

BUILDINGTODAY



THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE REGISTERED MASTER BUILDERS ASSOCIATION

VOLUME 25 NUMBER 1

FEBRUARY 2015

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Contracts are now compulsory for work over the value of \$30,000 under new Building Amendment Act regulations that came into force on January 1, 2015.

RMBA president John Macdonald welcomes the changes which he says will ensure due diligence, and protect builders and home owners.

It's a game changer that will mean many builders having to familiarise themselves with exactly what is now required before building commences.

We also cover the Government's plan to overhaul the Resource Management Act which Environment Minister Dr Nick Smith says is critical to addressing housing supply and affordability. Welcome back to another year of change in the New Zealand construction industry!

Andrew Darlington — Editor

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Housing affordability — why it's important to New Zealand

Chief's Chat

By CEO David Kelly

Registered Master Builders recently released a report to identify the cost of regulation on housing affordability. The report was prepared by BRANZ on our behalf, and is supported by the Construction Strategy Group.

The report highlights a number of recurring regulatory requirements that currently can create additional costs of \$35,000 to \$77,400 on a \$567,000 new house in Auckland, with a subsequent increase in mortgage payments of \$134,000 to \$266,000.

Housing affordability has been on the industry radar for some time now, and while land availability is critical and a large component of any future solution, there are many other factors that, when added together, can create an overwhelming financial hurdle for New Zealanders wanting to enter the new home

market. This is, of course, particularly an issue in Auckland.

Home ownership is part of the Kiwi psyche — it's what most of us aspire to. International studies show that quality affordable housing is a major component of the infrastructure, particularly in larger cities, that creates economic growth and attracts people — in other words, it's important.

One of the issues the report highlights is that there are a range of regulations imposed either at central or local government level that are all dealt with individually.

The major costs relate to the Resource Management Act, the Building Act, the Building Code, and health and safety.

While there are justifications put forward for each of these, nobody currently looks at the combined impact of them all. This report does



so for the first time.

While we definitely don't yet have all the answers to fix the issues identified in the report, we want this document to take its place as part of the debate about how to improve housing affordability.

We have forwarded the report to the Productivity Commission as part of our submission on improving housing affordability. The full report is available on our web site at www.masterbuilder.org.nz.

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Changes ensure due diligence

New rules to have significant impact

By RMBA president
John Macdonald

Happy New Year to you all! I hope you are over the festive season and are raring to get back into work.

Some of you may be aware that Building Amendment Act regulations were passed by cabinet on December 1, 2014, and came into effect on January 1, 2015.

Contracts compulsory for work over \$30,000

These rules will have a significant impact on how you draft your contracts from now on. For most of you, it will be business as usual, but for those builders working on smaller projects — that is, for any building work over \$30,000, it is now compulsory to have a contract in place before commencement of the project.

Builders now have to provide information regarding the legal description of their business — for example, whether you are a partnership or a limited liability company. It is now also a requirement to supply information regarding the key personnel who will manage or supervise the project, as well as insurance details, such as the type of cover you will provide and what type of guarantees and warranties are included.

You will also have to specify the materials and products that will be used (if known), the expected start and completion dates, and detail the payment method — for example, “charge-up”, with fixed hourly rates, materials and margins, or a fixed contract price.

At the end of the contract the main contractor must supply all of the warranties and guarantees that apply to the project.

The forms are available on the RMBA web site and are quite simple to fill out.

Defects and liability period

One of the biggest changes is the defects and liability period which is now 12 months, so it is very important that any maintenance requirements that affect the durability of any products supplied are detailed to the owner at the end of the job.

Personally, I am very pleased to see this come into force, as it provides protection for builders and home owners. Builders are now required to provide their prospective clients with a checklist for all building work over \$30,000, which outlines their due diligence.

It explains the need to get detailed quotes (not estimates) for building work, and the importance of “comparing apples with apples”.

If clients are better informed at the start, and builders have clear expectations of the scope of the project — and both understand the procedures for payments, variations and dispute resolutions — the outcomes should be better for all.

Please take the time to familiarise yourselves with the information in the new RMBA Residential Building Contract — RBC1-2015.

This year, I am trying to meet as many members as I can. In May I will be travelling around the South Island, and I look forward to catching up with you and getting your feedback.



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Palmerston North apprentice 'lucky to have been taught by the best'

It was a massive shock to Palmerston North apprentice Ryan Smith-Pilling, employed by Nailing It, when his name was read out as the third place winner at the Registered Master Builders Carters 2014 Apprentice of the Year.

He says while building has always been in his blood, he didn't expect to make it to the national final.

"From a really young age I enjoyed making things and using my hands. My granddad was a builder and my dad owns a power tool centre, so that was a big push. I got my first tool box for Christmas when I was five or six," he says.

"I didn't expect to be placed at all. I'm lucky to have been taught by the best — who you learn from is a big factor in how well you do at the competition. I put a lot of credit to my boss for getting me to the national finals.

"I worked alongside my boss for two years — he really pushed me and he made me push myself which, ultimately, is what you need when you're competing in a competition like this one."

The judges were impressed with Ryan, saying he presented well in his interview and came across as very sincere, and has a promising career ahead of him.

"Ryan is a mature apprentice who is focused on his career and keen to put the hard yards in now to set himself up for the future," they said.

"He stood out as having an exceptionally well written project submission, and his confidence and ability to let nothing faze him during the practical challenge was commendable."

Ryan says when it comes to the practical, you just have to put your head down and do the best you can.

"The practical challenge was all stuff I had done before, but I found having a massive audience watching my every move quite challenging. It was quite an unreal feeling — something I had



It was a massive shock to Ryan Smith-Pilling, employed by Nailing It, when his name was read out as the third place winner at the Registered Master Builders Carters 2014 Apprentice of the Year.

never experienced before.

"I've had clients and my bosses come on site and see what I was doing, but that's different to having over 100 people watching you. The charity that I was building for came down, and all these little kids were chanting my name and cheering me on — it was a lot of pressure."

Ryan has grand plans for the future, including a dream of working for himself one day.

"I'm qualified now so I'm hoping to open up my own business if the time is right. I'd like to move into a project management role with a bigger company first and then probably go out on my own.

"Separate to my prizes from Apprentice of the Year, I also won a scholarship for \$3000 to further my studies from the BCITO. I'm using

the grant to do a BCITO supervisor course — so that's my first step!"

Apprentices, employers and young people aspiring to be a part of the construction industry are encouraged to join the Facebook page at www.facebook.com/apprenticeoftheyear or follow us on Twitter: @AOY_NZ. For more information, visit www.apprenticeoftheyear.co.nz.

Owned by the Registered Master Builders Association, the Apprentice of the Year competition is made possible thanks to principal sponsor Carters, the Building and Construction Industry Training Organisation (BCITO), and supporting sponsor the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE).



Heritage restoration project most challenging yet

Work on a Canterbury Category 1 Historic Places Trust building which started out as an \$800,000 repair job after the Darfield earthquake became a full \$5.8 million restoration project following the second major Canterbury earthquake in February 2011.

The attention to detail and care used to restore Strowan House at St Andrews College in Papanui, saw Bushnell Builders Ltd win the Restoration Category and awarded Gold at the 2014 New Zealand Commercial Project Awards.

Bushnell Builders director Matthew Bushnell says this was the most challenging project his firm had ever undertaken in its 35 years.

“The amount of labour involved — 46,000 man hours — was huge,” Mr Bushnell says.

“It all had to be carefully pulled apart, labelled and stored before the rebuild. There were no surplus storage facilities, so we had to build temporary storage adjacent to the site,” he says.

Bushnell Builders was originally contracted in September 2010 to repair the damages caused by the Darfield quake and to install a sprinkler system for a fire upgrade. They were two weeks away from completion when the February 2011 earthquake hit.

Working with project partners Wilkie and Bruce Architects Ltd, Holmes Consulting Group Ltd, Paul Bunkall of Rawlinsons Quantity Surveyor, and Powell Fenwick Consultants Ltd, Bushnell had the complex task of a full structural upgrade, repair and refurbishment of the entire building, complying with strict resource consent conditions, all while ensuring the historic value was maintained.

