

June 2021

Changing of the Guard

This is my first Building Post as the Building Control Group Manager. I take over this role from Bill East. I certainly do have some big shoes to fill. However I am lucky enough to still have Bill working in the Building Control Team.

Bill's new role after stepping down as manager is the Duty Building Officer. With a lifetime of building experience his expertise in this role will be invaluable to our team and the wider industry. Bill is also still actively involved with the Accessibility Action Group and on the MBIE advisory group for Tiny Homes. So you have not seen or heard the last of Bill.

I have been lucky enough to inherit from Bill a stable, professional and dedicated team which includes twelve Building Control Officers, two Senior Building Control Officers, four Compliance Officers, three Planning Officers and five Administration Officers. I feel privileged to be working with this team as their manager.

Dhyanom Gala has filled my previous role as Senior Building Control Officer. His knowledge as an engineer, experience as Building Control officer and his professionalism and fresh ideas make him a welcome addition to the Senior Team.

For those of you that don't know me, I grew up and was educated in Christchurch. I spent eight years working overseas in Australia, UK and Ireland in a diverse range of employment ranging from building to banking. Upon moving back to New Zealand with my partner, Helen, I completed a carpentry apprenticeship in Christchurch. We moved to Blenheim in 2006 and in 2007 I started work with the Marlborough District Council as a Building Control Officer. In 2012 I was appointed Senior Building Control Officer and more recently as Building Control Group Manager.

I love living, working and playing in this province. I like to make the most of what Marlborough has to offer and love to get out on the water fishing and diving. In winter I try to get in as much skiing as possible when time and snow conditions allow. I also take an interest in and play a variety of sports.

As manager of the Building Control Group; I want to continue to work with the industry to ensure that the built environment in Marlborough is safe, sound and fit for purpose.



Building for Climate Change

It is widely accepted that climate change is already happening, and if it hasn't already, it is going to affect us all in years to come. The recent floods in the Ashburton, Selwyn and Canterbury area are testament to this. New Zealand is now on the path to a low emission target and a climate resilient future. The Government has committed to being Carbon Zero by 2050 and has established the Climate Change Commission to support this journey. As the regulator and owner of a number of key areas contributing to climate change, MBIE has a significant role to play in achieving these critical long-term goals. One of these key areas is the Building and Construction Sector.

The Building and Construction Sector is a large contributor to greenhouse gas emissions from using energy in buildings, producing construction materials, constructing buildings, and the waste from demolished buildings. A recent piece of research commissioned by the Sector (Thinkstep, 2018) estimated that the Building and Construction Sector contributes around 20% of New Zealand's greenhouse gas emissions, taking into account all the material used by the Sector. It is estimated that globally buildings account for 32% of energy use and 19% of energy related emissions. The above figures clearly show the opportunity for the Sector to help New Zealand reduce



greenhouse gas emissions and achieve the goal of net Carbon Zero by 2050. The climate risks we will be facing in the next 50 or 100 years are not the same risks we faced in the past. One of the key ways of keeping people safe from these risks, is having buildings that are designed and built well, and helping people use fewer resources such as water. Just using the current settings for the future won't provide the safety and resilience New Zealanders need. MBIE and the Building and Construction Sector will be working to make sure how we build is up to the task of meeting the climate risks New Zealand will face.

MBIE launched the Building for Climate Change Programme in mid-2020 and the first public consultation covered the following two frameworks:

- The Whole-of-Life Embodied Carbon Emissions Framework, which looks at reducing carbon emissions across a building's whole life cycle – from the production of building materials, all the way through to what happens to the building when it's at the end of its life.
- The Transforming Operational Efficiency Framework, which focusses on reducing carbon emissions related to the operation of buildings, such as the use of heating, cooling, lighting and ventilation.

MBIE received a large amount of information from respondents and they are still working on the summary of submissions that were received. The submissions are due for release shortly. Some of the results that have been shared so far include:

- 360 responses were received. 55% of respondents came on behalf of an organisation.
- 92% of the survey agree that the Building and Construction Sector needs to take action to reduce emissions. 79% also saying that there are barriers currently preventing or discouraging them, or

their business, taking action to reduce admissions. MBIE have acknowledged that their work to remove barriers to make things easier for the sector will be a tool to combating climate change.

