

# BUILDING TODAY

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE REGISTERED MASTER BUILDERS ASSOCIATION



VOLUME 30 NUMBER 5

JUNE 2020

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## INSIDE:

NZ'S LARGEST  
RETAIL STORE  
OPENS IN AUCKLAND

BUDGET 2020: WHAT IT  
MEANS FOR BUILDERS



BCITO CEO Warwick Quinn: Government to be congratulated — but challenges loom in keeping apprentices in the residential sector



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**FROM THE EDITOR**

This issue goes to press on the day the Government makes its announcement on a change to Alert Level 1 — and I'm assuming that by the time you read this the country will find itself at that level.

Now that the health part of the equation has been dealt with, upcoming efforts will focus on minimising the economic fallout.

This year's "Once-in-a-generation" Budget will pump billions into the construction sector and the economy in general. Read where it's going, and industry reaction to it, in this issue.

Columnist Leigh Olsen has tips for those having to make the hard decision to "Rightsize" their businesses.

And as co-columnist Terry Sage says: "Do the hard yards now, and get through the next three to four months". He has some advice on how to do just that.

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# Personal Warrant of Fitness — get yourself a check-up!

You look after your vehicles and site equipment — what about yourself?

By RMBA president Darrell Trigg

With Men's Health Week upon us this month, it got me thinking about some recent presentations I have done around Psychological First Aid (read my article, *Building Today* April 2019).

In the above article I introduce the MANERS Model as a first aid tool kit for immediate intervention if someone is experiencing a personal crisis.

## Self Care

The 'S' in MANERS represents Self-Care, the principles of which apply not only to men but equally to women as well.

Whether you are in the construction industry or not, the same principles apply to maintaining a balanced, healthy, physical and psychological well-being.

The goal of self care relating to physical and psychological well-being is to encourage all people to be involved with ongoing self-care, and to minimise the likelihood of reoccurrence of symptoms.

Why should we maintain continual self care?

- To understand our own symptoms.
- To ensure our own health and well-being is looked after.

How can we do this? What does self-care look like?

- Maintain a healthy lifestyle, including good levels of sleep, exercise, nutrition and work/life balance.
- Identify our own trigger factors, and know when we're most vulnerable.
- Spend time with people you value.
- Talk to someone you trust.
- Access additional support if you need it.

## What's your score?

I recently did the What's your score? test on the Mens Health Week web site — [www.menshealthweek.co.nz](http://www.menshealthweek.co.nz).

My score was 46 which indicated the following:

"Keep your health in the forefront of your



mind. It is important that you book in for your yearly men's health check and discuss all age-appropriate health risks with your GP. Men's Health Week is a great time to start being proactive with your health."

The point of the survey is the lower the score the better. When I looked at the suggested items I was not doing, they were all mainly around regular health check-ups:

- Have you ever been for a general men's health check-up when you are not sick?
- Have you spoken to your doctor about your prostate?
- Have you spoken to your doctor about your bowel cancer risk?"

These are all incredibly important questions, but ones that I have not really considered.

Soon after that, I got a reminder that my ute needed to go in for a warrant of fitness and service check.

That was when the penny dropped that we regularly seem to pay close attention to ensuring all of our vehicles and complex site equipment get serviced, tagged and maintained.

But the most complex machine of them all, the

human being — me — gets little or no attention or service at all!

## Warrant of Fitness

I know friends and colleagues that go to the doctor for check-ups/warrant of fitness checks on a regular basis — not just when they are in pain or feeling unwell. This makes sense as it is proactive rather than reactive.

I cannot encourage you enough to start regular check-ups. My best advice is to do this annually, not just when you feel unwell — perhaps celebrate your birthday with a check-up!

Registered Master Builders have been sponsors and supporters of Men's Health Week since its inception.

As a membership organisation, the RMBA's key aim is to help members build better businesses. But it's no good having a great business if your health and well-being is suffering.

It's important to us as an organisation to support all efforts to get the message out about personal care, to break down the macho mantra, and to help all men in the industry understand it is not a sign of weakness to get a check-up.

## Look for 'signs'

We need to be self-aware, meaning that any signs of change from our regular "norms" need attention, with the aim being to prevent premature illness.

I recall many years ago when I was building a new house on my own. I felt unwell, thought I would be fine and just kept pushing on, as I needed to work to get the next progress payment.

I got to the point where I was so weak I could hardly lift a hammer, and ended up in hospital with advanced pneumonia that took a long time to recover from — and put us in a worse position.

Our health doesn't just belong to us, it belongs to our family!

Please remember we have only one version of ourselves, and it is up to us as individuals to be the best version of us that we can be. Stay safe and look after yourselves.

# MARTON APPRENTICE BEATS OUT TOUGH COMPETITION FOR REGIONAL TITLE



## TODD SUTTON

CENTRAL NORTH WINNER REGISTERED  
MASTER BUILDERS CARTERS 2019  
APPRENTICE OF THE YEAR

Todd is employed by Richard  
Construction, and was trained  
through BCITO.

### SUCCESSES

Todd embraced the chance to test his skills against some of his peers, after gaining some valuable experience competing in the previous year.

“The competitive environment is different to a worksite, but I had a blast and encourage anyone to give it a go. I made a lot of mates through the competition, got to go up against some of the country’s most talented apprentices, and really enjoyed the overall trip.”

### CHALLENGES

While Todd found the practical session fun and straightforward, the interview stage made his nerves spike.

“I was worried I was going to embarrass myself in front of the judges. I wasn’t sure what they were going to ask me, the format, or if I was prepared enough. In the end it was fine, and getting to talk to them actually turned out to be a positive experience for me.”



### EMPLOYER COMMENTS

Richard Ellery believes Apprentice of the Year is a great opportunity for those early in their building careers to put what they have learned to the test.

“Our previous apprentices had entered the competition and had nothing but positive things to say about the experience. Todd has been doing great work and showed that he was capable, so we thought it would be a good test for him to see where he was at and how he was tracking.”

Richard believes taking on apprentices and helping them develop will have both a positive effect on his business and the community.

“We have always had two apprentices, and while they can’t contribute immediately, they usually start supporting the team and doing good work after the first few months. We take them on because they usually do quality work.”

“They work hard and are often keen to learn new skills. It is also a good thing for the town of Marton, giving locals more work in the area and providing quality builders in the area.”

PRINCIPAL PARTNER



EVENT PARTNER



## Mountainside Marvel in Twizel

### Dimension Building

National Winner 2019

• PlaceMakers New Home \$450,000 - \$600,000



#### Successes

Dimension Building's Richard Phiskie felt privileged to receive the award and is proud of his team's hard work.

"My team have worked tirelessly to earn and maintain the reputation we have for producing quality workmanship. With this build, we put good thought into the design, especially in relation to both its function and location. We also maximised the build's connection to its incredible exterior environment. Overall, the team executed the construction with absolute precision."

#### Challenges

"It was new ground for us for a number of reasons. It was the first build we had completed under our company's second branch, Dimension Building Twizel, and our foreman had just recently passed his building apprenticeship.

"However, the creative challenges were what got us up in the morning. The results are an absolute testament to our team and the way in which we train our apprentices."

#### Judges' comments

Competition judges praised the builder's attention to detail and contemporary stylings in the high country.

"The excellent floor plan of this property offers easy living for the owners on their own, but also caters well for extended family when needed. There has been clever use of quality and low maintenance materials, used both internally and externally. The attention to detail and incredible execution by the builders has further enhanced this stunning property."

House of the Year is made possible through the support of the following sponsors:



## Seamless Home Showcases Structural Creativity and Elegance

### Broswick Builders

National Winner 2019

• Renovation \$500,000 - \$1 million



### Successes

Todd Wickenden was stoked with the win, especially considering the strong competition they were up against in their region.

“It was a huge surprise for us to hear we won our category. The win is really great for the boys on site who get to see recognition for all their efforts. The award also shows we are at the top of our game and gives us a strong edge over our competitors.”



### Challenges

The mix of materials and finely tuned contrasts meant attention to detail was key to the final build.

“All the cranked steel portals had to be the first things installed, even before the floors and structure. This meant that it was a very tight site, allowing no room for error. All of the finishes also had 10mm negative details which was a further challenge.”



### Judges' comments

Judges called this home a perfect example of a great renovation that showcases what a seamless restoration can look like.

“The builders were incredibly skilled in crafting almost faultless details that appropriately matched the existing home. This home clearly demonstrates the incredible effort and passion shown between owner and builder.”

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# NZ Commercial Project Awards

Check out some of our incredible entries in the NZ Commercial Project Awards 2020. We're showcasing our Civic and Commercial Fit Out category entrants.