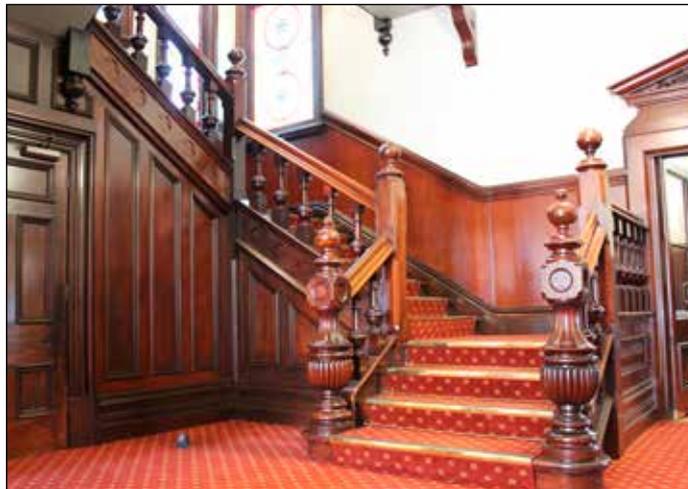
“The scale of work and the fact that the repair strategies were developed as we went contributed significantly to the challenges,” Mr Bushnell says.

“The engineers would come up with a different structural solution for each area as we progressed — there was no master plan. We knew we had to restore the whole building, but we didn’t know the work that was involved with each section until we were doing it.”

Due to the delicate nature of the building, much of the excavation had to be done by hand. This often exceeded 1.2m in depth, with



The attention to detail and care used to restore Strowan House at St Andrews College in Papanui saw Bushnell Builders Ltd win the Restoration Category and awarded Gold at the 2014 New Zealand Commercial Project Awards.



a total of 200 cu m of spoil being removed by hand.

Foundations were rebuilt in very small sections to ensure the existing structure maintained its strength, and all but one plaster lining had to be removed due to cracks in the plaster compromising its integrity.

The new state-of-the-art sprinkler system,

extensive structural upgrading and retention works have all contributed to a strong and secure future for Strowan House. All the hard work and long hours are almost undetected, which Mr Bushnell says is a true testament to the care and attention given to detail.

“All the services that are required to enable a building to have a modern day use have been fitted and discreetly concealed. So you’ve got a building that is stronger than it ever was, that’s better protected than it ever was and which is better suited for long-term usage, but still looks the same,” Mr Bushnell says.

Fast Facts:

- **Project:** Strowan House Earthquake Repairs
- **Project Team:** Bushnell Builders Ltd, Wilkie & Bruce Architects Ltd, Holmes Consulting Group Ltd, Paul Bunkall of Rawlinsons Quantity Surveyors, Powell Fenwick Consultants Ltd
- **Client:** St Andrews College
- **Budget:** \$5.8 million (contract value). \$6.8 million (project value)



'Technically challenging' home takes out House of the Year award

Richard Warwick of HAMR Home Building Contractors was "overwhelmed" when his name was read out as the winner of the Nulook New Homes \$600,000 - \$1 million award at the Registered Master Builders 2014 House of the Year.

He says this is only his second year competing in House of the Year, so winning an award was a great accomplishment for him and his team.

"Winning a House of the Year award has definitely helped send work our way," Mr Warwick says.

"Personally, it was a fantastic achievement because this was a really challenging build. The tight site and the 30° angle of the house posed a range of challenges — hours and hours of labour went into this build."

Mr Warwick says there was a huge amount of detail in this house, and the clever use of materials gave the home the X-factor.

"This house is stunning. Extensive use of raw materials joining with glass, timber and laminated timber, as well as cedar shutters and louvres, really made this house stand out from others in the category," he says.

The judges called this a carefully positioned and stunning architecturally-designed cedar and concrete block home.

"Taking a dominating position on top of Centennial Hill in Auckland, the home is carefully positioned between the established surrounding homes to allow views from almost every top floor room," they said.

"Living spaces surround three sides of the home, and a roofed indoor/outdoor living room has a clever complex of cedar shutters and fixed louvre screens. This extends the indoor living spaces, giving a feeling of openness, whilst providing privacy from the close neighbours.

"The builder has certainly been challenged with this project, and he has proven equal to the challenge, providing a fine example of a high degree of workmanship."

Mr Warwick says the benefits of House of the Year and being a Registered Master Builder are endless.



HAMR Home Building Contractors won the Nulook New Homes \$600,000 - \$1 million award at the Registered Master Builders 2014 House of the Year.



"I've been a Master Builder for three years, after starting our business five years ago — and we like being part of a recognised organisation," he says.

"Winning a House of the Year award is really rewarding for the whole team, and you become that little bit more special when competing

against other builders. We will absolutely be continuing to enter House of the Year!"

The Awards are made possible through the support of PlaceMakers, Master Build Services, James Hardie, GIB, Nulook, Future-Proof Building, Carters, ITM, Plumbing World, Resene, Westpac and Mitre 10.

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Breen Homes proud to win at House of the Year

Peter Breen of Breen Homes believes his partnership approach was the key to his success at the Registered Master Builders 2014 House of the Year competition.

Winning the ITM Renovation Award \$250,000 - \$500,000, Mr Breen says a lot of hard work goes into producing a house of this quality, and it was fantastic to see the efforts of his team and a great client recognised.

"Leading up to the event I was pretty casual about the awards, but that all changed when I walked into the venue and saw the huge number of tables and the effort that went into the evening," he says.

"I realised that even qualifying for the nationals was a massive achievement — to be named a national category winner was a great feeling."

The judges said this home extension is very well constructed and finished, in harmony with the existing house with retention of character well maintained.

"A 112 sq m extension with vertical tray copper cladding, exterior joinery that is thermally broken, and schist all complement the Central Otago scenery," they said.

"A large amount of internal schist lines the media room, complete with a 'picture frame' window, as well as hallway walls and a large open fire.

"Interior features include a large frameless glass cavity slider leading to the link, which separates the existing house from the extension."

Mr Breen says there are a range of business advantages involved with taking part and succeeding in House of the Year.

"House of the Year is a great opportunity to showcase the quality of our work to our potential clients. At Breen Homes we believe that real improvement comes from external review, so it's great to be able to measure our work against the best and see where we can improve," he says.

"We look for where we can improve in terms of quality of finish, but also in how we deliver a project, so the client can enjoy the process too. Part of building a great house is working for



Breen Homes won the ITM Renovation Award \$250,000 - \$500,000 at the Registered Master Builders 2014 House of the Year competition.



great clients, so we're always looking for ways to improve the experience for them."

The Awards are made possible through the

support of PlaceMakers, Master Build Services, James Hardie, GIB, Nulook, Future-Proof Building, Carters, ITM, Plumbing World, Resene, Westpac and Mitre 10.

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Around the Regions

Waikato

Waikato Master Builders help rebuild local SPCA

In 2013 Waikato Master Builders executive became aware of the desperate plight of the Waikato SPCA.

Due to council expansion at the SPCA headquarters, the organisation has had to find a new home, both for its educational purposes but, more importantly, for the homeless and abused animals they rescue.

The Waikato Animal Welfare Foundation was formed, and bare land was purchased in Te Rapa. The planned purpose-built facility is estimated to cost around \$2 million to build.

This is the situation that the Waikato executive became aware of, and a meeting was arranged with Foundation chair Jan Thomson.

It was immediately apparent that this was a much bigger project than at first envisaged, and the executive recognised that it needed to align with the BCITO to help out.

Along with Master Builders and the BCITO,

there are suppliers who have either donated or heavily discounted products and services.

Locals of all kinds connected with the construction industry have become involved to turn the project into a great community effort to benefit a very worthy local charity.

A donated cattery is now on site but this is just the beginning.

Further help from builders, contractors, labourers and apprentices is required to achieve the final goal, which is to have the SPCA up and running in its new premises by the latter part of 2015.

Collectively, if many can give a little of their time it can have a huge impact.



If you would like to know more about the project please contact Waikato president Steve Ross on 027 276 1161, or email steve@stewarthannaltd.co.nz.

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RMA overhaul critical . . .

