

# BUILDINGTODAY

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE REGISTERED MASTER BUILDERS ASSOCIATION



VOLUME 31 NUMBER 4

MAY 2021

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**Ross Middleton:**  
The climate change train has pulled out of the station — but the engineer is crook

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WOMEN IN TRADES COLLECTIVE: 'LOTS OF WOMEN KEEN TO JOIN THE BUILDING SECTOR'

MIKE FOX: WHEN DOES A HOUSING CRISIS BECOME A HOUSING EMERGENCY?

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# BUILDINGTODAY

MAY 2021

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It's blindingly obvious that the relationship between the planet and humankind has to change — and quickly.

Columnist Ross Middleton says like most forward-thinking commercial operations worldwide, construction companies need to accept this change and build it into their operating models for the future. Read his thought-provoking comments in this issue.

Meanwhile, an obvious solution to the industry's skills shortage lies in the increased recruitment of women into the sector, whether in an on-the-tools role or in administrative positions.

The newly-formed Women in Trades Collective has launched initiatives to get more women involved, including sold-out focus groups, and surveys that have attracted a huge response. Read more on page 33.

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1-year subscription (11 issues): \$57.50  
ISSN 1171-0225 (Print)

ISSN 1171-1264 (Online)

# Industry experiencing four commonplace 'growing pain' issues

Feedback from RMBA president Kerry Archer's recent nationwide travels suggests that there are four common issues facing the industry at present — councils and consents, lack of quality staff, land supply, and materials supply.

I have been lucky enough in the past few weeks to have travelled around the country attending some of the Master Builders annual members meetings.

With a few more to go in the next couple of weeks, my goal is to attend each branch over my two-year term.

I really enjoy these and getting face to face with the guys on the ground.

The informal chats before and after are invaluable in finding out what the real issues are with the Master Builders organisation and our industry as a whole.

## Positive feedback

I am happy to say there have not been too many grumbles about the RMBA and, on the whole, it has all been pretty positive feedback.

This says to me that what we are providing as an organisation is relevant and of benefit to members' businesses.

From an industry perspective, I thought I would share what seems to be the most common issues I have been hearing about.

These all relate to the current workloads that we as an industry are experiencing, and the associated "growing pains".

We have not had this level of activity in 50 years in New Zealand, and it does not show too many signs of slowing over the next few years.

## Four common areas

There seems to be four common areas where issues are arising — councils and consents, lack of quality staff, land supply, and materials supply. If you are experiencing any of these issues, you are not alone as it appears to be across the board.

What can be done about any of these? In the short term, not a lot.



Land supply and councils are big ticket items that are definitely on the government's agenda, with the Building Act and the Resource Management Act being looked at.

Land supply issues for housing are not so much centred around the lack of land but, rather, the lack of affordable land ready to build on.

Most of this is related to getting the infrastructure and subdivisions consented, all of which is currently being looked at with the government allocating big dollars towards infrastructure.

Unfortunately these things don't happen quickly, but it is good to know that they are in focus and underway, and that Master Builders are well regarded by the Government due to the advocacy role that we play for the whole of the industry.

With regards to supply chain issues, these are

largely out of our control, so we can only plan for the things that we can control.

All you can do is ensure that jobs are well organised, and that you're planning further out than you normally would to make sure you have materials on hand — or that you can at least advise clients and give them an option to make changes.

Addressing a lack of quality staff is also not a quick fix. The way people want to work now is different to what it has been in the past, and more emphasis needs to be placed on work-life balance.

We need to strive to provide a place of work that staff are proud of, and that they want to continue to work there — and this is not all about pay rates either.

## Difficulty retaining staff

As an industry, at times we have lacked good training and have had difficulty retaining staff.

Take on an apprentice and spend some time training them. Yes, it is a risk that they may leave once they have finished that training, but they should still be a valuable team member.

I have heard that this is a barrier for some employers, but maybe you need to look and see why it is they want to leave?

As mentioned earlier, I see all these issues as growing pains. Our industry is bursting at the seams, and that applies to everyone involved, from builders, subcontractors, councils and suppliers.

There is an old saying that more businesses go broke in boom times than in hard times. So make sure you are also allowing for a work-life balance and not just saying yes to all the opportunities that come your way.

Take a considered approach to your current and future workloads, and spend time planning for all possible and probable variables.

# STRENGTH IN OVERCOMING COMPETITION PRESSURE



## BYRON RAUBENHEIMER

WAIKATO REGIONAL WINNER  
NATIONAL FINALIST REGISTERED MASTER BUILDERS  
CARTERS 2020 APPRENTICE OF THE YEAR

Byron is employed by GD Pringle Building, and was trained through the Building and Construction Industry Training Organisation (BCITO).

### SUCCESSES

Byron would have never thought building a basic toolbox in two hours at the regional event could be so stressful.

“Throw in a timer counting down and just enough materials provided for no margin for error and it gets a bit trickier! I definitely learnt a lot from the regional practical that I carried through to the nationals.

“I enjoyed the energetic atmosphere at the nationals. We were all sweating bullets to complete the practical, but it was wicked to see all the support from families and employers. It was also great seeing the calibre of the other apprentices. The workmanship displayed in such a high-pressure environment was impressive!

“Being successful in the construction industry is more than just swinging a hammer so it’s awesome to see this reflected in the competition.”

### CHALLENGES

The biggest challenge for Byron was backing himself rather than worrying about what the other apprentices were doing on the day of the practical or what they had done with their submissions.

“As an athlete for 10-plus years I’m a highly competitive person. I tried to not get too caught up on winning and, instead, actually enjoying the competition. Ultimately, it was an unforgettable experience.