## Civic

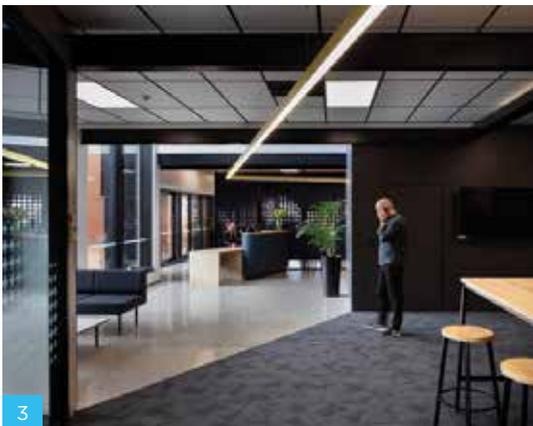
- 1 Nelson Airport Terminal**  
Naylor Love Canterbury,  
Nelson
- 2 Awatere Hall Renovation**  
Scott Construction  
Marlborough, Marlborough



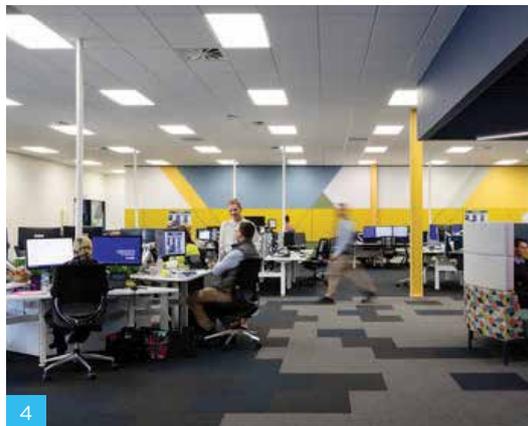
1



2



3



4

## Commercial Fit Out

- 3 Tonkin + Taylor**  
Unispace, Tauranga
- 4 New Zealand Police  
Technology Centre**  
Unispace, Wellington
- 5 HEB Construction**  
Unispace, Auckland
- 6 BNZ Auckland Agile  
Pilot Space**  
Unispace, Auckland



5



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## NZ's largest retail store opens in Auckland

New Zealand's largest furniture and homewares retailer Nido opened its doors to the public on May 30 in what was described as a significant boost for the local economy.

The new \$60 million, 27,000 sq m store in West Auckland will carry more than 10,000 product lines, and create 180 new jobs for retail workers in the coming year.

Managing director Vinod Kumar says hundreds of containers of product arrived in the months prior to Covid-19, which meant there was no interruption to supply lines.

"We have sourced products from New Zealand, Europe and the US, and will be the largest retail operation in the country," Kumar says.

"For those outside Auckland, we will eventually offer online shopping functionality through our web site, and provide nationwide distribution for our products," he says.

The locally-owned and operated store will open after nine years of research into the most innovative retail models internationally. It will house 80 exclusive brands, and feature more than 100 display rooms which will be continuously updated.



First Retail Group managing director Chris Wilkinson says the opening of the store will bring a boost to retail confidence, and help reinvigorate the category amongst Kiwi consumers.

"People have been focused on their home environment for the past few weeks, and we know that during the lockdown the businesses in these categories have done very well selling their essential items," he says.

Along with home makeovers, Wilkinson says businesses will also be looking to offerings like Nido as we transition to a new way of working post Covid-19.

"We are going to see a significant change in people's workplaces, and more of us will be working from home. Business owners are also going to need to reconsider commercial environments and office solutions, so we expect to see growth here too," he says.

Wilkinson says, increasingly, Kiwis are looking for shopping solutions that are brought together under one roof, and expects customers to travel from the Waikato and Bay of Plenty to purchase from the store.

"I think it's inspirational for the New Zealand market — the products have been carefully curated to focus on what New Zealand consumers like and want.

"They have a universal appeal, but underpinning that is an answer to a Kiwi demand for products which have convenience and value," he says.

Kumar says the size of the store is hard to comprehend, but to give some indication, it is able to accommodate a full-size three-bedroom show home inside, which has been home staged by the store's team of interior designers.

He says the first stage of recruitment has been completed, with a further 90 roles to be advertised later in the year.

## Surge of construction projects created as lockdown lifted

A surge of construction projects were created in preparation for the Level 4 lockdown lift in New Zealand, which signalled a welcome return for the workforce.

Data from Fergus job management software revealed that new work projects created in New Zealand in the last three days of April were at a record high.

The data showed that since the industry returned to work under Alert Level 3, more than 42,000 forms and 32,000 checklists have been created.

As the industry prepared for the lockdown to be lifted, more than 10,500 contact tracing forms and 4700 Covid-19 internal health and safety checklists were created on Fergus to help protect against more cases, with hundreds added per day across Australia and New Zealand.

Fergus job management software founder Dan Pollard saw record numbers of tradies retooling with his webinars, as well as creating projects to start after lockdown ended.

"New Zealand tradies saw a welcome huge

surge in jobs as lockdown lifted, with a record number of new work projects created ready to start back on April 28.

"We also saw hundreds of tradies retool with our webinars that gave tips to adapt after lockdown," Pollard says.

"These included advice on how to quote remotely with videos, help manage cash flow and generate leads to keep trades businesses thriving.

"Customers also created thousands of contact tracing and Covid-19 health and safety checklists.

"Having run trades businesses throughout previous recessions, this one has been different, as job losses and businesses closing happened very quickly upfront.

"There was also some financial assistance available to help keep things afloat, unlike the Global Financial Crash where credit wasn't available.

"Hopefully, New Zealanders will start to see an uplift sooner than in previous recessions.

"To avoid further restrictions and maintain thriving trades businesses, it is of utmost importance to keep strict health and safety checks and contact tracing forms maintained.

"Business owners should also keep an eye on consent numbers to track the industry progress, and concentrate on customer experiences to keep winning business and cash flowing."

Trades businesses experienced an extremely difficult time during Level 4 lockdown whilst they were allowed to work only on jobs that jeopardised health and safety.

"Medium-term, the impact of Covid-19 on tradies will be in the area of new starts in residential and commercial construction as a flow-on effect of any broader economic slowdown.

"Governments will look at investment in infrastructure projects as we exit the crisis.

"While the work appears to be there for tradies at present, a lot of this will be backlog, and tradies need to stay on top of their game in order to keep winning new work."

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## 'Once-in-a-generation' Budget 2020: What it means for builders

Billions of dollars allocated to construction sector

This year's "once-in-a-generation" Budget has focused on managing the economic effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on New Zealand.

The construction sector has been allocated several billions of dollars over the next few years, and this, along with other economic packages across the board, is designed to kick-start the economy in the wake of Covid-19.

There is a \$50 billion Response to Recovery Fund over the next four years.

The Government spent \$14 billion dollars of it in the Covid-19 Economic Response Package prior to the Budget.

The Budget allocates another \$16 billion, and leaves another \$20 billion for future allocation. The major allocations include:

### Extending the Wage Subsidy

- A further \$3.2 billion allocated for the wage subsidy.
- Businesses that can prove they have had a 40% decrease in revenue year-on-year can access a further eight weeks of the subsidy.
- The subsidy amount remains the same — \$585 for a full-time employee and \$350 for a part-time employee.

### Housing and Infrastructure

- The Government will roll out a home building programme of 8000 new state houses over the next four years. There will be 6000 State houses built and another 2000 transitional houses.
- \$5 billion of building will take place through the Kainga Ora borrowing programme and investment in Transitional Housing.
- An additional \$3 billion contingency for additional infrastructure investment (on top of the earlier \$12 billion NZ Upgrade Programme announced in January). This will include

projects identified through the Infrastructure Reference Group.

### Vocational Training

- The Budget is funding \$1.6 billion in a Trades and Apprentice Package to provide opportunities for people of all ages to receive trades training.
- This will include financial support for businesses to retain their apprentices, free apprenticeships and training in targeted critical industries, and funding increased enrolments in tertiary education and training.
- Building and construction identified as a critical trade.
- \$275 million allocated for Reform of Vocational Education, with the establishment of Workforce Development Councils and Skill Leadership Groups.

### Other Announcements:

- \$5.6 billion in health investment, including \$750 million in new capital infrastructure investment.
- Around \$1 billion to improve transport across the country, including a \$400 million capital investment to replace the Interislander ferries, and \$400 million for rail.
- \$1 billion environmental package (including a \$433 million investment in regional environmental projects, eg wetlands, removing sediment etc, including in the Kaipara catchment), while around \$300 million will be spent on pest eradication and controlling wilding pines. A further \$200 million on Department of Conservation track upgrades etc.
- A \$400 million injection for the Tourism Sector Recovery Plan, including a transition programme, a fund to ensure key tourism assets survive, a domestic tourism marketing campaign, and a public/private taskforce to shape the future of the industry.

# Budget 2020 reaction: What they said . . .

**The Employers and Manufacturers Association (EMA)** says the Government's budget amidst Covid-19 was always going to have to strike the right balance between spending and debt levels to regenerate the economy for the benefit of all.