Overhauling the Resource Management Act (RMA) is critical to addressing housing supply and affordability, and maintaining the momentum of economic and job growth, as well as better managing New Zealand's environment.

Environment Minister Dr Nick Smith says the RMA has produced more than 80,000 pages of plans and rules across New Zealand's 78 councils.

"This 10-metre mountain of red tape is holding back the development of new houses and jobs, and it is not performing well enough in managing key resources like fresh water," Dr Smith says.

"The Government is planning the most significant overhaul of the Act since its inception 25 years ago. We want to modernise the purpose to make it more practical and relevant, standardise council plans and simplify the process for gaining consents."

Dr Smith also recently released an independent report by Motu Economic and Public Policy Research — commissioned by the Treasury and the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment — into the impacts of planning rules, regulations, uncertainty and delay in residential property development.

The report concludes that the RMA is adding an extra \$30,000 to the cost of an apartment, an extra \$15,000 to the cost of a home, and that it is reducing the capacity of housing development by 22%.



Environment Minister Dr Nick Smith

"This report is consistent with the conclusions of the Productivity Commission and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development in highlighting the high administrative burden of our system of environmental regulations, but also adds new information by estimating the actual cost of its flaws," Dr Smith says.

"It indicates that over the past decade, the RMA has added \$30 billion to the cost of building, and reduced new housing stock by 40,000 homes."

Dr Smith also cites practical examples of where the RMA had wasted health and education funding, and where councils were using the RMA to unnecessarily interfere in people's lives.

"Our first phase of RMA reforms has made a positive difference in getting consents

processed more quickly, including for major projects like the Waterview Connection in Auckland, but we have always made plain more substantive change was required."

Dr Smith outlined 10 major changes the Government would be including in its second phase of reforms in 2015:

- Add management of natural hazards to the legislation's list of core functions.
- Recognise urban planning in the Act's purposes and principles.
- Specifically recognise the need for more affordable homes.
- Acknowledge importance of infrastructure such as transport, communication, water or energy.
- Give greater weight to property rights.
- Create national planning templates instead of numerous plans for different regions.
- Speed up the plan-making process.
- Encourage collaborative resolution instead of endless litigation.
- Strengthen national tools such as policy statements.
- Digitise all paperwork such as submissions and notifications.

"We have a power of work ahead to do with officials, our support parties and Cabinet committees to finalise and draft the required Bill. Our ambition is to have the Bill before Parliament and through a full select committee process this year," Dr Smith says.

"These reforms will be pragmatic and moderate. We want to reduce the mountain of plans and rules that make the RMA a barrier to new housing and jobs, but retain the core environmental controls that ensure we keep New Zealand special and such a great place to live."

. . . But Government figures underestimate cost of low industry productivity

Government figures indicating that environmental red tape is adding \$15,000 to the cost of a new home is "just the half of it", according to group home builder Generation Homes chief executive Kevin Atkinson.

"Behind the smoke and mirrors the reality is that the indirect cost of low productivity is a key issue in New Zealand's building industry," Mr Atkinson says.

"Time is money, and in my opinion the quoted figure of \$15,000 could almost be doubled by the time productivity is chewed up in working through complicated consenting processes — which, in turn, impacts on the ability of the industry to build more houses."

Mr Atkinson says the Government's ambitious plans to overhaul the Resource Management Act, designed to reverse skyrocketing house prices throughout the country, is a welcome

one.

"However, the proof will be in the pudding. The Minister is right in that the consenting process adds to the cost of the house, not to mention time delays. If the Government's reforms are implemented and actually successful the changes could be quite significant. But they are not a silver bullet."

Land availability is also key and, if addressed, will lead to increased affordability, Mr Atkinson says.

"From our personal experience it can take up to six years for land to be ready, from the concept stage through to supplying the market. Time is wasted in the repetitive work of going back to the council with revision after revision."

Under the proposed reforms, councils would be required by law to free up land for

development in line with projections for future population growth.

Mr Atkinson says standardising the consent process nationwide would be a large step forward for the industry.

"We find that there is a huge difference between councils, and a lot of local authorities are trying to adopt a more proactive and supportive approach."

Generation Homes is working closely with the Auckland Council to determine if the company can introduce five-day consents in West Auckland and Manukau, in line with arrangements already in place in Hamilton.

"If implemented, we can avoid delays and provide certainty for contractors. The benefits will ultimately flow down to customers due to a faster build time."



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Move towards trade certification for infrastructure workers seen as milestone for industry

Sector responsible for \$12 billion of work annually

The civil infrastructure industry has taken a major step forward towards establishing a recognised trade qualification for its workers.

Unlike building, plumbing and electrical workers, people in the civil infrastructure industry in jobs such as road building and pipe laying have no industry-wide and transferrable trade qualification.

A Civil Trades Certification Board has been established to oversee the initiation of the new trade regime and the registration of civil infrastructure tradespeople.

The Board had its inaugural meeting in Wellington in January.

Wide industry support

The initiative has wide industry support, and is being promoted through Connexis, the industry training organisation for the infrastructure industry, along with SCIRT (Stronger Christchurch Infrastructure Rebuild Team) who are providing a project manager to help the trade certification get under way.

Inaugural chairman of the Civil Trades Certification Board, Dave Connell, says taking the first step towards trades certification for civil infrastructure is exciting but well overdue.

"Trade certification will fundamentally change how the civil infrastructure industry works.

"We currently rely on labourers and plant operators supervised by foremen, and have work signed off by engineers," Mr Connell says.

"A regulated trades regime will see certified tradespeople take ownership and provide the craftsmanship required for delivery of a product or construction activity. It will be game changing for the industry and the people who

work in it," he says.

The Civil Trades Certification Board has been officially established to maintain and govern the trades certification regime on behalf of Civil Contractors New Zealand (CCNZ).

This organisation represents contractors who carry out the country's civil infrastructure construction and maintenance work.

More than 40,000 workers employed

CCNZ estimates the civil construction sector carries out more than \$12 billion of work annually, and employs in excess of 40,000 workers.

Mr Connell says the trade certification will empower and advantage workers who will have a recognised and transferrable trade behind them.

He says for employers it means more engaged workers who are more productive and safer, and with an expected outcome of less on-job re-work required.

Significant milestone

Connexis ITO chief executive Helmut Modlik says the establishment of the Trade Certification Board is a significant milestone.

"Introducing a trade regime for civil infrastructure has been something that has been wanted by the industry for a long time," Mr Modlik says.

"A number of factors, including the Christchurch rebuild and the increasing need for experienced and qualified infrastructure workers across New Zealand, has meant tangible progress has now been made.

"This is a significant step for the industry and its workers," he says.



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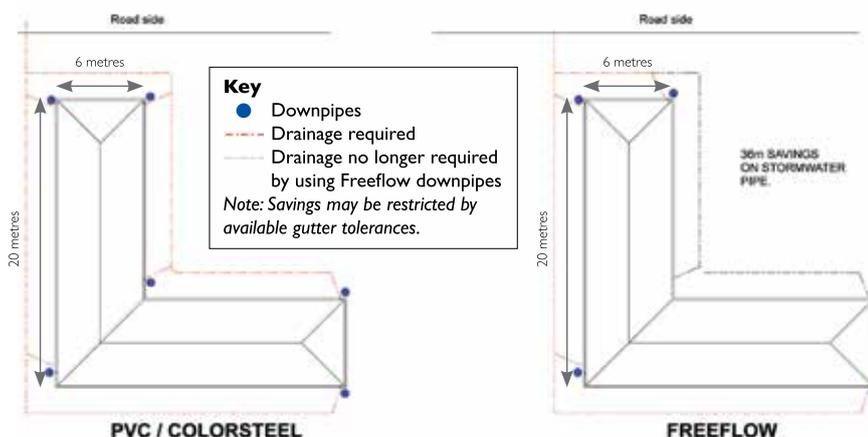
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Skill shortage hampers rebuild

More Qs needed — but they must be well qualified

A shortage of qualified and experienced quantity surveyors is hampering urgent construction work, particularly in Christchurch and Auckland, according to the New Zealand Institute of Quantity Surveyors (NZIQS).