### EMPLOYER COMMENTS

Managing Director George Pringle did not hesitate to encourage Byron to enter the competition once his original travel plans had been cancelled because of COVID-19.

“I always believed Byron had the skill set and determination to do well in the competition. He really impressed me at the regional site visit with the level of detail he could recall regarding an architectural house we had been working on for over 18 months.

“With the high level of competition at the national practical challenge, it was only minor things that separated each of the apprentices.

“There is nothing more rewarding to see than an apprentice, like Byron, who stays on in the company once they are qualified and starts training the new apprentices. I’m especially proud when they start working towards higher level training after getting qualified.”

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# Sky's the limit

## Brownie Construction

National Winner 2020

Master Build 10-year Guarantee Multi Unit



### Successes

This award win for Brownie Construction proved that they stand out in the building industry as a reputable construction company.

Managing Director James Brownie said, "Using cedar and tray cladding on the exterior created an impressive look, and added to the street appearance of the duplex units.

"The electric louvres on the second floor from the master bedrooms added a nice finish, and was a smart way of blocking out the windows from the main road without having to use window coverings."



### Challenges

Building on a busy central main road was a challenge.

"The two units took up most of the building site so there was very little room to move."



### Judges' comments

This sleek and contemporary duplex sits proudly in its inner-city environment. Clever use of black cladding works well with touches of rich cedar, creating a striking exterior.

Close attention has been made to create sunny private outdoor spaces for the owners to enjoy that integrate seamlessly with the internal living areas.

A spacious and cleverly planned interior is complemented by the overall execution of the build. The great collaboration between the developer, architect and builder makes this project a clear standout in this category.

Well done to the team for an exceptional job.

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## Eye-catching addition to the neighbourhood

### David Reid Homes (Kapiti)

National Winner 2020

New Home \$450,000 – \$600,000



### Successes

Having been involved in the competition for over 10 years, with five homes making the national competition, David Reid Homes (Kapiti) were excited to finally get a win.

Managing Director Tim Sunderland said, "The home was custom-designed for the unique site, and featured great textures. The use of bagged brick and macrocarpa cladding complemented the backdrop of Kanuka trees on the site.

"We have the privilege of building some amazing custom-designed homes for our clients, and this year we had the privilege of being recognised as one of the best!"

### Challenges

Every custom-designed home presents obstacles.

"I think the main challenge with this home was bringing together a wide range of custom products and getting them all to work together."

### Judges' comments

This striking house is well designed and sits beautifully in the Kanuka bush setting.

The raking mono-pitch roof projects over the high-level windows providing summer shading to the outdoor living area. The interior features high-level raking ceilings that provide a lot of light and space.

The large high-living ceilings are accurately clad with plywood. A feature interior timber wall has a secret door that adds an element of surprise to the room. The batten bedroom wall is effective and very well done. This house is the deserving category winner.

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# Building with a twist

## The B:Hive (Smales Farm Building 5)

### CATEGORY

Winner of the CARTERS Commercial Project Category

### ENTRANT

Leighs Construction

### PROJECT PARTNERS

BGT Structures (Engineer), eCubed (Engineer), Holmes Fire (Fire Engineer), Jasmx (Architect/Designer), Leighs Construction (Construction Company), TSA Management (Client Project Manager – Xigo), Whites Associates (Client Quantity Surveyor), WSP (Engineer)



## Successes

This project was a great experience for Leighs Construction and receiving recognition at an industry level has been extremely rewarding.

Operations Manager Matt Hindle said, "It's not often you get the opportunity to work on projects as unique as this, and to step back and take in what we have created has been great."

"This project had standout architectural features you don't get to build every day which made it so remarkable. We were lucky to have worked with a client that had a vision to create something special, and we were happy to build it with them."



## Challenges

A project with so many distinct features came with a few construction obstacles to overcome.

"Working with the formation and curves of the atrium balustrade and feature spiral staircase was one of the biggest challenges we faced on this project. This was resolved through high levels of coordination with consultants, the main contractor, subcontractors and suppliers to iron out buildability and final construction details."



## Judges' comments

The way the entire team worked collaboratively together to overcome the project's challenges was impressive. The main contractor secured the project on an ECI Contract Base, and had an important part to play in ensuring buildability was taken into account in the design as the developed and detailed project evolved.

The end result was a high quality, flexible, modern office building, which provides commercial space for over 850 people over 100 different tenancies.

This is truly a 'modern commercial building' and is a credit to all involved.

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# Legacy lives on

Ronald George Lawton 14/06/1934 — 26/03/2021

Ron Lawton, a second generation Master Builder, National Past President and life member of the Registered Master Builders Association, passed away in March.

During his tenure with the RMBA, Ron worked tirelessly, negotiating with the trade unions and employers representatives to achieve greater fairness for the construction industry.

He leaves behind four sons, 10 grandchildren and six great grandchildren, some of whom work for Lawton Building. One son, John, is on the Auckland RMBA executive committee.