Chief executive Brett O'Riley believes it provides a first step in doing this, but is keen to continue to work together with the Government on long-term economic recovery and additional sector-specific plans.

"We are particularly pleased with the \$4 billion business support package, the \$3 billion for shovel-ready infrastructure projects, and the focus on innovation and digitisation, and vocational education and training," he says.

"For businesses who have suffered a 40% downturn since this time last year, the extension of the wage subsidy by eight weeks will be welcome news."

The EMA says the combination of immediate and ongoing support, especially in the digital space, does help, especially in the short term.

"We know it's hard for businesses, especially SMEs, to look at innovation when they're struggling to stay solvent, but now is the time to capitalise on the things they've had to do differently and use the Government's support to do things better into the future," he says.

The EMA believes increased support for Research and Development, including the short-term temporary loan scheme to incentivise businesses to continue with plans, is the key for many to be able to pivot and regenerate.

"We're also pleased to see the \$216 million boost to New Zealand Trade and Enterprise to expand its scope of support to businesses, particularly with digital services."

And although positive economic indicators are set to take a plunge in the short term — GDP will go down and unemployment and debt levels up — at least those who have lost their jobs have prospects for the future, although potentially doing different work.

"The \$1.6 billion Trades and Apprentice Package to provide training opportunities for people of all ages is a practical measure to get people back to work.

"And the \$50 million allocated for Maori Apprentice and Trades Training is also welcomed as we're already seeing younger people join the dole queues at a faster rate than others," O'Riley says.

"It is also pleasing to see that the Government has balanced the economic need to the country with overall well-being, with it

addressing housing with a \$5 billion building package through Kainga Ora, \$121 million for community initiatives for at-risk young people, and \$1 billion for the environment."

But while there is cash for key sectors such as export and manufacturing, the key will be in the detail of these plans.

"Manufacturing is acknowledged as an essential plank of our economic recovery going forward, and we're keen to work with the Government on a more detailed, future-focused plan for this sector, similar to the \$400 million Tourism Sector Investment Plan that has been announced," O'Riley says.

"We are also looking forward to providing any input we can to the Infrastructure Reference Group that will govern the projects that will literally help get our economy moving, for the good of all."

## **The New Zealand Infrastructure Commission, Te Waihanga (Infracom),**

welcomes the billions of dollars allocated towards infrastructure in the Budget.

These include \$3 billion for shovel-ready projects, additional rail investment, free trades training, and funding towards social housing.

But it warns further long-term infrastructure needs must not be ignored.

"In this time of crisis, it's essential that we find ways to kick-start the economy," Infracom chair Dr Alan Bollard says.

"Infrastructure has an important role to play, especially through the large number of people the construction sector employs," he says.

"Infracom has been part of the selection process of shovel-ready projects through the Infrastructure Industry Reference Group, and we look forward to those projects receiving a much-needed boost to get things moving.

"However, there are also projects that won't be able to commence within the next 12 months, but will need attention for the long-term benefit of all New Zealanders, such as aging water pipes.

"It's also important that infrastructure investment addresses future needs such as climate change mitigation," Bollard says.

Infracom is in the process of developing its 30-year strategy for infrastructure in New Zealand, and is consulting extensively with key stakeholders to identify gaps and strengths.

The strategy will be presented to the Government in 2021.

**Civil Contractors New Zealand (CCNZ)**, the country's national association for civil contractors, has welcomed increased investment in infrastructure announced in the Budget.

It also welcomes the opportunity for the civil construction industry to create jobs and take a lead role in New Zealand's economic recovery.

CCNZ chief executive Peter Silcock says the announcements are a win for everyday Kiwis as well as contractors, because they will enable the country to upgrade and improve community infrastructure such as roads and water networks.

Silcock says the increased investment is a great opportunity, not just to build new roading and water networks, but also to catch up on the country's deferred maintenance, and to upgrade existing infrastructure to be fit for purpose in the present day.

"Upgrading New Zealand's infrastructure will serve the country well in the long term. It will also enable the civil construction industry to provide meaningful employment for those who may have lost their jobs, as well as retaining the skills in our current workforce."

He says helping people upskill would require close attention to enable people to transition smoothly.

While skills such as abseiling or heavy vehicle driving would be transferable, considerable re-training would be needed for some.

Industry welcomed opportunities to work closely with the Government and the broader training and education sector, especially around developing new pathways to civil apprenticeships.

He says to be truly effective, this investment would also need to reach the regions and the many small-to-medium employers in the industry, who worked on vital regional works as well as being employed as subcontractors on big-ticket projects.

"While it's important to give the economy a boost, this needs to be sustainable. The last thing we want to do is create a boom/bust situation.

"To create sustainable employment and better community outcomes, investment needs to be well-planned and phased over time."

Silcock says the NZ Infrastructure Commission was established to help take a planned approach and manage the infrastructure work pipeline, and dialogue between government and industry had been vastly improved since the creation of the Construction Sector Accord.

# Timber products bring architect's unique vision to life

**B**ased in the remote Ahuriri Valley in Otago, the award-winning Lindis Lodge has all the features of a five-star resort, with beautifully stylish bedrooms and living spaces, a private chef and a grand billiard room.

Though the real drawcard is the landscape.

Designed by Architecture Workshop and built by Registered Master Builders company Brosnan Construction, the local environment was, without a doubt, the key inspiration for the project, where pure elegance is combined with the peacefully serene but striking surrounds that span 2700 hectares.

In keeping with the location's natural beauty and the project's sustainability objectives, Big River Group's plywood and flooring products were chosen due to their hard-wearing durability and natural, warm tones that provided a beautifully aesthetic interior.

The company's Armourpanel Spotted Gum was used for the bathroom cabinetry, bed furniture, wall linings and perforated screens throughout the five-room resort and recreation areas.

The ArmourFloor Spotted Gum 189 then provided the lodge's flooring, including the public space and all bedrooms.

## Inspiring landscape

Architect Chris Kelly of Architecture Workshop says the inspiring New Zealand landscape helped too, of course.

"The lodge was designed to be nestled unobtrusively into the landscape, and we knew by choosing the Big River materials they would be in perfect synergy with this," Kelly says.

"Environmental issues were absolutely an important factor in us working with the products, as they are natural, have minimal waste, and are ecologically produced."

As one of Australia's strongest plywoods, Armourpanel has a unique construction method that sees each of its five layers of Australian hardwood sheets bonded together in a cross-ply manufacturing process to form a strong, solid, stable decorative panel.

Its toughness makes it ideal for use in hard-wearing areas, and is a go-to choice amongst architects, builders and home owners looking for a superior product.

Big River Group national plywood and specialty manager Stuart McGonagle says due to the build's remote location and subsequent exposure to extreme weather conditions, the project didn't come without its logistical challenges.

"This is why the versatility, stability and toughness of our products are a great match for Lindis Lodge, as they are able to withstand these sorts of pressures while also delivering on visual aesthetics," McGonagle says.

Since completion in 2018, the building has achieved the client's objective of establishing Lindis Lodge as one of the highest calibre accommodation options in New Zealand.

So far, the project has picked up a number of accolades, including a Southern Architecture Award and, most recently, winning the prestigious Hotel and Leisure - Completed Buildings category at the 2019 World Architecture Festival.

For more information visit [www.bigrivergroup.com.au](http://www.bigrivergroup.com.au).



# New business investment 'breaking ground' in Hamilton

More than 100 of AA Insurance's Hamilton staff are set to move into the new Union Square development next year, which is located within the Anglesea, Hood and Alexandra Street blocks at the south end of the city's CBD.

Company chief executive Chris Curtin joined several Hamilton staff on-site at the breaking ground ceremony, to welcome construction site works that began recently.

Led by local Registered Master Builders company Foster, on behalf of AFI Investment Ltd, Union Square is touted as its latest initiative in creating a thriving business hub in the city, and is hoped to contribute millions of dollars to the local economy over the next five years.

Curtin says AA Insurance staff are excited to be part of this important project for Hamilton city, and the positive contribution it will make to the local economy, especially following Covid-19.

"Our Hamilton team of just over 100 is looking forward to moving in next year, as well as making the most of the building's fantastic facilities. We're certain Union Square will give the city a major boost, and we're delighted to be involved."

AA Insurance will join another major financial company as inaugural tenants into the first of five buildings that are due for completion in August 2021.

Described as a "marquee office and retail development", Union Square will boast 30,000 sq m of office space, 18 retail outlets, and be supported by 350 onsite car parks.

Tenants will have access to a purpose-built wellness centre, and end-of-trip facilities such as bike parks and showers.

Although these selling points were taken into consideration, it was the building materials which have been chosen to reflect the Waikato and designed to Green Building principles that clinched the deal.

"When choosing a new lease, we were



impressed that Union Square was focused on green-building principles, which was reflective of AA Insurance's Auckland head office," Curtin says.

"We understand how important a well-designed workspace can be for our people's health and well-being, so it made our choice easy."

