
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