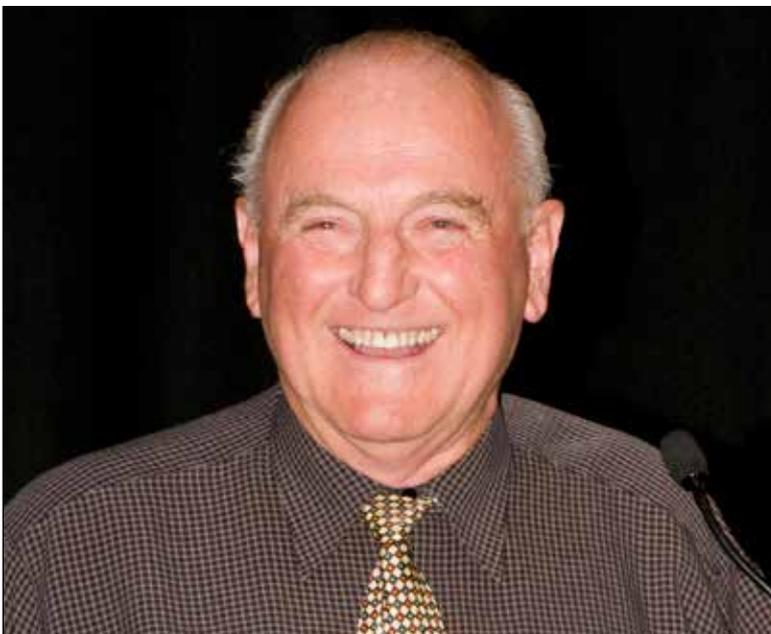
Ron's hard work, persistence and loyalty to the building profession will be remembered by all.

He is now resting in peace with his beloved Nancy, wife of 60 years.



# Pillar of the Association

Graham James Mallett – Died 16/04/2021 aged 84



Graham Mallett was a National Past President and life member of the Registered Master Builders Association.

He was a member of the Waikato Branch for many years, and made huge contributions to the RMBA, locally and nationally.

He gave his time generously as a House of the Year and Apprentice of the Year judge, apprentice trainer, BRANZ board member and chairman, a member of the National BCITO Advisory Group and the NZIOB judging panel.

Despite retiring to the Bay of Plenty, he continued to be an active member of the Waikato Registered Master Builders Association, attending all member meetings and social events.

Graham was a pillar of the Association and held in high regard by all.

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# When does a housing crisis become a housing

EasyBuild director Mike Fox says the Government's introduction of a tax package under the guise of a housing policy will, ironically, make the very people it is meant to assist worse off.

For years we have heard the cries of New Zealand's housing crisis, and watched as house and land prices skyrocket and rents increase, leaving housing less attainable than ever before, and causing huge numbers of people to experience housing instability and insecurity.

After failed attempts, the Government has decided to have another shot at a silver bullet, quick-fix solution.

Their answer to this unprecedented housing shortage and rising land costs is to introduce a tax package under the guise of a housing policy, essentially implementing a backdoor capital gains tax and punishing residential landlords in the process.

The Government has set residential landlords apart from all other businesses in that they can't deduct legitimate business interest costs.

This action has been touted as a way to close a mythical tax loophole but, in reality, it was just a politically-expedient smokescreen for the Government to disguise the new tax package.

Pre-Covid-19, the country's trusty farmers were the whipping boys of the handwringing apologists. But since those same farmers have saved our economy, the vitriol has subdued, and it's now the so-called rapacious landlord that has become the Government's favoured punching bag.

## Exact opposite

The Government chose to ignore the advice of officials and, unbelievably, sought no regulatory impact report. Rather, it opted for its own Putin-style housing policy that will deliver the exact opposite to what is needed.

Landlords that don't get chased out of the market will have to increase rentals to recover costs and head off threatened rent caps.

The outcome of this tax will be fewer available rentals, higher rents and more vacant houses as home owners seek to avoid the unintended consequences of this ill-thought-out policy.

Meanwhile, the policy itself is likely to have little positive impact. It will simply shift housing investors from competing with first-time buyers for existing properties to competing with them for new properties.

Final policy is yet to be released with the rules



about what constitutes a new dwelling, and how long that deductibility will remain in force shrouded in vagaries.

It's hard to have confidence or trust in the Government with changes likely occurring overnight, so I expect investors to be wary for some time.

It could be argued the "new build" aspect of the housing package gets some incentives right by directing rental housing investment towards increasing the housing stock.

However, add to this the already existing constraints on new house building, such as planning regulations, availability of suitable land, and material and trades shortages, and it's pretty clear that this policy is unlikely to cause change.

Consider the case of an unsuspecting home owner relocating to, say, Australia to work for just over a year. It wouldn't be sensible to sell the New Zealand house due to high transaction costs and the risk of slipping off the property ladder when trying to buy back on their return.

Rather, it makes sense to rent in Australia while also renting out their New Zealand home.

However, this would now generate a potentially substantial tax bill on the family home as it gets caught by a sneaky change of use rule.

Indeed, one calculation showed that this plausible scenario could generate a capital gains tax liability of almost a year's salary — simply if one was to sell and move to a

similarly-priced house.

How unfair is that? It will only result in homes either being left vacant or good citizens simply not bothering to return to a tax-punitive New Zealand.

It actually incentivises delaying property sales to avoid the tax even when selling would otherwise be in the taxpayer's best interest, further keeping a much-needed property unavailable to the wider market.

Furthermore, given the law changes around tenancy terminations, landlords will not take a chance on what might be perceived to be the slightest marginal tenants.

They'll sadly choose to leave their property vacant until a perceived lower-risk tenant comes along, leaving the state to be the sole provider for housing a section of the community that once would have been acceptable.

## Burgeoning queue for social housing

Accordingly, watch the already burgeoning queue for social housing, motels and accommodation assistance balloon out over this coming year.

It is already costing the nation \$1m per day for motels, with much worse to come. Perversely, houses that would have been sold off into the general market will now also be retained longer purely to get around the 10-year bright line capital gains tax.

Who can blame home owners, with the tax take at marginal rates of up to 39%? It makes it one of the most punitive capital gains taxes of any western country.