AA Insurance will occupy 1266 sq m over 1.5 floors, during an initial term of nine years.

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## Northland forestry student receives academic scholarship

Northland student Camryn Stewart has received an academic scholarship from Waipu-based timber manufacturer Northpine.

In her fourth and final year of a Bachelor of Forestry Science at the University of Canterbury, Camryn says the financial grant from Northpine is a huge help to put towards her course fees and costs.

"As a student you don't really have a lot of money, and it is such a massive help financially. I am putting it towards my course fees and extra course costs like field trips," she says.

As a Northlander born and bred in Kaitaia, Camryn has spent some of her practical course work interning for another Northland company, Summit Forests, completing practical experience in plotting and helping with trials.

After graduating from her Bachelor of Forestry Science, she hopes to work in forestry management or forestry marketing and supply chain operations.

"The variety and flexibility of the forestry industry appeals to me, and I enjoy being outdoors on the job," she says.



Camryn Stewart

"I'm excited about the possibilities and what my future holds."

The scholarship was presented to the industry at the Northland Forestry Awards in September 2019, and was endorsed by the Northland Wood Council. Applicants can apply via the Northpine web site.

"I'm extra grateful to receive this support from a company in Northland. I extend my thanks to

Northpine for their generosity," Camryn says.

Employing more than 60 people, Northpine is a privately-owned timber manufacturer based at Waipu (Northland), with a distribution centre in Silverdale (Auckland).

The company processes only high-quality structural pine grown in the north. Its specialist range of large-dimension timber beams and square posts, sold under the brand name Northbeam, is available nationwide via building supply merchants.

General manager Bruce Larsen says supporting forestry students in their studies is part of their commitment to the industry and fostering the next generation.

"Northpine is delighted to award this scholarship to Camryn, who is committed to her studies and is working towards a career in forestry," he says.

"We're committed to encouraging each individual to achieve their full potential, and this extends to our next generation who are currently students."

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# Truly unprecedented times

## By BCITO chief executive Warwick Quinn

Over the past couple of months, the impact of the Covid-19 lockdown and the Government's response has been, to use a now well-used term, unprecedented. But it truly has been.

I have provided a few thoughts on the impact Covid-19 could potentially have on construction apprenticeships, with a particular focus on the 15 trade sectors under Building and Construction Industry Training Organisation (BCITO) coverage.

Currently, the BCITO has just over 13,000 active trainees and apprentices. Without significant intervention, we anticipate a substantial decline in apprentice numbers over the next six to eighteen months, but the extent of that decline, and the recovery time, is difficult to assess with any certainty at this early stage.

Our view relies on past experience of the issues, and trends identified from those experiences.

We see no particular reason why the outcomes would be markedly different this time, given the construction sector has been through recessions many times before and the results are always the same.

You just have to look at what happened in 1987 with the stock market crash, 1997 with the Asian financial crisis and, of course, the 2008 global financial crisis. Unless the response is different this time, 2020 will be no different.

As a general overview, apprentice numbers are tied directly to the health of construction firms, particularly residential construction firms.

As the largest sector of construction (it is also the largest employer of construction apprentices, with more than 80% of BCITO trainees), it is a good barometer when it comes to considering how construction activity and training is likely to react to the current circumstances.

The amount of existing work and the ongoing confidence in the supply of future work is the critical determinant in the willingness of employers to take on apprentices.

We are aware of the Government's intention to accelerate investment in "shovel-ready" construction infrastructure projects to help kick-start the recovery.

These large infrastructure projects will help with unemployment and, while we support any moves in this vein, they will do little to address the loss of construction apprentices, given



most are employed in the housing sector.

Infrastructure has no call for qualified floorers, roofers, tilers, joiners, carpenters, electricians, plasterers, interior designers, kitchen and bathroom designers and the like.

We expect consumer confidence in the housing market to be negatively affected for some time, which will result in residential construction being similarly impacted. Trainee numbers will be an early casualty, and it is difficult to see how this can be avoided.

The challenge is to try and retain (or keep a connection with) the number of apprentices currently in the system — to not waste the learning to date, and have a capable and trained workforce ready when the recovery is underway.

We wrote to Ministers explaining what we expected to see and, in addition to significant intervention, we recommended bringing forward and fast-tracking the reforms of vocational education.

One of the desired outcomes of the vocational reforms is for learners to be able to transition seamlessly between work-based, classroom-based and remote learning, and that the learning journey is not disadvantaged by location or the fortunes of the economic cycle.

With the New Zealand Institute of Skills and Technology (NZIST) now established, it should be more able to influence how the Polytech sector might have otherwise responded.

We believe there are opportunities for the BCITO (and other construction-based ITOs) and the NZIST to work together collaboratively in the spirit of Reform of Vocational Education (RoVE) to help address some of the likely casualties Covid-19 will have on our employers and learners.

Also, consideration has to be given to supporting those apprentices who might otherwise end up as NEETS (not in

employment, education or training) and maintaining a connection with their employer, even though they are no longer employed.

Firms will likely want their staff back as their businesses recover. Keeping those relationships alive while apprentices continue to learn off site will facilitate a more effortless transfer between continued learning and work — even if that transition is gradual (for example, one or two days a week).

There are options available to facilitate this which align with the Construction Sector Skills Action Plan that we believe should be explored.

This connection and reconnection with the employer and apprentice is also a vital ingredient to ensure learning is not disrupted (or the disruption is kept to a minimum), as successful programme completion tends to be heavily compromised when an apprentice changes employer.

We wrote to Ministers sharing these views, and with the Budget on May 14 we saw their response. Investing \$1.6 billion in trades training and apprentices is truly unprecedented (there's that word again) and, along with \$5 billion for 8000 new public houses, will go a long way to support us.

The extra 8000 new public and transitional homes, and the Warmer Kiwi Homes package, is a nod to help maintain the supply of work, and drive skill demand by employers who will also be supported if they take on apprentices.

For every two homes we build there is an apprentice, so 4000 more apprenticeships will be available than might have otherwise been the case.

The Government also recognises that we need to continue to develop and grow our skills during recessionary times as, historically, we've struggled to have sufficient skills when the market recovers.

Free fees for all for two years, support for group training schemes, support for Maori and Pasifika trades training, and trade academies in schools are all targeted at this.

Finally, the fast tracking of the reforms to vocational education and the establishment of the six Workforce Development Councils by the end of this year will pave the way for Industry Training Organisations and Polytechs to work closely together and form the NZIST.

For too long, we have been competitors, and we need to remove those barriers so we are all working together for the best interests of employers and learners.

The Government needs to be congratulated.

# Virtual connections in place for NZ Building Industry Awards ceremony

The New Zealand Building Industry Awards are going ahead for 2020, but with changes that reflect pragmatism and innovation.

On a practical level, both the close-off date for the award entries and the awards ceremony have been pushed out by two months. This has allowed the construction industry to stay focused on more immediate concerns across April and May.

The awards ceremony, to be held on its new date of Friday, October 30, 2020, has transitioned from a single venue event to a multiple location event being held simultaneously in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch.

Connected via a virtual platform, the event will be delivered in a format similar to a television network's election night special, with finalists attending the various venues, and the MC cutting to live feeds from each venue for the presentations of the awards.

"Holding the event across multiple venues provides us with flexibility to deal with any number of restrictions that might be in place in October," New Zealand Institute of Building (NZIOB) chief executive Malcolm Fleming says, "while acknowledging that the cost for a regional finalist to attend the traditional event in Auckland may have limited appeal for companies in the current environment."

The Cordis hotel is retained as the primary Auckland venue for 2020, while the addition of Te Papa in Wellington and the Christchurch Town Hall as satellite locations ensures that the awards ceremony will retain the glamour that the New Zealand Building Industry Awards has developed a reputation for.

Event partner Winstone Wallboards Ltd is pleased to see how the NZIOB has repackaged the annual awards programme to reflect market conditions.

"The New Zealand Building Industry Awards is a major event in the construction industry," Partnership manager Clara Sumner says.

"The move to extend the industry's 'big night' experience to both Wellington and Christchurch, while providing free live streaming to all, will see the event develop a truly national audience."

For main contractors, the traditional cost-band categories are open to those who have run a



Above: Glenn Jowett (right) of Beca was Highly Commended in the James Hardie Innovation Award category at the 2019 New Zealand Building Industry Awards. He was presented with his award by Minister for Building and Construction Jenny Salesa.

Below right: Entertainment on the night.

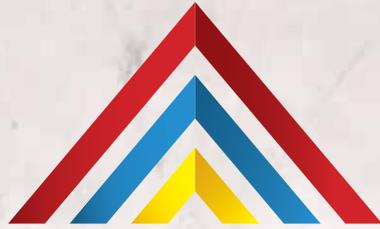
construction project with distinction, with eligible projects being those that have been completed in the period November 1, 2018 to May 31, 2020.