President Julian Mace says the biggest problem is finding quantity surveyors with appropriate practical work experience.

Online job advertisements for quantity surveyors increased 26% over 12 months from June 2013.

Since 2009-10 around 560 visa and work permits have been approved for quantity surveyors to enter New Zealand.

Properly experienced

"Yes, we need more quantity surveyors, but they must be well qualified and properly experienced."

Mr Mace says quantity surveyors immigrating to New Zealand often have valuable offshore experience of large scale buildings, developments and infrastructure that is useful given what's happening in Christchurch.

However, he says the NZIQS is hearing reports of unqualified and inexperienced quantity surveyors doing work that is not up to standard and to the detriment of customers.

Rigorous quality assurance

"We do urge people and organisations to engage a quantity surveyor who is a member of the New Zealand Institute.

"The Institute has rigorous quality assurance criteria, which means customers can be assured of the practitioner's skills and experience and, if anything does go wrong, the Institute provides a disciplinary process."

Quantity surveyors are already on the immigration department's skills shortage list, indicating the Government is actively encouraging skilled workers in that profession.

"The building boom in New Zealand will continue for many years yet and quantity surveyors will be in demand."

Mr Mace says the lack of appropriately qualified and experienced quantity surveyors is hampering building work where it is most needed — in Christchurch and Auckland.

"There are significant career opportunities for the foreseeable future, for men and women," he says.

The Government's Occupation Outlook 2015 report says there are 2150 quantity surveyors in New Zealand, and that the engineer professionals sector is tipped to grow at just under 4% a year for the next several years.

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New building planned for Tetra Pak at Waikato Innovation Park

Waikato Innovation Park has signed an agreement with existing tenant, Tetra Pak, to construct a custom-built national headquarters on its Hamilton East campus.

The new building will be the fourth constructed on the Park's campus since it opened its doors in February 2004.

The new two-storey, 3500 sq m building will house Tetra Pak's New Zealand headquarters and design team, in addition to a workshop for its technical service team.

The food processing and packaging company currently operates from Waikato Innovation Park in a shared office building, and employs 100 staff. The company moved into the Park in September 2009.

"The Asian and Chinese demand for dairy products from New Zealand continues to grow, which means growth for Tetra Pak as we help New Zealand dairy companies to realise their export plans," according to the most senior Tetra Pak director in New Zealand, and site manager of the Hamilton office Chris Morgan.

"We are pleased to continue our tenancy at Waikato Innovation Park, which has served us well during the past five years," Mr Morgan says.

Waikato Innovation Park chief executive Stuart Gordon says the new build creates exciting opportunities for the Park, its tenants and New Zealand businesses.

"Tetra Pak's move into a new building is exciting for us here at Waikato Innovation Park because it means we get to help an existing client with their expansion. Seeing our tenants progress and grow is what we are all about.



From left: Tetra Pak director Chris Morgan, Hamilton mayor Julie Hardaker and Waikato Innovation Park chief executive Stuart Gordon on the site of Tetra Pak's planned headquarters in Hamilton.

And we're always pleased when we are able to provide options as our tenants grow beyond their initial space requirements," he says.

"The move for Tetra Pak also creates room for expansion for our other growing tenants within our campus, and makes room for new tenants as well."

Mr Gordon says the company plans to break ground by March 2015 and open the building in December.

The new build will be undertaken with the preservation of Waikato Innovation Park's natural environment in mind.

About Waikato Innovation Park:

Waikato Innovation Park provides a dynamic business campus where collaboration between business and research organisations drives commercial growth for resident companies.

The Park houses more than 40 companies employing more than 400 people on site. More than 80% of the Park's companies are exporters, and collective earnings were in excess of \$160 million in 2013.

The first building was opened in 2004 and subsequently underwent an expansion in 2006. The Park's second building was opened in 2009.

For more information about Waikato Innovation Park, visit www.innovationwaikato.co.nz.

Subcontractors call for decision on voidable transactions

Subcontractors are calling for the Supreme Court to release its decision on the ability of liquidators to claw back payments made by insolvent companies to contractors, and put an end to months of uncertainty for New Zealand businesses.

Last year, the Court of Appeal backed a liquidator's power to claim back payments made by an insolvent company to a contractor up to two years before its collapse, a practice known as voidable transactions.

An appeal against the decision was heard at the Supreme Court in March 2014. However, a leading industry body representing subcontractors is frustrated at the wait for a decision.

Graham Burke, president of the Specialist Trade Contractors Federation which represents

more than 5700 contracting firms in New Zealand, says while this decision is pending, thousands of businesses remain in a "no-man's land" with regard to voidable transactions.

"Under the Court of Appeal ruling, any service you supply and are paid for afterwards is a voidable transaction," Mr Burke says.

"That affects every business in New Zealand which provides goods and services on account. However, the building trade is particularly aware of this because there are more insolvencies in the construction sector than in other sectors."

Voidable transactions rules are intended to prevent queue-jumping among creditors. However, Mr Burke said that under the current ruling, the balance is stacked heavily in favour of liquidators and preferred creditors such as

the IRD.

"Most contractors are unsecured creditors. The current ruling means that contractors who complete a contract properly and have paid their suppliers and staff, cannot have certainty that payments they have received will not be recovered.

"This makes it difficult for small business to plan to invest and grow. The contracting market is currently buoyant, but there have been some high profile insolvencies in recent years.

"The issue of voidable transactions needs to be resolved so businesses can make decisions about investing in areas such as new equipment, staff training and expanding their businesses to meet the growing demand."

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5000 apprentice sign-ups an all-time high

The BCITO has achieved another first for the construction industry by reaching 5000 apprentice sign-ups in 2014 — an all-time record. In fact, at the close of business for the 2014 year, that number had actually grown to 5542.

“This milestone reflects the huge commitment from the building and construction community, our apprentices and BCITO staff,” chief executive Ruma Karaitiana says.

“We look forward to working with the industry to maintain momentum over the coming years to ensure we meet the skill requirements of New Zealand’s construction sector. We’re literally building people like never before.”

Trevor Mackie of Christchurch was delighted to be number 5000. Trevor works for joinery business R A Hale 1997 Ltd, and is lucky enough to really enjoy what he does every day. He’s looking forward to his future in the industry, and can’t wait to become a qualified joiner.

Trevor began working for R A Hale when he heard about the opportunity through his school, Hagley Community College, and went for it. Three months later, and recognised as a dedicated and attentive worker, Trevor was signed into a joinery apprenticeship.

Managing director Donald Bisphan is pleased with Trevor’s progress. “He’s a really great member of the team, a good all-rounder, and we’re looking forward to teaching and mentoring him further.”

“I’ve always enjoyed working hands-on creating something and working out complicated and intricate details of a project from start to finish. Joinery lets me do both,” Trevor says.

“The best thing about being an apprentice is learning something new every day and finding out better ways of doing things that you might not have known beforehand.”

In his spare time, Trevor is a keen BMX racer, and was ranked number nine in New Zealand at age 16. He also competed in the BMX World Championships in Auckland in 2013.

To win a BMX race you need to be in front going into the first turn and accelerate the fastest. The leader controls the race and the followers need to work harder. Trevor will no doubt take the lead in his joinery career just as he has in his racing career.

His BCITO training advisor will guide Mr Bisphan and Trevor through the apprenticeship programme over the next few years. The BCITO wishes him the best for his learning journey.

Having exceeded all forecasts for apprentice numbers during 2014, the BCITO is committed to ensuring there are enough skilled professionals across all trades to cope with demand in the future.

If you’re an employer keen to take on a new apprentice, contact the BCITO on 0800 4 BCITO (0800 422 486). The organisation has a dedicated job matching service and a database of many people who are interested in starting an apprenticeship in the construction industry.

BCITO
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My Secret to Training Legendary Apprentices...

Since starting my own business at age 30, I've been passionate about training. I wanted someone young and fresh to help me out; who would grow to become a valuable member of both my team and the construction industry. So I took on an apprentice through BCITO.

Seven years and six apprentices later, I'm reaping the benefits. Not only do I now have a team of guys with the skills that my business needs, but I've got some great mates to work with too.