There are few commentators from any quarter who think the Government's knee jerk tax policy will deliver anything other than more revenue for the Government, and not one more house.

We'll unfortunately be watching for more policy bounces with the likes of rent caps, as the consequences of policy on the fly hit home.

It's rumoured that any proposed rent cap will be linked to the house, so even if a tenant moves out, the landlord will be unable to review the rent.

Individuals' property rights are getting trashed

# emergency? It's here!

by this Government, and it's worrying to think what sector of society or business is next in their sights.

The trouble with ideologically-driven, hasty and ill-thought-out policy is the unintended consequences and the constant band aid legislative changes needed to paper over the ever-widening cracks.

One of the peculiar things about politicians is that effects of bad legislation linger with us for far longer than the tenure of the perpetrators who instigated it.

## Civic and moral duty

Politicians have a civic and moral duty to do the right thing even when it is against their ideological beliefs.

However, the long-term best outcomes seem to get lost in the clamber to satisfy short-term political itches and the hunger to preserve your political career.

Perhaps it's because being a politician is so often now seen as a well-paying job rather than a service.

Many of our politicians have never been meaningfully employed elsewhere and, consequently, would be unemployable at any senior level outside of the political arena.

That's a sad indictment as to the type and quality of our leaders and their lack of commercial acumen. I fear this mess will be

with us long after this team of woke politicians has returned to obscurity.

This tax policy has a feel of panic and naivety about it — akin to a group of secondary school pupils asked to come up with an answer to a housing crisis over their lunch break with no real desire to accept any sound advice or opportunity to test outcomes.

In reality, the aforementioned statement is probably not far off the truth in the preparation of what is probably the dumbest policy the Government has dreamed up yet, with the failed Kiwibuild fiasco coming a close second.

The negative consequences of this policy will be far reaching, and the irony of it is that the very people it is meant to assist are going to be worse off. How dumb is that?

Tax and punishment are not the answer, so what is?

Put simply, it's all about short supply and lack of housing. Create an environment to quickly provide suitable housing stock and the market becomes satisfied, house prices and rents stabilise as home owners finally have choice.

Better than the current obscene scenario where 50-plus people compete for the same rental or home to purchase.

Politicians need to address the root causes of the housing shortage which, in my view, remains tied up in the availability and cost of land for development, zoning restrictions

around construction or intensification, and funding problems for infrastructure, particularly bulk infrastructure, which isn't generally covered by development levies.

While their Urban Development Policy and high level infrastructure mutterings have come onto the radar, things seem to be happening at a glacial pace, and progress needs to be a lot faster.

They're also now talking about scrapping the RMA, and replacing it with three new laws. But don't hold your breath — this will be years away and more like rearranging the deck chairs than meaningful change.

## Political will

None of these issues are new, though what has been lacking is the political will to solve it. One would think the time is right, now more than ever, to solve this.

Without policies that reform construction sector regulations and open up more land for urban housing, there is little prospect of house prices stabilising while current demand-driven trends persist, especially in Auckland and Wellington.

The one centre in New Zealand that has not had rampant house inflation is Canterbury. There is something of a test case and a solution there for the rest of the country if the

*Continued page 14*

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# Tax package, housing policy or complete shambles?

**Norman Gemmell, the chair in public finance, Te Herenga Waka/Victoria University of Wellington, comments on the government's latest housing policies (from *The Conversation*).**

Economists like to talk about “optimal policy instruments” — essentially, policies that achieve their objectives more effectively or efficiently than the alternatives, and have minimal unintended consequences.

Judged by those criteria, the New Zealand government's recently announced package of housing policy instruments is a long way from optimal. You might even call it a shambles.

How so? To the uninformed, the package's main elements may seem to address the housing affordability crisis by doing several things:

- Removing tax deductibility of interest on loans for residential property investments.
- Extending the bright-line test — the period

during which the property sale attracts a Capital Gains Tax liability — from five to 10 years.

- Favouring new builds in these tax changes.
- Introducing a “changes of use” rule that effectively makes family homes liable to a Capital Gains Tax if sold within 10 years and rented out for more than one year.
- Raising income and house price caps for the government's First Home Grant scheme.

However, if we examine the package in light of the three optimal policy requirements, we can see problems.

Economists have a policy “rule” that to achieve various policy objectives, you need at least as many policy instruments. The housing package is a hodge-podge of inter-related measures, but it has several explicit objectives:

- Stabilising house prices.
- Facilitating home ownership.
- Discouraging (ill-defined) speculative investment.
- Increasing the housing stock with mainly (undefined) “affordable homes”.
- Closing what the Government claims is a housing “tax loophole”.

To these, add implicit objectives of tackling perceived income and wealth inequalities between tenants, landlords and home owners.

Overall, this is quite a task, and it would be remarkable if any set of housing policies could achieve such wide-ranging objectives.

Arguably, the primary target of this policy package is stopping the inexorable upward march of house prices.

Failing to achieve that would simply put it among a long line of attempts by previous governments (National and Labour) over the past 20 years at least.

In all cases though, the biggest problem has been insufficient political commitment to boosting housing supply.

## Housing crisis now a housing emergency?

*From page 12*

Government has the fortitude to repeat the emergency powers that were put in place after the Canterbury earthquakes.

Entire suburbs of people were displaced and they needed somewhere to go. The solution was to bypass many of the current regulatory roadblocks and develop sections into the market forthwith.

The result was that suitable land was made available quickly, market demand was satisfied, and rent and property prices stabilised.

Isn't that what everyone wants? So why not repeat that on a nationwide basis until we can catch up?