Other categories include: Interdisciplinary Collaboration (for builder/consultants/client project teams), Innovation (for new products or processes that change the way we build), Safety Excellence (for those who have demonstrated leadership in safety, including safety in design), and Young Achiever (for those under 30 years of age). Any entry that includes an NZIOB member is free.

The deadline for entries to the 2020 New Zealand Building Industry Awards has been extended to Friday, July 24, 2020.

More information and access to online entry forms can be found at <https://nzbuildingindustryawards.org.nz>.





# NEW ZEALAND Building Industry Awards 2020



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to New Zealand's foremost  
Building Industry Awards.



The Cordis, Auckland



Te Papa, Wellington



Town Hall, Christchurch



Live streaming

## AWARDS CEREMONY & GALA DINNER

The Awards Ceremony & Gala Dinner will now take place on **Friday, 30 October 2020** and will be held simultaneously across venues in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch. Connected via a virtual platform, the event will be delivered in a format similar to a television network's election night special, with the MC cutting to live feeds from each venue. The event will also be live streamed.

## DEADLINE FOR ENTRIES

Entries are open and the deadline to submit has been extended to **Friday, 24 July 2020**.

*Find out more and enter online at:*  
[nzbuildingindustryawards.org.nz](http://nzbuildingindustryawards.org.nz)

[nzbuildingindustryawards.org.nz](http://nzbuildingindustryawards.org.nz)  
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This unique brushless unit is a favourite for tradies who work in environments where noise can be an issue, and those looking to save time and money by completing their driving tasks faster.



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Features and benefits include:

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# Hi-Vis tapes gaining in popularity

Komelon was first to market with its new and innovative range of quality hi-vis tapes for the professional trades.

The Komelon Hi-Vis tape range was a New Zealand-driven initiative, and has now been picked up and marketed successfully by Komelon globally.

One of the main key benefits of the Hi-Vis tape is the blade's fluorescent yellow background which enables tape measurements and numerals to be easier to read, particularly in low light conditions or simply where one's eyesight isn't what it used to be.

The hi-vis colouring on the tape casing has also made finding the tape much easier to locate on site or in the toolbox.

Feedback from customers and builders has been excellent, with many citing they now prefer the



hi-vis format over the traditional yellow coloured tape blade for the above reasons.

With the heightened H&S awareness

environment that builders now work in, the new Komelon Hi-Vis range is likely to be further adopted by those in the trade.

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# Decking tool's latest version well received

One of Sutton Tools' most popular tools for builders is the P&N Cut-Smart 2-in-1 Decking Tool.

The company has been working with the manufacturer developing and refining this tool for several years.

The latest version has been well received by tradies who love the performance and reliability.

The product features a fully adjustable depth control, non-marking stop collar and replaceable drill bits.

It can be used in a drill or impact driver, and will pre-drill. The carbide countersink will handle timber, plastic, cement board and other abrasive material.

It can handle 8g, 10g, 12g and 14g screw sizes.



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## Digital check-ins 'non negotiable' for NZ construction industry

One of New Zealand's biggest plumbing companies has implemented mandatory digital check-ins to keep its tradies safe as they re-commence working on big projects across the country.

After four weeks of lockdown, Cooke & Dowsett NZ has sent workers back on-site at the luxury high rise construction Pacifica, as well as Bunnings at Westgate, both Auckland-based sites.

However, the company said it needed to be sure it could quickly bring up a list of who was in contact with who on-site if another outbreak occurred, and thus implemented the custom-built app 1breadcrumb to manage the process.

1breadcrumb was developed for the construction industry as a one-touch solution to the pandemic, allowing tradies to safely check in and check out of worksites, without the cumbersome paper-based solutions that were being used.



Cooke & Dowsett project manager Gary Moore says 1breadcrumb allows construction companies to put safety first.

"It allows us to access information about who has been on site, for how long, and who they interacted with — in case of a secondary outbreak," he says.

companies to easily and securely manage an automatic checking process whilst ensuring the privacy of on-site workers.

"We cannot expect for life to revert to the way it was before coronavirus," Moore says.

"Digital check-ins and check-outs will become part of the post-pandemic normal."

"At the moment, our processes are paper-driven, taking up hours of unproductive labour, and making it impossible to do this quickly."

1breadcrumb was developed with built-in GEO-fencing, allowing

## Keeping it local

Building Industry Federation chief executive Julien Leys says as a result of the effects off Covid-19, the building industry needs to rethink the supply chain.

In a recent *Build* magazine article, Leys says "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.

For more than 50 years, MiTek says it has contributed to the building industry and the New Zealand economy.

With manufacturing and support offices in Auckland and Christchurch, as well as satellite employees across the country, MiTek says it promotes innovation, productivity and employee growth to ensure it delivers building solutions for today, while continuing to invest in New Zealand's future.

So, on returning to a post-Covid-19 work environment, the company is hard at it to provide manufacturing certainty, and

supplying timber connectors that meet the New Zealand Building Code.

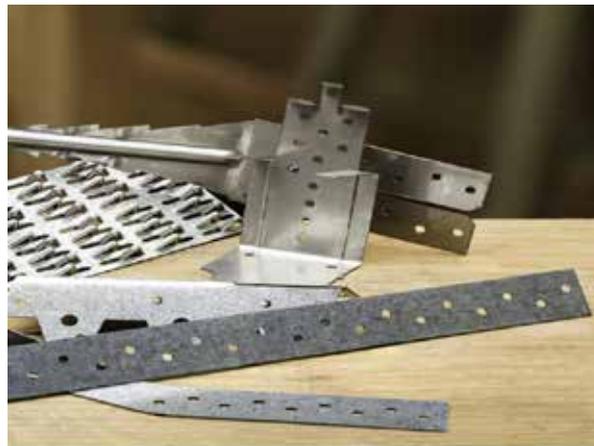
MiTek, Lumberlok and Bowmac products are designed, developed, manufactured and certified by Chartered Professional Engineers to satisfy New Zealand Building Code requirements.

All products are rigorously tested in New Zealand with building materials that are available and frequently used by New Zealanders.

Obtaining CodeMark accreditation for Lumberlok timber connectors confirms that the company's products meet the 3604:2011 Building Code.

MiTek product test reports are based on New Zealand construction methodologies that meet or exceed strength and serviceability requirements as outlined in the New Zealand Building Code.

These test reports are then independently assessed for confirmation — unlike foreign manufacturers that rely on tests from foreign



MiTek offers a complete range of trusted, code-approved builder products.

practices, using foreign materials.

These products and building solutions that are aligned with 3604:2011 are also supported by New Zealand-based engineers and account managers who are freely contactable when structural clarification is required on-site for timber framed houses.

MiTek says when getting back to "normal", builders can be assured that the support and trust many have placed with the company prior to lockdown will remain.

# Getting it right in a different world

Architect Don Bunting sees the Covid-19 stand down as an opportunity to find a better and more climate-friendly economic path.

Economist Kate Raworth, author of *Doughnut Economics*, makes a case for ditching the belief that economies obey rigid mechanical rules.

This can lead to widening inequality and a negative effect on the environment. Act more like a gardener in the sustainable use of resources rather than the false premise that market forces will pull the economy into equilibrium.

The result of “growth-based policy-making” has led to the highest levels of inequality in OECD countries in 30 years, and an ecological footprint needing six planet Earths if less-developed countries follow suit.

Perhaps for the first time, current leadership might be encouraged to change their past approach. Perhaps.

We have learned how vulnerable we are relying on much larger economies to provide life’s essentials. And recent events have shown how radically we might need to change to meet the climate challenge.

But we will still need a working economy to survive and retain some semblance of our former way of life. Change is inevitable, so why not make change work both for us and for the planet?

## Winners and losers

Economics professor Tim Hazledine said in an article in the *New Zealand Herald* in April that: Governments aren’t very good at picking winners, but losers sure are good at picking governments.

He was commenting on the “long wish lists” from local authorities, prompted by government’s call for “shovel-ready” projects, noting that a lot of the projects were dodgy from a cost-benefit perspective, and some may be particularly inappropriate in a new post-pandemic economy.

For example, will the “ruinously expensive” underground railway in Auckland be justified if a significant number of central city workers decide that working from home is actually both enjoyable and efficient?

Perhaps virtual conferences are the way of the future rather than building large, often empty conference centres in Auckland, Wellington

and Christchurch.

Unfortunately, too many projects, including the superficial attraction of light rail as the answer to our urban transport needs, are based on the “build them and they will come” approach to planning.

A bit of pragmatism is needed as we analyse what our economy and our lives might look like post-Covid.

## A new Ministry?

One worrying “light bulb” idea put forward in early April by Shane Jones and Phil Twyford was to recreate the Ministry of Works.

The MOW existed from 1876 to 1988, first as the Public Works Department and later as the Ministry of Works. Its design offices were recognised as centres of technical excellence and a vital pool of knowledge on construction techniques.

The architects, engineers and project professionals provided a vital resource for organisations such as Standards New Zealand, ensuring that construction standards reflected the very best of industry knowledge.