Finding the right apprentice isn't easy, but once you've found someone you can get along well with, is eager to learn and not afraid of a bit of hard work, you're sorted. Through training apprentices, I've

had excellent opportunities to foster great talent. One of my first apprentices, Willie de Gruchy, went on to win the Auckland 2013 House of the Year. Bill Harkness (pictured), who's still working with me now, won the RMB Carters Apprentice of the Year title in 2013.

I'm so proud of what these guys have achieved, and it's so rewarding to know I have been a part of their career.

When your apprentices succeed, so does your business. Who wouldn't want a top class tradesman to work alongside everyday?

For me, training apprentices just makes sense.

Ben Redmond
Redmond Builders & Construction

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If you reckon Ben knows what he's talking about and you want to get involved with training **CALL BCITO ON 0800 200 486**. We may even be able to help you find the right apprentice.



Trevor Mackie (left) with his mentor Donald Bisphan.

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Raising the building industry to a new level

By John Oliver, Hiandri Solutions Ltd

Water is enemy No 1 when it comes to building — wet frames, wet floors, delays — who needs it!

The Hiandri concept was one of those light-bulb moments that seem to happen at 2am — the idea of placing plastic packers under the bottom plate at 600mm crs, lifting the entire timber or metal frame 12mm above the floor, allowing water to escape, the plate to dry quicker and keeping the timber from acting like a blotter, just soaking water up through the frame. It seemed just a plain, simple, common sense solution to a big industry problem.

Purely from a builder's perspective, the benefits from installing Hiandri bottom plate packers are immediate.



They replace damp proof course H3.2 plates because they're a safer working platform that cannot hold water.

There are minimal delays at pre-lining as the frame is not, and has not been, sitting in water because it drains — meaning significant savings, including re-inspection fees, no costly mechanical drying, no holding costs, no delays in progress payments and, of course, you are highly unlikely to get that dreaded phone call

some time down the track advising that your frames have rotted.

The best part is the cost. As a guide only, on a standard 200 sq m New Zealand home, Hiandri bottom plate packers can be supplied and fitted by your frame manufacturer for less than an additional \$450, or less than 0.2% of the build cost, a cost that can be recouped in spades.

The Hiandri system is fully patented, and made in New Zealand so the company has control of the process and supports local industry.

The product is fully tested and engineered, including standard bracing systems, plus Codemark Certification, which means it will be accepted by all Building Consent Authorities in New Zealand.

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Home ventilation systems typically comprise of an above-the-ceiling-roof-cavity, and a centrally-mounted fan which distributes drier filtered air from the roof cavity into bedrooms and living rooms via a network of ducting, the latter also mounted in the roof cavity.

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- Low cost.
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- Easy installation, a few hours compared to one to two person days, with no ducting or complex equipment.
- Can be fitted by many DIY home handymen and electricians in particular.
- No cost, easy-filter maintenance — remove



and wash yourself, versus an expensive annual contract.

- Easily scalable — start with one room and add other rooms as you wish.
- No electronics to master, simple and effective.
- Very quiet operation, lab-tested at 14 decibels, barely audible to the human ear.
- Univent fans are designed to run more than 150,000 hours, and have a six-year warranty.
- Automatic pre-set humidity and temperature controls — turns itself on and off depending on roof cavity air moisture content and temperature.

The system pulls dry air from the roof cavity which is mixed with the wetter air in the home living spaces, reducing the moisture content by pressurising each room, causing sufficient air changes to reduce the moisture content.

It also reduces window condensation and the amount of moisture absorbed into wall coverings, drapes and carpets which can lead to mould and mildew, key triggers for asthma and allergies.

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When will the Licensed Building Practitioners

Building Today columnist and industry stalwart Mike Fox talks candidly about issues concerning the New Zealand construction industry.

The current Licensed Building Practitioners scheme was born as a result of recommendations from the 2002 Hunn Report on Weathertightness and the resulting consultation with industry sectors.

It started with voluntary participation in November 2007 and became compulsory from April 2012.

Of the almost 29,000 licences now issued, 19,000 are for carpentry. Because a number of practitioners have dual site licences, the actual number of individuals who are licensed equates to about 24,000 (see graph below for the complete breakdown).



Mike Fox



Compared to other operative schemes covering the likes of electricians, plumbers and drainlayers, which span as far back as the 1930s, the LBP scheme is still in its infancy. However, with the entry cycle of the LBP scheme now nearing completion, the next phase will be one of consolidation, strengthening the system and upskilling the practitioners within it.

The LBP scheme was launched following an amendment to the Building Act 2004 in November 2007. With the primary intention of encouraging competent building practitioners to build homes, and to get it right the first time, the scheme also arms consumers with information to make informed decisions about the building practitioners they engage.

Two and a half years have now passed since the Act became compulsory, and it's time to see if the scheme is delivering in accordance with its original intentions. Beginning with a fundamental question — is the industry better off for having a comprehensive licensing

regime? The answer is a resounding yes.

There is no question that a cultural shift has taken place among the hands-on workforce. Those that are actually completing the work now sign off on it, and record it in a memorandum of work. This has led to a lift in individual professionalism and a real focus on doing the job right, first time.

Despite this, the current system is still far from perfect. It has now been operating long enough to see where the strengths and weaknesses lie, which means there is an opportunity to fine tune and make improvements.

So what are the strengths of the LBP scheme?

- After initial reticence and concerns over additional liability, LBPs have embraced the system as part of being a professional within the industry.
- Individual professionalism and upskilling through CPD training is raising the knowledge and skill level of the sector.

- Trade associations, merchants, manufacturers and BRANZ have become more focused on educating LBPs and, thereby, helping raise knowledge and standards.
- The consumer and the trained builder are better protected from the untrained interlopers who have plagued the industry with easy entry and exit during every building boom.
- Homes are now designed and built more robustly than during the leaky home decade.
- The LBP brand is growing and consumers are becoming more aware of it. This awareness of LBPs, along with the compulsory changes that took effect on January 1, 2015 around disclosure, contracts and warranties, will all help raise professionalism.

I might add that the regulators did themselves and the industry little help by rushing the above changes through. Industry players are now left scrambling creating new contracts and disclosure documents.

What are the areas for improvement with the LBP scheme?

With the scheme still maturing, it's only natural for areas of improvement and faults to become apparent. Although this list of improvements may seem somewhat long we should not lose sight of the overall intent and success of the scheme.

- Site licences currently have no function or value other than being a quality mark for the individual. A use for them should be found, whether it be in risk-based consenting, site co-ordination or, failing that, they should stop collecting fees and cease to exist.
- Building Consent Authorities (BCAs) have been slow to recognise the skills of LBPs and continue to treat everyone as unskilled, with the number of inspections taking place now being more than ever before. BCAs have an opportunity to play an instrumental part in assisting with identifying those LBPs that need upskilling or removing from the system, and should be encouraged to do so.
- Some BCAs see the LBP scheme as just another administrative function and opportunity to gather revenue. One BCA I am aware of even has the gall to charge a fee of

scheme deliver tangible benefits?

\$50 per LBP working on the site. This can amount to a tidy sum, and is something I am sure was not an intention of the scheme, and is not in the best financial interests of anyone but the BCA in question.

- CPD requirements are currently a bit light, and it is encouraging to see practical changes on the horizon, including recognition of practical on-site learning.
- More work should be able to be done by LBPs with self-certification. This could be managed by extending Schedule 1 of Consent Exempt Work, but only if completed by a suitably qualified LBP.
- A clearer definition of the term “supervision” is needed. Unfortunately, anecdotal evidence of the system being abused exists. Seemingly, certain groups bring in temporary unskilled labour and use a local LBP to sign off the work. This is obviously unacceptable behaviour and is not in the spirit of the LBP scheme.
- A gap exists in the regime that allows less than reputable companies to navigate around the system. Given it is only individuals who are licensed, this will always be the case unless there is some provision to recognise companies within the licensing regime.
- Complaints are on the rise, which is hardly surprising given the number of licences. Most complaints are about contractual or cosmetic items which are outside the jurisdiction of the scheme and can't be dealt with.
- A Code of Ethics to cover and guide best practice behaviour of LBPs would go some way to clarifying expectations of the consumer and LBP.