And with the added benefit of hindsight, we know the sky didn't fall in in Canterbury as a result of fast-tracking things.

This is a market supply problem that won't be fixed by a taxation policy or the stroke of a pen. It needs leadership, fortitude and meaningful change.

One final thought: when does a housing crisis become a housing emergency?

The previous government denied there was a housing crisis, and this now not-so-new government, through its inaction and failed

policies, has allowed the crisis to turn into an emergency.

It is with us now, albeit slightly disguised by the media drum around Covid.

I liken it to when Covid first hit, and the World Health Organisation insisted we were only experiencing an epidemic while everyone else knew the horse had already bolted well before, and we were in a worldwide pandemic by the time they threw their hands in the air.

It is now time to stop the handwringing, finger pointing and denial, and treat this issue for the emergency that it is.

We can't continue to ignore the social, health and well-being of our nation's future, which hangs on getting this resolved.

Taxes and beating up segments of society that have previously provided rental housing will not produce one more affordable home.

It's all about supply, supply and more supply.

**• 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.**

## Government makes a start on housing

Housing Minister Megan Woods says with 7000 public houses and 5414 new builds in the pipeline under various housing initiatives, the Government is on track to deliver more than 18,000 public and transitional houses within the next three years.

She says government commitment to ensuring more New Zealanders have warm, dry, healthy homes is paying off in Auckland, where she recently opened a 167-unit apartment block in Glen Eden and 83 transitional homes in Otahuhu.

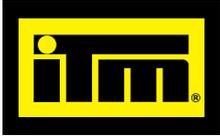
In Glen Eden, three different types of housing have been delivered in the Westlight apartment complex, made up of 90 public housing two and four-bedroom units, 34 one-bedroom and two-bedroom KiwiBuild homes, and 43 private apartments.

It is also close to schools, public transport, the town centre, and a busy main street.

The Ted Mason Foundation provided the capital to build the Westlight Apartments and partnered with community housing provider Compass Housing.

Meanwhile 83 one bedroom-and two-bedroom new builds, split across two buildings on Atkinson Avenue in Otahuhu are, they say, showcasing the Government's continued commitment to building more transitional homes under the Aotearoa New Zealand Homelessness Action Plan.

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# New Zealand's timber shortage: help is here

In the wake of the recent hubbub over timber distribution, Red Stag group chief executive Marty Verry got plenty of great publicity, capping it off by announcing the opening of a new wood processing plant in Rotorua.

Verry says the plant will add 5% to the capacity of the New Zealand wood processing sector. That equates to around 2000 dwelling units, or most of the estimated shortfall in current timber supply.

The factory will produce Cross Laminated Timber (CLT), the new "mass timber" construction product being adopted rapidly worldwide.

CLT is made by gluing successive layers of timber laid crossways over the layer below, to form large panels of three, five or seven layers of timber thick.

The rigid engineered timber panels are then precision cut by CNC machines in a factory and



*Red Stag group chief executive Marty Verry*

rapidly assembled on site.

In Red Stag's case, the CLT panels can exceed 16 metres by four metres in size, making for very fast construction and few connections.

Kaianga Ora is a major user in New Zealand, and use internationally is widespread. Google

recently broke ground on its first mass timber building in Silicon Valley using CLT.

"We're going to bring forward the opening to May to help the timber shortage," Verry says.

Costing \$50 million, the CLT factory is co-located with the Southern Hemisphere's largest sawmill, Red Stag, in Rotorua.

It will employ 40 people initially, rising to double that over time, and is part-funded by a \$15 million loan from the Provincial Growth Fund.

Verry pushed the idea that he doesn't expect all of the CLT factory's capacity to be used in residential units though, as there is already a waiting list of other projects planning to use it, including retirement villages, student accommodation, office buildings, educational facilities and cultural buildings.

"CLT has a value sweet spot in large-format structures, buildings of three storeys or more, and for mid-floors in terraced housing built to the NZS 3604 standard," Verry says.

"Apartment buildings and fast-to-install CLT mid-floors will be our residential focus areas."

Supply of flooring materials such as joists, I-beams and flooring panels has had supply problems in recent months, and Verry expects the building community will be quick to take up CLT mid-floors, which drop into place to provide a finished platform to construct the next level on without delay.

Meanwhile, the CLT factory's sister company, Red Stag Timber, is also helping with the timber shortage.

The country's largest sawmill, supplying around 25% of New Zealand's needs, is pulling back uncommitted supply from export markets and squeezing out more hours and capacity to help keep its ITM, PlaceMakers, Mitre 10 and independent clients.

"We plan to bring forward further expansion of both the mill and CLT factory on the back of Carter Holt Harvey's decision to stop supply to key merchant chains," Verry adds.

"There are many in the industry that will want to source from an independently-owned supply chain, rather than relying on product from a competing merchant chain."

## Exotic forestry scores highly

The recently-released Ministry for the Environment's latest environmental report scores exotic forestry highly for its low impact on soils.

The report identified exotic forests as the land use by far the least affected by low macroporosity, which is an indication of poor drainage.

Ministry analysis found only 11% of exotic forests were below the macroporosity target range, whereas 75% of lifestyle blocks had the problem. Likewise, it found only 12% of exotic forest soils had higher than a target range of phosphate.

This element can have downstream environmental impacts, such as lowering water oxygen levels or promoting toxic algal growth.

This forest percentage compares favourably with dairy and cropping properties, where 61% of sites were above the target range.

Fertiliser is applied to exotic forests very rarely, and the phosphate levels here are most likely to be a temporary result of recent

planting of trees on farmland.

Forest Owners Association president Phil Taylor says the report is a clear indication that trees, whether exotic or indigenous, are good for soil and water health.