The Ministry also provided numerous future industry professionals with cadetships and support, both internally and at universities and technical institutes.

In its early years, the Ministry’s construction arm provided an essential resource in creating public buildings, roads, bridges, dams, highways and major services.

This happened during a time when the private sector had neither the inclination nor the capacity to meet the demands of a growing economy and a growing population.

Like many government works departments, the MOW became bloated, inefficient and unnecessary, as the private sector took over more and more of the workload.

There might be a case for a government-sponsored centre of technical excellence, to reconsider and replace some of the poor decisions made in the recent past, especially in the compliance area.

This might also ensure that our industry is able to take full advantage of the digital tools currently available but currently neglected.



Whatever happened to BIM? I was introduced to Building Information Modelling at a conference in Kyoto in June 2000. For the next 10 years there was a lot of talk internationally but little uptake locally.

Since then we might have seen BIM-Lite, but little sign of the adoption of a digital building model containing all inputs — the meta-data covering product selections and pricing, detailed programming and compliance issues — to build and manage a construction project throughout its development from brief to sign off, on time and within budget.

The form and implementation of our current building control systems is a disgrace, leading to substandard design, substandard construction and a bloated, time-wasting and expensive compliance process.

If Twyford and Jones believe they can correct this by recreating a Ministry of Works then all credit to them.

However, I am not convinced this is part of their current grand vision, which I suspect is focused more on quantity (getting stuff built fast) than on quality.

## The next pandemic

If you think Covid-19 has been bad, a potentially bigger threat to humanity is a virus infecting the digital networks we increasingly use for controlling essential services.

*Apocalypse How? Technology and the Threat of Disaster* is a book by ex-UK politician Sir Oliver Letwin. He highlights our growing reliance on converged networks that are increasingly complex, interconnected and international.

If you think relying on China for building materials and pharmaceuticals is bad enough, wait until someone blocks the virtual highway and switches off the power grid.

**Next time:** Next month I will look at some of the things I believe we need to change to meet the new normal.

# New Zealand's affordable housing crisis — why is

*Building Today* columnist and EasyBuild director Mike Fox says there is a massive disconnect between supply and demand for affordable housing. So why, he asks, are we continuing to build larger homes on expensive land that are out of reach for the average home buyer?

It is one of the biggest problems our country faces — we cannot produce the affordable housing that's so desperately needed.

But we can produce an overabundance of expensive homes. So why the massive disconnect between demand and supply?

Without political ownership and a major overhaul of the current regulatory processes, affordable housing will never be delivered. New Zealand's journey to housing unaffordability has been 30-plus years in the making.

Over the past four decades, I've built hundreds of homes, and have watched the market progressively tilt towards larger homes on smaller, very expensive lots, with building time frames stretching out and productivity plummeting.

Unfortunately, this is what our current system and market dictates, but it is woefully under-delivering on what we need to house everyone, especially in the dawn era where affordability will be paramount.

The current Government's worthy political aspirations to ramp up affordable housing by 10,000 units per annum under the guise of Kiwibuild crashed and burned in spectacular fashion.

They soon realised what those of us in the industry have long known — the delivery system is broken.

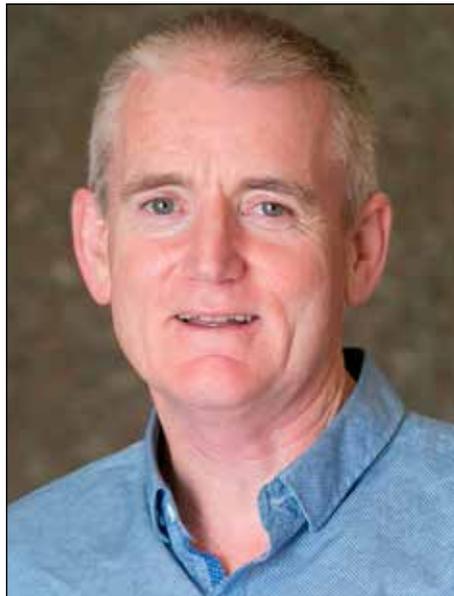
At huge political embarrassment, they learned that our underlying system is plagued with hurdles, delays, costs at every turn, and is inadvertently skewed to only create high-cost land and, subsequently, high-cost homes.

It's a pipe dream to think that the current system or market will produce affordable housing without intervention, especially in urban areas.

The sad thing is that the Government's response to fixing the broken system is to change the law so that government projects can sidestep the Resource Management Act (RMA) and leave the rest of the country stuck in the regulatory mire.

Why not be brave and fix the problem for everyone, once and for all? Instead, it's an opportunity lost, and the problem kicked down the road because it's politically difficult.

There are currently many hundreds of unsold



new homes sitting in Auckland and other locations around the country because those that need the housing can't afford them.

We have been building a disproportionate oversupply of expensive larger homes, with the greatest area of demand being affordable homes hardly catered for.

This needs to change, and quickly. However, if we continue to follow the same regulatory processes, how can we expect a different outcome? It just won't happen.

If we want affordable housing, we need to produce affordable land free of inflationary minimum size and design-restrictive covenants.

In reality, these covenants are put in place by developers to raise the price of subsequent section releases. They cut out a large portion of buyers who might be wanting a smaller, more efficient home.

Any meaningful changes will only come about under current systems by sidestepping the market and some of the feel-good niceties of planning, and simply getting on with pragmatically producing the housing, and centrally funding the infrastructure needed.

If the politicians have not got the wisdom or courage to change the rules that have created this mess, perhaps they will need to develop their own land that can be used for affordable

housing. Previous governments have successfully done it before.

## To solve this crisis, we need a different approach

The solution is relatively clear — we need fewer rules and political fortitude, as local authorities will need to be curbed and, in some cases, overruled — and not just for Government projects.

I know of one private enterprise example where a smaller local authority has been sitting on its hands for more than 12 months like possums frozen in the headlights.

It's a \$40 million project that will deliver 150 affordable homes to market for less than \$400,000 each, including the land.

Clients are crying out for the product, but what I refer to as two star-gazing planners just seem overwhelmed, and the project continues to sit in limbo. The planners' strategy seems to be to go slow with the hope the project will eventually disappear.

How unjust is that on society? Affordable new homes being kept out of the market on the whim of a planner. All the while, holding costs are pushing up prices by the day, and the clients remain unhoused in motels and cars.

Another example is a transitional housing project, with a perfect site and location and the need overwhelming.

This time, the neighbours got a bit jittery, politicians circled, didn't like the heat, and the project was canned, resulting in more motel rooms booked.

God only knows what all this is costing the taxpayer. This is the crazy disconnected world the RMA creates.

If they asked me, I would remove all smaller residential projects from the RMA as it is no longer fit for purpose, and the planning process too subjective. The process often gets hijacked by neighbours, anti-commercial practices, personal agendas and nimbism.

More standardisation of design and modular building needs to be increased, and the consumer conditioned to not expect a bespoke home if they want affordability and value.

# it near impossible to produce low-cost homes?

Building companies create the expectation that you can have your home any way you want. However, if the consumer realised that building bespoke added at least 25% to the cost of their home, they may view things very differently.

This is even more important now where people will be cutting their cloth accordingly, and looking for homes within their means that deliver efficiency on all fronts.

The social and health costs from not getting more affordable housing into the market far outweigh the cost of providing good housing. All these people forced to live in motels, cars and caravans need a stable, warm place to call home.

## Is the RMA helping?

Although well intentioned, the RMA has morphed into a major stumbling block. Currently it is project-specific, and has no cognisance as to what the community actually needs to house its people, or what its impacts are on the financial viability of a project.

It is heavily weighted against the party wanting to commence a new project. The applicant is made to feel guilty until they can prove themselves innocent.

The surrounding homes seem to have an inordinate amount of say, and councils often pander to spurious objections.

It's a cost-plus model, with the first person purchasing paying the bill for infrastructure, GST and all manner of other local authority fees.

The RMA, along with the 70-disjointed individual council district schemes, is an unsustainable model.

## What about the Building Act?

In addition to issues caused by the RMA, since the introduction of The Building Act 2004, construction costs have soared, and productivity has plummeted.

Why? Considerable administrative process has cumulatively been forced into place, but it is adding very little material value.

Risk-averse behaviour has turned once helpful local authorities into gun-shy, chicken-little organisations slowing construction down, and demanding consumer money be spent to absolve themselves of liability.

The construction industry currently works at the speed that the controlling local authority can issue and administer consent — and that impacts significantly on productivity and costs.

Some local authorities are brilliant while others are woeful. I have heard in some locations you can wait as long as 21 days for an inspection. How can anyone be expected to be productive or work within constraints like that?

In the past 15 years the cost of building has increased 110%, while the general cost of living has increased only 44%. Much of this extra cost is the result of compounding regulatory change, council fees and unfairly imposed infrastructure cost.