Complaints on the rise

Complaints and resulting penalties are an important part of keeping the integrity of the system intact. This is a complex and multi-layered area that can be used to gather data on consistent shortcomings and areas where upskilling can be focused.

Monitoring complaints will also go a long way towards being able to exit those that lack skills or who bring the regime into disrepute.

Consumers are looking for remedy when they make a complaint. However, because the licensing regime is about technical skills and not contractual or cosmetic complaints, many are disillusioned to find their complaint is not covered.

The recent changes to the law around disclosure, contracts and warranties may help negate some of these complaints.

Complaints are dealt with by the Licensing Practitioners Board, and with a current rate of about 70 per annum, they are steadily growing.

The complaints typically fall into one of four categories:

- Failure to provide a record of work. 30% approx.
- Work started or done without a building consent. 30% approx.
- Incompetent or negligent workmanship. 20% approx.
- Bringing the scheme into disrepute, eg misleading clients. 10% approx.

The motivating factors for making complaints are varied, but fall into the following categories:

- The builder should not be working in this area.

- BCAs seeing repeated incompetence by an LBP.
- Vindictive complaints by aggrieved clients or head contractors.
- A cost-effective way of gathering evidence that can be used for further alternate action. It is worth noting that there is no monetary gain or opportunity for an award to be made to those making a complaint.

Although BCAs are in the best position to help improve the quality of those within the system, they seem somewhat reluctant to make complaints due to the amount of paperwork involved.

They also have the ability to issue infringement notices and fines which, perversely, they can profit from.

This may need to be monitored and addressed if BCAs become over-zealous as they see the fines as another easy revenue stream.

If BCAs want to rely upon the skills of LBPs they also need to actively be part of the monitoring of such while the system matures and improves. A long view and collaborative approach by BCAs will result in a much better system for all.

To date, the Licensing Practitioners Board has been treading lightly on penalties, but this will ramp up as the system matures. Already there have been many censures, with some licences suspended.

In closing, one can see that the framework for a successful and effective licensing scheme is in place. However, we are yet to experience the real tangible benefits of the LBP scheme.

These include, for example, risk-based consenting, self-certification on an expanded schedule 1, and recognition of skills by risk-shy BCAs resulting in fewer inspections.

All these are necessary ideals but seem a long way off. To ensure the LBP scheme is worthwhile for all, vital requirements are strong leadership by the regulators and a willingness by all the participants to make the system a winner.

• This article contains the author's opinion only, and is not necessarily the opinion of the Registered Master Builders Association, its chief executive or staff.

• Following page: Scaffold, Access and Rigging New Zealand president Nick Pfahlert responds to Mike Fox's *Building Today* June 2014 column on falling from height safety measures.

Important advice for LBPs wanting to avoid a complaint

The majority of complaints are to do with failure to provide a record of work and starting or completing work without a building consent. Both are easily within the control of the LBP, and are not worth getting dragged through the system for.

Withholding a record of work as leverage for payment is an illegal and foolish practice. Understandably, it seems unfair that you have to provide it even if payment is in dispute. However, you have other remedies available to you.

Starting or doing work without a consent is not worth the risk. It's important to actually sight the consent document and conditions before going to site. Don't rely upon the say so of the client or other third party that it has been issued or taken care of.

If a complaint is made against you for either of the above, you will be required to attend a hearing and, if upheld, it will be recorded against your registration for three years as a matter of public record.

Attending a hearing will be stressful, time consuming, and could be damaging to your reputation. Pick your battles — these are ones you can easily avoid.

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Best practice guidelines criticism unfounded

By Scaffolding, Access and Rigging New Zealand president Nick Pfahlert

In the June 2014 issue of *Building Today*, columnist Mike Fox suggested regulations surrounding scaffolding and working at heights in the construction industry added additional costs and delays to building projects, and sited misinformation around enforcement of the rules and inspections.

While we welcome debate in the construction sector, it's important that some of Mr Fox's inaccuracies and misinformation are corrected. So let's set the record straight about the economic and industry impact of height safety best practice and regulations.

According to an independent BRANZ study, the Best Practice Guidelines around working at heights in New Zealand is estimated to result in 90 fewer deaths and severe injuries per year, and will save the New Zealand economy \$1.13 billion over the next 25 years.

We must remember that working at heights is a holistic term, and not only about scaffolding, rigging or accessing, but includes a safety approach for those across industries who are at risk working at height.

All inclusive, the research shows stronger guidelines generate more than \$1 billion dollars in total benefits over 25 years, thanks to improved productivity, reduced sick leave and lower health care costs. This equates to a cost-effective benefit for the industry, workers and the New Zealand economy.

We understand that regulation can be challenging, but the Best Practice Guidelines, as they deal with construction, have been developed by leaders across the construction industry and the Department of Labour who understand the best way to keep New Zealanders safe, while also ensuring productivity can remain high.

We are working hard every day to better improve our standards and work with practical changes, saving money for New Zealanders and making scaffolding, rigging and access safer for everyone involved.

Although the working at heights best practice spans many industries, the construction sector in New Zealand has a reputation for its poor health and safety record. According to ACC, there were 133 work-related injury claims to ACC for every 1000 full-time workers in the construction industry in 2011.

The number of injuries in the construction industry carries a significant financial cost, with claims exceeding more than \$100 million every year. In the 2007/2008 financial year, 50% of fatal ACC injury claims occurred in the construction industry.

The very reason scaffolding exists is to better protect workers, and it is the responsibility of the industry to ensure workers can be as safe as possible in an already dangerous industry.

The BRANZ study also confirmed that stricter guidelines for those working at heights in the residential construction sector has reduced total accidents by 3.7%. As more companies understand and implement Best Practice Guidelines, injuries will be reduced by a greater number.

Further research has shown that as inspections have increased following protocol put in place by the Ministry of Labour under its WorkSafe legislation, their increased visual presence has put construction

BT's Back in Time

20 years ago:

- All residential work undertaken by Master Builders was to automatically carry a five-year guarantee, starting in mid-1995.

Extension of the guarantee scheme operated by Master Builders Federation subsidiary Master Build Services to all residential building work was timed to complement the Federation's television advertising campaign.

MBF chief executive Trevor Allsebrook said automatic cover would effectively provide a long sought-after system of registration for builders.

"The guarantee, which will feature in the TV campaign, will give professional builders a marketable advantage over the cowboys," he said.

15 years ago:

- Sponsorship of Registered Master Builders House of the Year local awards ceremonies was centralised, taking a weight off local co-ordinators.

The 20 local awards functions were all to be sponsored by PlaceMakers, James Hardie, Winstone Wallboards, Origin Timeframe, Firth Industries and Tasman Insulation. These businesses were also sponsors for the national awards ceremony which was due to be held in Christchurch in 2000.

10 years ago:

- The Department of Building and Housing warned people using private building certifiers to be aware that certifiers may not have adequate insurance cover against potential claims of negligence.

The advice followed a comprehensive review, begun by the former Building Industry Authority and instigated by leaky building problems at the end of 2002, of the indemnity insurance certifiers were required to have.

5 years ago:

- MultiProof, a new streamlined, national, multiple-use approval service for volume builders was launched by Building and Construction Minister Maurice Williamson.

"Without compromising quality and safety, MultiProof fast-tracks building consents for standard, multiple-use building designs. It will save time and money for consumers and builders," Mr Williamson said.

Best practice guidelines criticism unfounded

From page 26

companies on notice to clean up their act and follow safety regulations at a higher standard. The increased presence is estimated to reduce accidents by almost 25%.

Mr Fox also assessed that there have been building delays, particularly in Canterbury, because of scaffolding requirements.

We accept there is a significant shortage of skilled scaffolders in New Zealand. Scaffolding, access and rigging are demanding jobs requiring skills and strength, resilience, agility and a head for heights. That's why we successfully advocated for scaffolding to go on the Immediate Skills Shortage List.

We have also continued to increase training to apprentices to help develop their skills all the way up to management level. With more capability, faster service will be available across the industry.

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Managing director liable under the Fair Trading Act 1986

Timothy Bates, principal of Auckland law firm Legal Vision, reviews the Court of Appeal decision of *Wellington City Council v Dallas*, following up a High Court decision he previously reviewed in his May 2014 column.