"All forests prevent erosion, filter water and reduce flood damage. With commercial pines there is a huge advantage in rapid carbon sequestration to combat climate change as well."

Taylor also identifies another part of the report which assesses the higher Land Use Capability classes 1-4 as "most productive for pasture and forestry".

"I hope our primary sector ministers take that point on board. They need to realise that forestry is a valid productive use choice for land owners.

"The ministers' suggestions during the election campaign that this productivity only applies to farming are quite wrong, and so they ought to drop their ideas of preventing productive and profitable forestry on these land classes."

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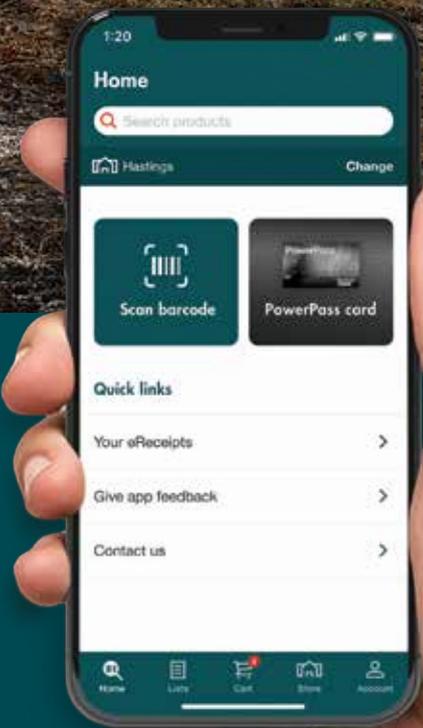
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# Reduce waste — build a house!



*The USA version of saveBOARD provided the membrane roof substrate for the Tesla Gigafactory One in Nevada, which has a roof area of approximately 200,000 sq m. This equated to upcycling 2000 tonnes of composite plastics in this single roof, saving 336,000kg of embodied carbon dioxide compared to using a plywood substrate.*

New Zealand builders will soon be able to replace plywood, particle board and plaster board, with low-carbon, environmentally-sustainable construction boards made from packaging waste such as used beverage cartons, soft plastics and coffee cups.

The technology to turn waste into high-performance building material was developed in the United States where it has been widely used for more than a decade.

The product was chosen by Tesla as the membrane roof substrate for its 200,000 sq m Gigafactory One in Nevada.

The roof equates to upcycling 2000 tonnes of composite plastics, and saves 336,000kg of embodied carbon dioxide compared to using plywood.

The waste-to-building material technology is being brought to New Zealand by saveBOARD, a new venture backed by Freightways, Tetra Pak and Closed Loop.

The first New Zealand saveBOARD plant will be located at Te Rapa, Hamilton, and its first production run is scheduled for late 2021.

The plant will save up to 4000 tonnes of waste from landfill every year, and 12 new jobs will be created initially, with more expected as the project grows.

## Impact-resistant board

saveBOARD will manufacture an impact-resistant board with similar performance to plywood, OSB (oriented strand board) and particle board that can be used for interior and exterior applications.

Using proven, patented technology which has been operating for more than 12 years, the material is upcycled from waste into affordable, high-performance, low-carbon building materials.

saveBOARD co-founder and chief executive Paul Charteris says making high-performance,

low-carbon building materials using 100% recycled materials from everyday waste is a game-changer that will transform the construction industry in New Zealand.

“It will enhance the construction industry’s drive towards more sustainable construction practices,” he says.

## Environmentally responsible

saveBOARD is negotiating to receive waste material from large food and beverage companies that want to meet ambitious waste reduction targets and be more environmentally responsible.

Building a circular economy also requires backing from key industry partners. saveBOARD has funding and support from industry leaders who will provide recycled material, as well as transport and logistics solutions.

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# Tyres turned into graphene now making concrete stronger

Rice University scientists in the United States have optimised a process to convert waste from rubber tyres into graphene that can, in turn, be used to strengthen concrete.

The environmental benefits of adding graphene to concrete are clear, chemist James Tour says.

“Concrete is the most-produced material in the world, and simply making it produces as much as 9% of the world’s carbon dioxide emissions,” he says.

“If we can use less concrete in our roads, buildings and bridges, we can eliminate some of the emissions at the very start.”

Recycled tyre waste is already used as a component of Portland Cement, but graphene has been proven to strengthen cementitious materials, concrete among them, at the molecular level.

While the majority of the 800 million tyres discarded annually worldwide are burned for fuel or ground up for other applications, 16% of them wind up in landfills.

“Reclaiming even a fraction of those as graphene will keep millions of tires from reaching landfills,” Tour says.

The “flash” process introduced by Tour and his colleagues in 2020 has been used to convert food waste, plastic and other carbon sources by exposing them to a jolt of electricity that removes everything but carbon atoms from the sample.

Those atoms reassemble into valuable turbostratic graphene, which has misaligned layers that are more soluble than graphene produced via exfoliation from graphite. That makes it easier to use in composite materials.

Rubber proved more challenging than food or plastic to turn into graphene, but the lab optimised the process by using commercial



Recycled tyre waste can be turned into graphene to make stronger concrete.

pyrolyzed waste rubber from tyres.

After useful oils are extracted from waste tyres, this carbon residue has until now had near-zero value, Tour says.

Tyre-derived carbon black or a blend of shredded rubber tyres and commercial carbon black can be flashed into graphene. Because turbostratic graphene is soluble, it can then easily be added to cement to make more environmentally-friendly concrete.