Many good operators have been worn down by the incessant regulatory creep and the growing army of Clipboard Charlies. They are exiting and taking much needed skills away from the industry.

We need strong leadership, meaningful change and a complete overhaul of the RMA, The Building Act and The Local Government Act so that the drivers and outcomes result in efficient, affordable and sustainable housing.

Change will only happen through collaboration between industry and policy makers, but there must be a catalyst for change. I believe we have reached that tipping point.

One would also hope housing can be depoliticised, and an across-party accord could be reached.

It is too important an issue to be used as a political football. Recent events have opened the gates of pragmatism, and we should take this opportunity to improve things for the industry.

A full review of the governing acts should be undertaken, and if regulation doesn't help the delivery of affordable healthy housing or make the industry more productive, then the time has come to ditch it.

**• 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.**

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## CCA — do you have to make payment of a determination if a related adjudication determination is pending?

Timothy Bates of Auckland law firm Legal Vision discusses the above question by reviewing a case concerning the contract for the construction of a residential dwelling in Paraparaumu last year.

This article reviews the decision of *Alpine Prime Properties Ltd v Haskell Construction Ltd*, a case that came before the courts because Alpine applied to set aside a statutory demand that Haskell had served upon it.

### Facts

Alpine is a property developer that owned four lots in Paraparaumu. On August 2, 2018, it entered into a contract for the construction of a residential dwelling on one of the lots in Ruapehu Street.

The contract price was \$800,000, which was to be paid in nine stages as works progressed.

Works commenced in August 2018. By September 2018, Haskell had completed stage 1 (foundations/floor structure), and duly invoiced for these works. The invoice was paid by Alpine.

In December 2018, Haskell received a revised design, including steel. In response, Haskell sought to increase the contract price to accommodate the inclusion of the steel. Alpine did not accept the proposed variation to the contract price.

Meanwhile, Haskell had continued with the construction works, largely completing stage 2 (wall and roof lining), save for the steel work.

On February 13, 2019, Haskell issued a payment claim for stage 2, asserting it had reached "substantial completion".

A site meeting took place on February 26, 2019 where a disagreement emerged.

On April 18, 2019, Alpine purported to cancel the contract pursuant to SS 362N(2)(b) and 362O(a) of the Building Act 2004, alleging substantial breaches of contract by Haskell.

On April 24, 2019, Haskell attempted to accept Alpine's cancellation as though it had been made under CL 15.2.2(c) of the contract, which allows cancellation where the parties agree the contract has become impossible to perform or is otherwise frustrated.

Haskell thereafter submitted the dispute about payment of its payment claim 2 to an adjudicator appointed under the Construction Contracts Act (CCA).

Whilst it was ruled that the works were not substantially complete, it was ruled that Alpine owed \$133,000 to Haskell.

The adjudicator did not consider whether the cancellation by Alpine was justified or amounted to repudiation, or whether damages applied.

The same adjudicator did accept a second reference to him from Alpine concerning the issue of cancellation.

He ruled that due to breach of contract by Haskell, Alpine was entitled to cancel the contract. But he had no evidence from which he might change his initial assessment of loss as made in his first adjudication.

Alpine then referred a third adjudication to another adjudicator. This adjudication required the adjudicator to determine its claim for damages arising from breach of contract by Haskell.

This determination was pending at the time these proceedings were brought before the court.

### Legal framework

These proceedings arrived in the High Court by method of a Companies Act 1993 statutory demand having been served on Alpine by Haskell. Alpine refused to pay, and looked to avoid the presumption of insolvency applied by not paying, instead seeking to set aside the demand.

The fundamental question the court was required to consider was whether Alpine could resist making payment of the first determination, being the sum of \$133,000, in favour of Haskell, whilst it waited for the determination of the third adjudication.

Alpine's case was that it should not be required to make interim payment of the \$133,000 because it had a counterclaim for damages



resulting from breach of contract that would, in all likelihood, exceed the amount claimed in Haskell's statutory demand. Alpine's claim in the third adjudication was in excess of \$300,000.

Alpine relied upon authority to the effect that an interim payment need not be paid under the CCA where there is a real risk that the creditor will be unable to repay the amount following a final determination on the merits, and the debtor has a strong case that the creditor will ultimately have to repay that amount.

The court ruled that the application brought by Alpine, namely to set aside the statutory demand, failed, as it could not invoke an unproved counterclaim to avoid the "pay now, argue later" regime for interim payments established by the CCA.

Section 79 is clear that only the set-off of a judgment can prevent that principle applying, or where the liquidated claim a party attempts to set-off is mutually accepted by both parties.

In terms of the argument raised that Haskell was likely to have to pay the money straight back and was in risk of insolvency itself, the court said for this to apply, proceedings had to have been issued by Alpine which, if successful, would, in turn, supersede any interim award.

It was clear that the third adjudication proceeding (if successful) could only amount to an interim award.

Ultimately, the statutory demand was not set aside, and Alpine was given 20 working days to pay the amount, otherwise Haskell could apply to put Alpine into liquidation.

**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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# Covid-19 focus turning to economic recovery

Terry Sage of Trades Coaching New Zealand says the Covid-19 information overload is turning from health to dollars. So what's the best way forward for your business?

I talked last month about the current overload of information, stretched journalism, and not to take in everything that's out there.

Has the amount of information changed in the past four weeks?

No, it's still pouring in, but the content has changed somewhat, from numbers of cases and recoveries to numbers of dollars, the future, and a heavy hint of politics. Aren't we the lucky ones!

Again, if you believe everything that is written then you might as well close up shop now, sell the house, auction the first born and head for the hills with a tent and Joffrey's crossbow.

Or, you can read between the lines, listen to reason, and start planning.

So what is ahead of us? Does anybody actually know? Or is it all just speculation and guesswork?

Well, I've never had much luck with crystal balls, and if I did have one it would certainly be cloudy right now.

My economics skills have always been severely lacking, although I have been accused of acute optimism in the past.

It will be alright in the end, and if it's not alright then it's not the end is it? So start thinking and start planning.

Let's state the obvious shall we — are there tough times ahead? Of course there are.

Will there be a recession? Yeah, probably, if that's what the journos are going to call it. Are we going to survive it? Of course we are.

This is nothing compared to the majors of last century, including world wars, depressions, famines, epidemics and the rest.

So let's put this into some sort of perspective — yes, it's bad, but we are in a much better position than we were during last century to get through tough times.

## Best way forward?

So what's the best way forward for a business owner? Well, there's many variations and lots of advice out there, but this is what I am passing on to my clients, and anybody else who's desperate enough to listen to me.

First, it depends on how hard it is for you. Some will be creaming it, others will be ticking by, and then there will be the ones mired in panic.

Let's address the tickers and those panicking. Aim to plan week by week and month by month — if you look too far forward you will lose sight of immediate needs.

Cut as much expense as possible, make use of



all the giveaways, wage subsidies, government loans, mortgage holidays, interest-free loans and whatever else you can get your hands on.

If you really need to, then some staff might have to go. Morally, I know this is wrong, and it goes against one reason for the wage subsidy. But if cutting one job can save four others then do it.

If you have stuff to sell give it a go, but you may not get what you want for it — perhaps you can buy another one when times are good again?

Cash is king when cash flow slows, so don't be too hasty to spend.

Think about the next 30, 60, and 90 days' accounts. You will have invoices going out and bills to pay, and these will be hard times cash flow-wise.

The main issue will be that you had possibly six or seven weeks with no work so, therefore, no invoicing and no income.

Then you rushed back to work, ordered heaps of materials, and you have to pay for them soon, while also paying wages and subcontractors.

Hopefully you have managed to get a few invoices out since you went back, but, and this is the stinger — will the invoices be enough to cover the bills?

Do the hard yards now, and get through the next three to four months. And don't be shy, slow or too proud to ask for help.

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THE BUSINESS SIDE OF CONSTRUCTION

# Rightsizing your business the right way

Tradie HR director Leigh Olsen says Covid-19 has forced business owners to take some heart-wrenching decisions. Here's how to go about rightsizing your business.



The Covid-19 pandemic has created a level of pressure on employers and employees like never seen before. Business owners are having to consider decisions that threaten what they have spent years pouring their heart and soul into.

Workers are suddenly finding themselves out of work, competing for jobs with many others, or considering a career change altogether. And emotions are running at an all-time high.

Doing nothing is not an option for the majority of SMEs, with rightsizing a key step in helping any business to get through these turbulent times.

Often referred to as "restructuring", rightsizing is the process of a business restructuring or re-organising itself by either reducing staff numbers, cost cutting or rearranging its workforce to adapt to market conditions.

It is a stressful business activity with not only legal requirements, but also an obligation to do right by all parties.

This article clarifies what you can do to make sure you "do right by all parties", and take care of all of those involved. Plus you will gain guidance around the risks and responsibilities if you have to rightsize your business.