- 87% of responses agreed that the programme should include initiatives to reduce whole of life embodied carbon in New Zealand buildings, with around three quarters supporting a cap on whole of life embodied carbon for new building projects.

Whatever the outcomes of this program there will be changes to the industry and the Building Code that will have a wide ranging effect. When changes are implemented they will be well documented and Council will endeavour to keep you informed on how to keep up to date with the changes.

Building Code Clause H1 Energy Efficiency

In May, MBIE consultation closed for proposed changes to the energy efficiency clause H1 of the Building Code. MBIE asked for feedback on proposed changes to insulation requirements in new builds, and creating additional climate zones to better reflect the weather patterns in New Zealand. When comparing our builds to those of similar climates throughout the world, our minimum insulation requirements here in New Zealand are quite low. It still amazes me in residential builds that both the industry and consumers preference is look rather than performance. Components such as expensive kitchen bench tops, tapware, and door hardware all seem to be high on the priority list. All these items can be ungraded at a later date and to prioritize these at the start seem to be at

the detriment of the critical components such as increased sized framing which allows for thicker and better performing insulation, or additional bracing rather than minimum building code requirements. The analogy is going for a warrant of fitness on your vehicle and passing, but only having minimum tyre tread. This is the same as meeting the minimum requirement of the building code. It is food for thought that we will live in a dwelling for a lifetime and be satisfied that it makes minimum requirements for things such as structure, insulation and ventilation as long as we have a nice looking benchtop. From personal experience of having to deal with the complexities and the personal frustration of having my parent's house rebuilt after the Christchurch earthquake, I can personally confirm when disaster strikes; having a resilient building is worth the sacrifice of a nice benchtop. It would be great to see the insurance industry getting on board with reducing premiums and offering incentives for those who build above minimum code requirements.



To me it seems absurd that there is no incentive by the insurance industry to build a more resilient building. Surely the risk is reduced and this should be reflected in the premiums charged I will do my best to follow this up with the insurance industry to provide some clarity as to why there is no incentive to customers who build above the minimum standards.

Supply Chains

New Zealand has been reasonably sheltered from the challenges some other countries have faced throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. However supply chains in the Building and Construction Sector have been affected, and consideration needs to be factored in when facing supply issues. Some supply chains are faring worse than others, and retailers are doing their best to keep the industry updated where issues are occurring. Careful planning at design needs to be considered in regards to product supply. It is no good for a designer to specify products that are known to be unavailable or in short supply. Lack of product will cause delay to the physical build on site. If products need to be substituted at construction stage, the substitution needs to be documented with Council. Depending on what the



component substitution is, will have a bearing on the documentation required.

Council is aware that there is an increased need for product substitution due to supply chain issues and we will try to accommodate this by having further capacity to deal with this issue. If you are facing supply chain issues please ensure you contact Council in regards to the changes before you need to use the substituted product on site.

Remote Building Inspection

Our team is constantly exploring ways to provide efficiencies to improve our overall performance. One new piece of technology that we are currently trialing is Artisan which is a remote inspection tool that allows inspections to be photographed by builders and reviewed off-site by Council inspectors.

Artisan is a mobile phone app and web solution developed by BRANZ. The digital solution enables each key step in the build process to be prescribed, seen, assessed, and verified, then saved to Council files. In simplified terms, builders can photograph their work, submit the photos via the Artisan app and the Building Control team can review their work off-site. If Artisan is to be used during construction, the builder will be provided with a shot-list of photos to be provided to the Building Control team. When the photos are submitted, the Building Control team will assess each shot for compliance and provide confirmation of the inspection result. This process is a high trust model however



with the professional industry that we have in Marlborough and the LBP licensing scheme, Council believes this model will work in some circumstances.

By using this app, there are benefits to the industry as compliance can be confirmed throughout the build process, rather than waiting for inspections. Inspection travel times are costly to the industry. The time spent travelling is time when an inspector is unproductive. Some of the travel times to remote parts of Marlborough are up to six hours for a return trip. By removing travel time, Council envisaging that more time can be spent processing consents and undertaking inspections when required.