## BUILDING PERFORMANCE

Learn more about the Building Code update programme at

[www.building.govt.nz/building-code-updates/](http://www.building.govt.nz/building-code-updates/)



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# MBIE welcomes feedback on the LBP scheme

The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) is seeking feedback on how the Licensed Building Practitioners scheme is working.

“We want to hear from Licensed Building Practitioners (LBPs) and those who engage with them to find out if key elements of the scheme are working,” MBIE building policy manager Amy Moorhead says.

The LBP scheme was first introduced in 2007, and is the primary way the building regulatory system ensures that practitioners undertaking residential building work are competent.

“New Zealand needs Licensed Building Practitioners who are trained, skilled and accountable.

“We want to ensure the public and wider sector have trust and confidence in the people carrying out residential work that is integral to weathertightness and structural integrity,” Moorhead says.



Feedback is sought on three main areas of the scheme — LBPs’ ability to supervise non-LBPs undertaking restricted building work, licensing classes, and if the minimum standards of

competency remain appropriate.

“Based on the feedback we receive, we will strengthen the scheme where necessary so that it remains fit for purpose to serve in the best interests of New Zealanders,” Moorhead says.

The review of the LBP scheme is part of a series of reforms to the building laws to lift the efficiency and quality of building work in New Zealand.

The reforms will see a more efficient building system, a lift in the quality of building work, and fairer outcomes if things go wrong.

“Our aim is to lift the performance of all building professionals and tradespeople, and hold accountable those who do not meet the standards set for them,” Moorhead says.

A discussion document has been published to the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment web site. Submissions close on May 31, 2021.

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## Action needed to review lead levels in plumbing products

Master Plumbers is keen on the recommendation by the Ministry of Health to review current plumbing standards with regards to allowable lead levels in imported tapware and fittings.

The recommendation forms part of the Ministry's review of the health system response to the lead contamination in Waikouaiti's drinking water supply.

"Whilst the recommendation is a good one, New Zealand needs to move to lead-free tapware and brass fittings as a matter of urgency," Master Plumbers chief executive Greg Wallace says.

Lead is a cumulative toxin, which makes ongoing exposure through drinking water of particular concern.

### Nervous system damage

Young children are especially vulnerable, with even low levels of exposure linked to learning disabilities and nervous system damage.

"No level of lead is acceptable," Wallace says. "Other countries, including Australia, are moving to lead-free tapware and brass fittings, and New Zealand should be following suit.

"It is not enough to tell home owners to run the tap before drinking if the water has been sitting for a while, as the Health Ministry's

advice currently stands."

The Health Ministry has indicated that the new national drinking water regulator Taumata Arowai will be best placed to take account of the recommendations once the Water Services

Bill is enacted.

The full review can be found at <https://www.health.govt.nz/publication/review-health-response-waikouaiti-water-supply-lead-contamination>.

## Many risk being left behind as digital economy soars

New BNZ research has shown soaring use of the internet throughout the Covid-19 pandemic.

However, while more than two-thirds of New Zealanders increased their digital skills over this time, concern is growing for the 700,000 people at risk of being left behind because they lack essential digital skills.

Digital skills assume increasing importance for key business areas such as those in the construction industry.

BNZ chief economist Paul Conway says the lack of digital skills for such a significant number of New Zealanders risks holding the country back from the promise of a more inclusive and sustainable economy.

"The most concerning aspect of this research is that New Zealanders with low digital skills are often already disadvantaged in our society," Conway says.

"For example, around 30% of people with low levels of education or low incomes are found to lack essential digital skills.

"By not urgently addressing this digital divide, we face the threat of entrenched inequity as these people become less able to engage with society and the economy.

"This risk will only worsen as the digital transformation picks up pace, with more of the economy, social services, and our lives in general shifting online."

Conway says the vast reach of the private sector means it too needs to be doing more to help lift the digital skills of New Zealanders. For example, employers have an opportunity to support their employees in developing their digital skills.

The private sector can also use its strong market networks to reach more people, helping improve their customers' skills along the way, he says.

## Workplace employers need to provide good vaccine info

For over a year now, Covid-19 has become part of the normal language and narrative around the world.

In that time it has caused seismic changes to countries, populations, economies and families.

But what does it practically mean for workplaces, especially now with the trans-Tasman bubble open and vaccinations for everyone coming closer? And how do businesses talk to their people about this?

Vaccination has always been, and remains, a personal choice. It is considered a medical procedure and, as such, can be refused. But they have been around since 1796 when Edward Jenner created the smallpox vaccine.

Vaccines work by preparing the body's defence systems, priming it to store antibodies to target the virus. But unlike some other vaccines, the Covid-19 vaccine



New Zealand is using contains no live virus.

Without the ability to overwhelm the virus with existing antibodies, the body needs to identify the virus, develop its defence and then roll it out.

That all takes time, and all the while the virus is reproducing at a rapid rate, spreading to organs where the infection can take over.

The Covid-19 vaccination programme — like all

New Zealand's vaccination programmes — is designed to achieve herd immunity, where enough people in the community are vaccinated so the virus has no place to go as it needs a host.

For employers, it is a matter of balancing the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015, the Human Rights Act 1993, the Privacy Act 2020, and the Bill of Rights Act 1990.

But first and foremost, they should start by providing employees with the information to make an informed choice about vaccination.

As always, vaccinations should go hand-in-hand with good personal hygiene, including hand washing and sanitising, covering coughs and sneezes, and not coming to work if you're sick.

Over the past year those measures dramatically cut the rate of winter influenza and common colds.

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# NZGIF invests in solarZero to accelerate growth

New Zealand Green Investment Finance (NZGIF) has invested \$10 million in solar energy services company solarZero to support the growth of the company.