### What are your legal requirements?

Redundancy should always be a last resort, and should only be considered when you have tried everything else and there is no other choice but to let staff go. Section 103A of the Employment Relations Act 2000 states "what a fair and reasonable employer could have done in all the circumstances".

This means it is important, as part of getting the process right, that employers consider other alternatives to rightsizing than just going straight to redundancy. Other options could be:

- Use of secondments.
- Extended leave without pay (LWOP).
- Reduced days/hours of work.
- Voluntary exit.
- Redeployment.
- Contractor arrangement.

### Allow reasonable time for consultation and feedback

No one wants this process dragging on for several weeks or even months because it's too hard, emotionally and financially.

However, legally, employees must be given time

to think about the changes you are considering. Until you have their comments and feedback, you must not make a firm decision about any restructure, and should remain open-minded until the end of the consultation process.

Employees are legally entitled to be consulted about things that could significantly affect their jobs. Until you have their formal comments on the change you are thinking about, your plan is not final — it is a proposal.

Employees do not need to agree with your proposal for restructure, but they do need to have a say.

### What should you consider before rightsizing?

The word "restructure" can often strike fear into the hearts of many — from those potentially affected through to those having to conduct the process.

Whatever the situation, a carefully considered and thoughtful response is the best approach for this often emotional change management process. Use the following key aspects to reduce apprehension and distress for all those involved.

- Take the time to plan: Start by considering how the change will impact your customers, clients and, most importantly, your workforce.

Use this information to develop a robust change proposal that clearly indicates your reasons for the change, and be prepared to provide specifics. If you are claiming that you are having to do a restructure for financial reasons, then provide data to support that claim.

- Develop a communication strategy: Once you have decided on the business rationale for the change, how are you going to communicate it? Who is going to do this and when? Will this be done in a group meeting or on a one-to-one basis?

For those potentially affected employees, leaders must clearly explain the impacts for them.

If appropriate, other employees can be kept up to date with proposed changes — but always keep your priority to those directly affected with the restructure. Timing is also an

important consideration. You don't want this process to become drawn out, but nor should a restructure be quick and dirty.

Employment New Zealand has a detailed Overview of Workplace Change Document available that outlines the steps to follow when making such a change in the workplace — <https://www.employment.govt.nz>.

- Be Truthful: Be prepared to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth for the change.

Everything you say and do, including emails and texts to each other, could become evidence if an employee wants to take a personal grievance against you for an unfair process, or that you made them redundant for the wrong reasons.

Being open and transparent goes a long way in assisting staff to better understand where the company is coming from.

- Show Leadership: From experience, a key aspect that can help this whole process is great leadership. Be patient with your employees, and make yourself available to answer questions and talk them through the process.

Be ready for emotion and, if needed, provide support, whether it be through external counsellors or an internal resource. Sometimes just being silent and listening to them is a key part for the process to work.

### Support

At Tradie HR we know this whole restructuring process can be scary, intimidating and emotional. We are currently offering 20 minutes of free HR advice for any Registered Master Builder members who would like to sense-check their current process, or just chat in confidence about rightsizing their business.

**Note:** This article is not intended to be a replacement for legal advice.

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# Building Consents Information

For All Authorisations, April 2020

Dwellings	\$913,902,000
Domestic Outbuildings	\$8,813,000
<b>Total Residential</b>	<b>\$922,715,000</b>
Non-residential	\$363,656,000
<b>Total All Buildings</b>	<b>\$1,286,372,000</b>
Non-building Construction	\$18,992,000
<b>Total Authorisations</b>	<b>\$1,305,364,000</b>

## Number of new dwellings consented

	Apr 2020	Mar 2020	Apr 2019		Apr 2020	Mar 2020	Apr 2019
Far North District	19	20	27	Horowhenua District	12	20	16
Whangarei District	27	37	39	Kapiti Coast District	9	22	16
Kaipara District	9	22	16	Porirua City	19	59	40
Rodney District	107	73	76	Upper Hutt City	2	13	12
North Shore/Albany Wards	168	271	176	Lower Hutt City	13	20	74
Waitakere Ward	90	101	72	Wellington City	34	36	67
Auckland Wards	161	295	332	Masterton District	11	26	10
Manukau/Howick Wards	150	205	112	Carterton District	9	10	4
Manurewa-Papakura Ward	148	177	215	South Wairarapa District	4	5	4
Franklin Ward	70	65	60	Tasman District	32	15	27
Thames-Coromandel District	20	29	19	Nelson City	14	17	13
Hauraki District	7	12	9	Marlborough District	12	24	23
Waikato District	69	71	59	Kaikoura District	3	3	6
Matamata-Piako District	13	9	14	Buller District	1	2	4
Hamilton City	75	110	74	Grey District	2	2	5
Waipa District	39	50	29	Westland District	3	3	1
Otorohanga District	1	3	1	Hurunui District	4	7	9
South Waikato District	2	4	4	Waimakariri District	44	27	37
Waitomo District	2	3	1	Christchurch City	218	252	212
Taupo District	24	22	22	Selwyn District	104	139	106
Western Bay of Plenty District	18	29	22	Ashburton District	10	11	12
Tauranga City	60	94	100	Timaru District	8	18	12
Rotorua District	4	6	22	Mackenzie District	5	8	11
Whakatane District	3	16	29	Waimate District	0	0	4
Kawerau District	0	0	0	Chatham Islands Territory	0	0	0
Opotiki District	0	1	0	Waitaki District	2	8	7
Gisborne District	11	5	12	Central Otago District	19	24	22
Wairoa District	1	1	0	Queenstown-Lakes District	103	166	77
Hastings District	45	28	31	Dunedin City	19	27	25
Napier City	16	10	14	Clutha District	2	9	8
Central Hawke's Bay District	3	3	7	Southland District	6	14	14
New Plymouth District	8	51	45	Gore District	0	5	1
Stratford District	0	2	0	Invercargill City	2	13	15
South Taranaki District	8	12	5	Area Outside TA	0	0	0
Ruapehu District	5	0	5				
Whanganui District	4	15	12	Total	2168	2904	2605
Rangitikei District	0	5	5				
Manawatu District	14	15	10				
Palmerston North City	37	20	34				
Taranaki District	4	5	1				

- 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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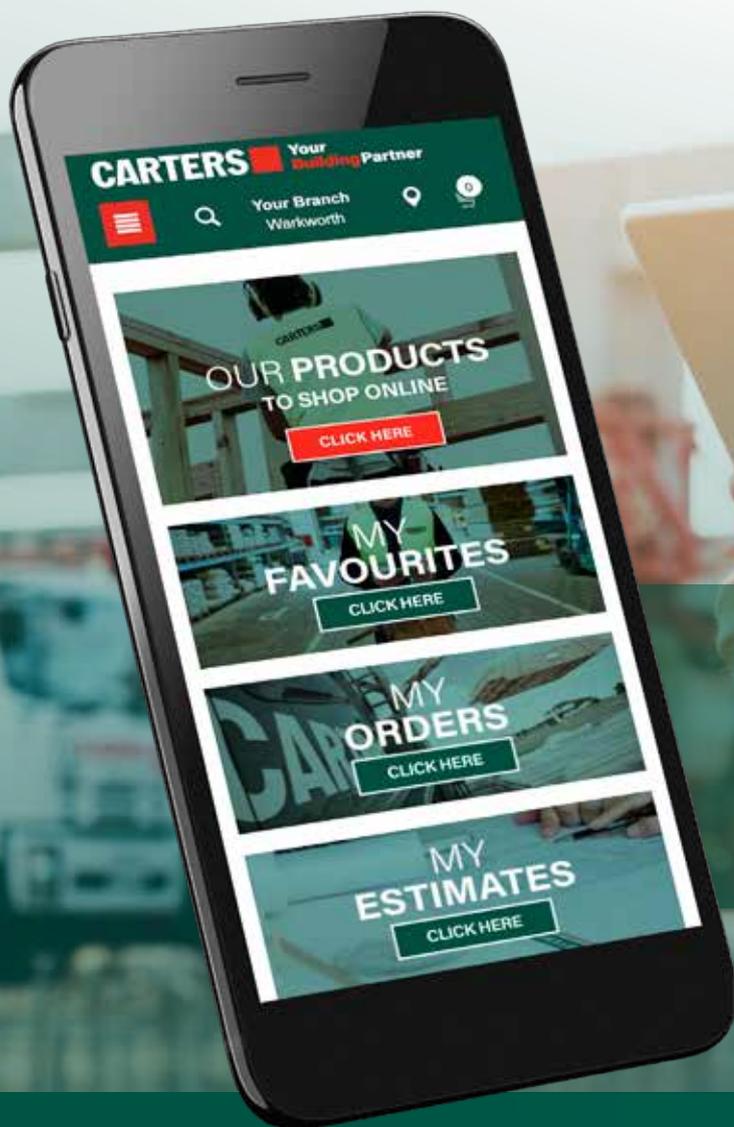
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