When discussing with the industry the use of Artisan, some have voiced concerns that they still see the requirement for face to face inspections. We agree with this concern and rest assured this app is not a replacement of the full inspection process. Council understands there are critical points in time throughout the build, where face to face inspections are still required. Also we will risk assess the build to assess its complexity and what inspections are required. Artisan limitations are to areas where mobile coverage is available. Overtime the increased network coverage throughout the Marlborough region will see this limitation been diminished.

Dhyanom Gala has been instrumental in implementing Artisan and I wish to thank him for his work in researching and working with the industry to provide this solution. I hope in time the industry will see the long term benefits.

The Building and Construction Industry in Marlborough

In the public spotlight is the new Blenheim Library that Robinson Construction is building. The foundations and slab are now down. Fair to say the concrete industry in Marlborough has been busy as the amount of concrete needed for this project. The Building Control Team were lucky enough to be shown over the site by Robinson Construction recently and it was very interesting to see the complexity of the foundations. This build will take more form over the coming months as the next phase of the build takes shape. There are many complex design and build components, so it will be interesting to see the library evolve.

Another public project that is currently underway is the Sports Hub/pokapū, at Lansdowne Park. This project when completed will see a shared space for several different sports which will be a great asset for all of Marlborough.

All the commercial construction firms appear to be busy with many projects underway. The wine industry is still growing and extra capacity for this growth is keeping the industry busy. There is also quite a bit of building work at several Marlborough schools currently underway. It is a healthy sign for the Building and Construction industry when the commercial sector is busy.

The residential sector continues to be busy, and has been since the end of lockdown. Rose Manor Sub-division is quickly filling up. When the Wai-Iti infrastructure and the appropriate Resource Consents are complete, it is envisaged that dwellings will quickly follow.



There are some complex residential builds underway and these showcase the talent of the design and construction industry that we have in Marlborough.

There are some big projects in the pipe line that have been well documented in the media. These include the combined college project, redevelopment of the port and the retirement village. These projects will put extra pressure on the already stretched resourcing of labour in Marlborough, so it

will be interesting to see how the firms involved with these projects manage the labour and accommodation requirements. I recently held a meeting with Naylor Love who are principal contractor for the Combined College Project and they are still very much in the planning stage of the project. They are envisaging that they will have more of a confirmed timeline for this project later in the year. The Council Building Control Team are conscious that these large projects will put extra pressure on all facets of the industry, including consenting and processing. The last thing that the Building Control Team want to see, is these projects effecting the capability to service the existing industry. The Building Control Teams intention are to ensure that the service we currently provide is not detrimentally compromised by these projects.

One of the positives that have resulted from the pandemic is the uptake of apprenticeships in the building and construction sector. In years to come, I hope we see the benefit of new faces added to the industry which currently is dealing with a shortage of skilled and unskilled workers.

The Registered Master Builders Apprentice of the Year is soon to take place. This competition recognizes excellence among carpentry apprentices and raises awareness of career opportunities in the Building and Construction industry. Last year Marlborough won the top three places for the Upper South Island Area (Nelson, Marlborough and West Coast) and one contestant ended up second for the whole of New Zealand. Last year's results speak for themselves in respect of the quality of the apprentices that Marlborough produces.

Comings and Goings

Recently the Building Control Team saw William (Wally) Reimers resign to undertake a role for a private inspection and processing consultancy. Morning smoko here at Building Control will not be the same without Wally, as his recollections of his time as South African Police Officer in his home town of Mtubatuba use to leave us all thanking that we are lucky to live where we do here in New Zealand. Wally not only was a police officer, he was and still is a practicing minister, keen motorbike rider, biltong producer and beer brewer. We wish Wally all the best in his new job. We are currently in the interview phase for replacing Wally's role.

The Building Control Team was also thrilled to hear Deepti Shah, who is currently on maternity leave, gave birth to a baby girl. Deepti and her husband's family are all overseas and due to border restrictions, can't enter the country to visit, which makes it tough for them. Congratulations Deepti, I know the building team is looking forward to meeting your baby girl.

Receiving Future Building Posts

Mailing the Building Post is to be phased out. If you wish to receive future Building Posts please e-mail your details to buildingadmin@marlborough.govt.nz



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