This appeal concerned a leaky home built in early 2000 by Kingdom Residential Housing Ltd. The owners had sued the council who, in turn, sued the parties involved in the original construction, including the managing director of Kingdom, Mr Dallas.

The council settled with the plaintiffs for \$670,000 and involved a number of the third parties in this settlement. Mr Dallas was not part of the settlement, and he was pursued by the council in the High Court.

The council brought a claim as against Mr Dallas in the High Court for the sum of

\$546,000. It was unsuccessful in this proceeding for all the reasons more fully set out in my May 2014 article.

Of particular relevance to the appeal was the finding by the High Court that the cause of action brought on the basis of section 9 of the Fair Trading Act 1986, failed. It was on this particular finding that the council brought its appeal.

There were two particular statements the council contended were misleading. The first statement related to a statement in a letter from Mr Dallas on Kingdom letterhead that "KRH Plumber" had attended to kick out flashings.

The second statement was contained in a further letter to the effect "we have complied with the Building Act".

The council contended that this second statement was not limited to the parapets of the building, but was a representation relating to the whole structure.

The statement about the kick outs

The Court of Appeal considered whether a reasonable person in the council's situation would likely have been misled or deceived by the statement. It ruled that the statement about kick outs from Mr Dallas was clear and unambiguous when one reads the Kingdom letter with the letter from council to which it responds.

It could only be sensibly construed as a statement that the requested kick outs at the end of the apron flashings had been completed by KRH Plumbers. The fact that this representation was made when, in fact, the kick outs had not been installed (sealant having been used instead) was, in fact, a misstatement, and amounted to a breach of section 9 of the Fair Trading Act 1986.

The statement as to compliance with the Building Act

The Court of Appeal followed the High Court ruling and said that this statement was confined to the parapets and, thus, did not constitute misleading and deceptive conduct.

However, based upon the misstatement as to

the kick outs, it ruled that a breach of section 9 had been committed. The court then considered whether this entitled the council to relief.

The first essential finding made by the Court of Appeal in this regard was that the council did rely upon Mr Dallas' statement as to the kick outs prior to issuing the Code Compliance Certificate. In particular, it relied upon evidence of a council officer which was clear and unchallenged, that he had relied upon this assurance.

The Court of Appeal had little difficulty in concluding that the council had relied upon this statement.

In response to the court addressing the issue of whether, in fact, the council had suffered loss as a result of the misstatement as to the kick outs, Mr Dallas argued that the council had a clear duty to inspect the kick outs, and its failure to do so was the operative cause of the loss.

However, the Court of Appeal construed the council's failure to inspect the kick outs as evidence of the council's own negligence, but still considered the statement of Mr Dallas to the council as a contributing cause of the loss. The appeal succeeded on this aspect.

I should note that the court formed the provisional view that Mr Dallas and the council ought to be found equally responsible for the kick out defect, but chose not to express a view on what the overall apportionment of loss ought to be as between council and Mr Dallas (factoring in other operating defects), instead, seeking submissions on this point.

The outcome on appeal shows the implications of the Fair Trading Act 1986 to all those trading in the construction industry. It also shows the determination of the council to seek compensation from those it believes have contributed to the losses suffered by leaky home owners.

Note: This article is not intended to be legal advice (nor a substitute for legal advice). No responsibility or liability is accepted by Legal Vision or Building Today to anyone who relies on the information contained in this article.

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Life's a bach

Architect Don Bunting wonders whether our homes are becoming too big for our current lifestyles.

Returning to work after a few precious weeks of relaxed, beach-style living has made me wonder whether we really need homes as large and sophisticated as those found in most modern subdivisions.

With 150 sq m seen as the bare minimum size and 200 sq m+ as much more typical, it's no surprise that modern housing is becoming increasingly unaffordable.

Yes, I know subdivision costs are a major factor in the cost of housing, but every square metre adds cost both directly and in terms of plot size, as does the 2.5 bathrooms and other expected accoutrements.

The simple life

Our family bach (crib to you South Islanders) was constructed in the early 1920s when building materials were in short supply following the Great War.

A few improvements were made in the late 1940s, also a time when building materials were hard to find. It wasn't until the mid-1970s that a few mod cons were added to make it more liveable, but still with the loo and bathroom out the back.

With the beach straight off the front lawn and cold drinks from the rusty old frig in the shed, who could ask for more? Particularly with family now back from Australia (the recent reverse migration back home) and some great weather in the north, it was easy to appreciate what little you need to be happy and comfortable.

With McMansions taking over our beachfronts, there are fewer opportunities to enjoy and appreciate the simple life and not miss the more salubrious lifestyle accompaniments we now see as essential.

Even washing and drying dishes can become a social occasion, accompanied by a few songs and laughs as you put away mismatched crockery and glasses.

Subdivision heaven or hell?

Both sides of Christmas I visited three of the newer subdivisions around Auckland — one the redevelopment of an old quarry area, one on a former Air Force base and the other a complete greenfields development 40 minutes to the north of the city, but with a direct

motorway link back to the centre.

This gave me an appreciation of what developers see as the type of housing the Auckland market is seeking.

The former quarry is the most advanced, with perhaps 70% either completed or under construction. The housing is a mix of large, stand alone but very closely packed, two-storey houses, terrace housing in long rows either side of wide streets, and a few five to six-storey apartment blocks.

As with all three subdivisions, the infrastructure is first class — wide roads, paved footpaths and grassed verges and a generous amount of open reserve area. Trees have been planted and there is a large, semi-natural marshlands area operating as a holding system for stormwater.

The colour palette used for the houses is muted — mostly beige and grey tones — with few splashes of bright colour. Brick and weatherboards are back as the preferred cladding, with tiled roofs on the houses and flat roofs on the terrace blocks.

Backyard cricket games would be impossible on the small amount of free site area, especially the terrace houses which, while they inexplicably have four bedrooms, seem destined for older couples or even singles.

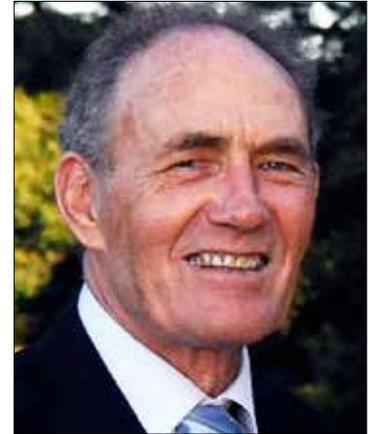
The housing mix on the former Air Force base is similar, although with some roads travelling down rather than across the steeper contours the stand alone houses seem even closer together. However there is much more variety among the house designs, with a wider range of developers involved.

The development north of the city, with its larger individual plot sizes, has a more traditional "quarter acre paradise" look to it, which makes the few blocks of terrace housing seem out of place, particularly in this more rural setting.

With a lot more retail and schooling attached, together with a brand new golf course, this has more the look of a new satellite town than an urban subdivision.

Good or bad?

So what, if anything, does this tell us about our current approach to housing the population of our largest and fastest growing city? And what



does it tell us about how our lives are being changed by the type of housing on offer?

The now very expensive central city suburbs have priced many out of that market. People realise that being close to the city adds quality of life and not the reverse. Being close to work, having better, more traditional schooling and increased recreation options, is clearly a top priority for many families and singles today.

The only central city alternative to a \$1.5 million+ single house is apartment living, with all the downsides of potentially noisy or unsuitable neighbours, body corporate hassles and, for most, no protection for view or outlook.

Time for a change

For many younger people housing ownership has become a burden as much as a benefit. Yes, house ownership can offer an alternative investment, but the percentage of net income that many couples are having to put into owning their own home or apartment is way beyond what any earlier generation had to contend with.

Our first home cost less than three times my annual income — in those halcyon days when couples could, if they chose, survive comfortably on just a single income.

Perhaps the time has come to reconsider what we really need to live comfortably, not just in terms of house size, but also in terms of the growing levels of comfort and extra electronic flash and dash we complicate our lives with.

A final note of context: anecdotally, a majority of the world's population lives in what we would describe as a slum — no services, no hygiene and no legal ownership of land or buildings. Just bless the fact that you live in New Zealand.

Finding that life is no different to last year?

Terry Sage of Trades Coaching New Zealand reminds you not to forget to act upon your holiday 'lobal' hopes when re-joining the world of 'prolonged activity'.

I write this in hope that you have all enjoyed a great and well deserved holiday season.

Guys, you should have brought "her indoors" a gift to be proud of and one she deserved. Ladies, did you treat him like the king he thinks he is? If so, Christmas should have been a doozy.

But it all seems so last year now as you have been back to work for weeks. Is life any different? Has anything changed at all? Does it need to change?

For many busy business owners sitting down for any "prolonged non-active time", (Christmas break) it forces the brain to explore areas not normally used.

Areas such as the forward thinking lobe, the what have I done with my life lobe, the I don't want to be in this position again next year lobe. Maybe the we are going to be three times bigger in 12 months lobe and, very commonly, the I'm getting way too old for this lobe.

Is this prolonged non-active time healthy for busy business owners? Yes. In fact, I think it's absolutely essential and I think it should happen more than once a year. But it can also be a dangerous pastime as it

can feed false hope.

Why false hope? When all lobes of the brain start working and they come up with possible answers, this gives hope.

But when you then re-join the world of "prolonged activity" and forget to act upon that hope then disillusion starts taking over.

The dangerous part is disillusion harbours complacency, and we carry on down the safe road.

There is a saying that is bandied around many times: "If you always do what you have always done you will always get the same results".

So why have I turned from business coach to psychologist? Trust me, I haven't.

I leave the clever stuff to the clever people. All I am saying is when you think it is time for a change and you come up with an answer, try it — don't play the safe card.

Change is good, change is healthy and just because you can't actually see it, change is necessary. It's a necessity because the world changes around you and you need to keep ahead or at the least current with those changes.

The changes take multiple disguises, from compliance to IRD, from materials to techniques, from staff to price increases — there is no end to the changes all around you.

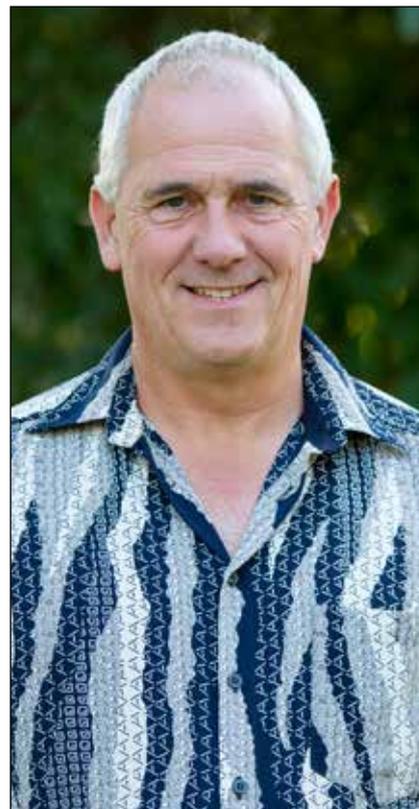
Then there is you — yes, you change too. The obvious change is we get older and slower, but also our attitudes change and our needs in life change. If you went into business single, then married, and now there are kids running around, not only have your financial commitments changed but your time is not yours alone to command.

So what's this tale all about? It's about you, and every now and then you need to take stock of yourself and make sure the path you are on is the right one.

In most cases it is, and with constant tweaking we make sure it's perfect. But for some it's not, and wholesale change is needed.

Which is why I am not on the tools anymore, have no employees, and don't ever think about Mrs Bucket and her lavender bathroom. And why I became a Trades Coach . . .

Whatever change is needed, you are most welcome to call for a chat on 09 945 4880.



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Building Consents Information

For All Authorisations, December 2014

| | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| Dwellings | \$820,647,000 |
| Domestic Outbuildings | \$12,454,000 |
| Total Residential | \$833,101,000 |
| Non-residential | \$431,012,000 |
| Total All Buildings | \$1,264,113,000 |
| Non-building Construction | \$40,386,000 |
| Total Authorisations | \$1,304,498,000 |

Number of new dwellings consented

| | Dec 2014 | Nov 2014 | Dec 2013 | | Dec 2014 | Nov 2014 | Dec 2013 |
|--------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|---------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Far North District | 13 | 21 | 19 | Horowhenua District | 4 | 7 | 10 |
| Whangarei District | 38 | 37 | 27 | Kapiti Coast District | 28 | 18 | 29 |
| Kaipara District | 8 | 6 | 10 | Porirua City | 18 | 15 | 8 |
| Rodney District | 110 | 107 | 56 | Upper Hutt City | 30 | 5 | 10 |
| North Shore City | 160 | 55 | 96 | Lower Hutt City | 12 | 37 | 15 |
| Waitakere City | 66 | 65 | 88 | Wellington City | 74 | 12 | 29 |
| Auckland City | 142 | 562 | 215 | Masterton District | 3 | 9 | 7 |
| Manukau City | 64 | 98 | 179 | Carterton District | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Papakura District | 28 | 53 | 54 | South Wairarapa District | 2 | 3 | 2 |
| Franklin District | 67 | 36 | 29 | Tasman District | 26 | 21 | 19 |
| Thames-Coromandel District | 17 | 15 | 15 | Nelson City | 12 | 8 | 14 |
| Hauraki District | 8 | 6 | 3 | Marlborough District | 14 | 12 | 18 |
| Waikato District | 31 | 24 | 28 | Kaikoura District | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| Matamata-Piako District | 6 | 9 | 8 | Buller District | 3 | 4 | 7 |
| Hamilton City | 66 | 64 | 83 | Grey District | 3 | 4 | 1 |
| Waipa District | 26 | 38 | 33 | Westland District | 3 | 3 | 9 |
| Otorohanga District | 0 | 4 | 1 | Hurunui District | 10 | 6 | 3 |
| South Waikato District | 3 | 0 | 3 | Waimakariri District | 94 | 134 | 85 |
| Waikato District | 2 | 0 | 1 | Christchurch City | 485 | 419 | 345 |
| Taupo District | 26 | 12 | 16 | Selwyn District | 109 | 129 | 96 |
| Western Bay of Plenty District | 28 | 26 | 23 | Ashburton District | 9 | 11 | 12 |
| Tauranga City | 76 | 76 | 55 | Timaru District | 17 | 16 | 23 |
| Rotorua District | 10 | 6 | 6 | Mackenzie District | 4 | 5 | 7 |
| Whakatane District | 5 | 3 | 2 | Waimate District | 1 | 2 | 6 |
| Kawerau District | 0 | 1 | 0 | Chatham Islands Territory | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Opotiki District | 3 | 2 | 0 | Waikati District | 3 | 8 | 7 |
| Gisborne District | 5 | 2 | 9 | Central Otago District | 17 | 10 | 17 |
| Wairoa District | 0 | 1 | 1 | Queenstown-Lakes District | 39 | 47 | 39 |
| Hastings District | 13 | 22 | 26 | Dunedin City | 28 | 26 | 25 |
| Napier City | 7 | 1 | 14 | Clutha District | 6 | 6 | 2 |
| Central Hawke's Bay District | 1 | 4 | 3 | Southland District | 11 | 5 | 6 |
| New Plymouth District | 52 | 28 | 25 | Gore District | 4 | 2 | 3 |
| Stratford District | 1 | 0 | 1 | Invercargill City | 8 | 8 | 5 |
| South Taranaki District | 2 | 3 | 9 | Area Outside TA | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Ruapehu District | 2 | 2 | 3 | | | | |
| Wanganui District | 7 | 8 | 5 | Total | 2199 | 2420 | 2035 |
| Rangitikei District | 3 | 3 | 0 | | | | |
| Manawatu District | 6 | 4 | 8 | | | | |
| Palmerston North City | 13 | 9 | 14 | | | | |
| Taranaki District | 1 | 0 | 0 | | | | |

- Based on 2006 census areas
- Each dwelling unit in a housing project is counted separately
- Figures in these tables may differ from published statistics

Source: Statistics New Zealand

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