NZGIF's investment complements an existing financing facility from Westpac NZ to accelerate the uptake and deployment of solarZero's innovative "solar as a service" model that gives customers access to solar energy without the upfront costs.

The solarZero smart solar energy service provides households with more than solar panels.

Its systems include solar PV and battery hardware and smart management systems, as well as real-time monitoring to help improve energy efficiency within the home.

In turn, these technologies extend the benefits of renewable energy beyond individual households.

solarZero's smart technology enables individual solar PV and battery systems to be linked to a "virtual power plant" that supports the resilience of the electricity grid and local lines systems, especially at times of peak power demand.

Currently, solarZero has 3500 smart batteries from its GridforGood fleet enrolled in Transpower's demand response programme, providing a potential 10MW of power for short-term demand reduction to support



Transpower's network management, which is set to grow with the aid of NZGIF's investment.

This investment will accelerate the development of the solarZero technology platform that supports the integration of renewable,

## Construction Sector Accord in partnership to develop sustainable workforce

The Construction Sector Accord is partnering with Diversity Works New Zealand, the national body for workplace diversity and inclusion, to build a sustainable workforce for the construction sector.

Accord director Dean Kimpton says the old ways of working won't stand up to the future challenges the sector faces.

"We want to encourage more diverse talent into the construction sector and shift away from our traditional way of attracting, recruiting, retaining and growing people — the status quo isn't working," Kimpton says.

### Expansive variety of careers

"Construction as a sector is made up of an expansive variety of creative and rewarding careers, yet we are struggling to attract and retain a diverse range of people into these jobs.

"We are embarking on this project with

Diversity Works New Zealand to better understand how we can improve diversity, equity and inclusion and, ultimately, to better reflect the communities who live and work in the environments we create."

### Biggest challenges

One of the biggest challenges facing the construction industry is the shortage of people and skills throughout the sector, impacting its capacity to deliver the growing pipeline of construction projects.

Women make up only a small percentage of the construction-related workforce in New Zealand, and Maori and Pasifika are under-represented in the skilled professions and at leadership level.

"The industry has exciting initiatives underway to meet some of these challenges through the work of the Diversity Agenda, the National Association of Women in Construction, and Women in Trades, as well as organisations like Keystone Trust.

"We are looking forward to building a roadmap with Diversity Works New Zealand to transform the sector to better invest in and promote diversity, so that we can become a sector that welcomes and celebrates people of all identities and backgrounds.

"This partnership with Diversity Works will bring us one step closer to achieving this goal," Kimpton says.

Diversity Works New Zealand chief executive Maretha Smit says one of the first steps will be to get a clear understanding of current diversity and inclusion practices within the industry.

"This research will give us robust data, and a sense of the diversity landscape across the various trades in the sector and how that's impacted by organisation size," Smit says.

"The assessment tools used in this research will also empower organisations to benchmark themselves against their peers, and to develop organisation-specific goals and interventions to create sustainable workforces."

# of solar and battery deployment

distributed energy resources into the power system, increasing capacity that enables the wider electrification and decarbonisation of the economy.

solarZero chief executive Neil Cowie says he's delighted to have the support of NZGIF's investment in the business.

"Our business is committed to providing the technology and innovation to reduce individual and collective emissions, one household at a time.

"By removing the financial barrier and giving households easier access to the benefits of solar energy and smart battery storage, we are building our GridforGood community, creating significant benefits for householders and the electricity network."

NZGIF chief executive Craig Weise says the investment illustrates that commercially-oriented investing can deliver environmental outcomes.

"In this case, we have deployed an innovative

subordinated debt facility to support solarZero's growth, alongside an existing facility developed by Westpac New Zealand," Weise says.

"This also provides a clear example of how NZGIF can work directly with the banking sector to deliver benefits to their customers, as well as low-carbon outcomes."

Visit [www.solarzero.co.nz](http://www.solarzero.co.nz) to find out about solarZero's free home assessment offering, or call 0800 11 66 55.

## About NZGIF

New Zealand Green Investment Finance (NZGIF) is a Crown-owned company established to accelerate investment that reduces greenhouse gas emissions.

Based on the globally recognised green bank model, NZGIF is an independent limited liability company.

Find out more at [www.nzgif.co.nz](http://www.nzgif.co.nz).

## About solarZero

With its origins in solar water heating innovation in the 1970s, solarZero has installed more solar systems on Kiwi homes and businesses than any other company.

It was the first solar company in the world to achieve Toitu carbon-zero certification and has held this green credential for 11 years running.

solarZero is one of the fastest growing green companies in New Zealand. Its investors include Sir Stephen Tindall's K1W1 investment fund, Pencarrow, and ACC.

An award-winning financing mechanism developed by solarZero and Westpac NZ, now bolstered with New Zealand Green Investment Finance's mezzanine finance, locks in a fixed, low-cost, inflation-free price for solar energy over a 20-year term, which removes any and all technology risk for households.

Find out more at [www.solarzero.co.nz](http://www.solarzero.co.nz).



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# You can't just go with the flow . . .



Rob Champion of the Window & Glass Association discusses the industry's soon to be released Field Testing Accreditation Programme, helping to create a better built environment for all.

## Introduction

I was once told by someone who should certainly have known better, that “water out the end of a hose is water out the end of a hose regardless of how it's being used” — which I am not sure is true even when it comes to watering your garden. It's certainly not true when testing windows and doors.

Whilst the development of our Field Testing Accreditation Programme had begun long before this comment was made, it is this exact premise that started us down the path to begin with.

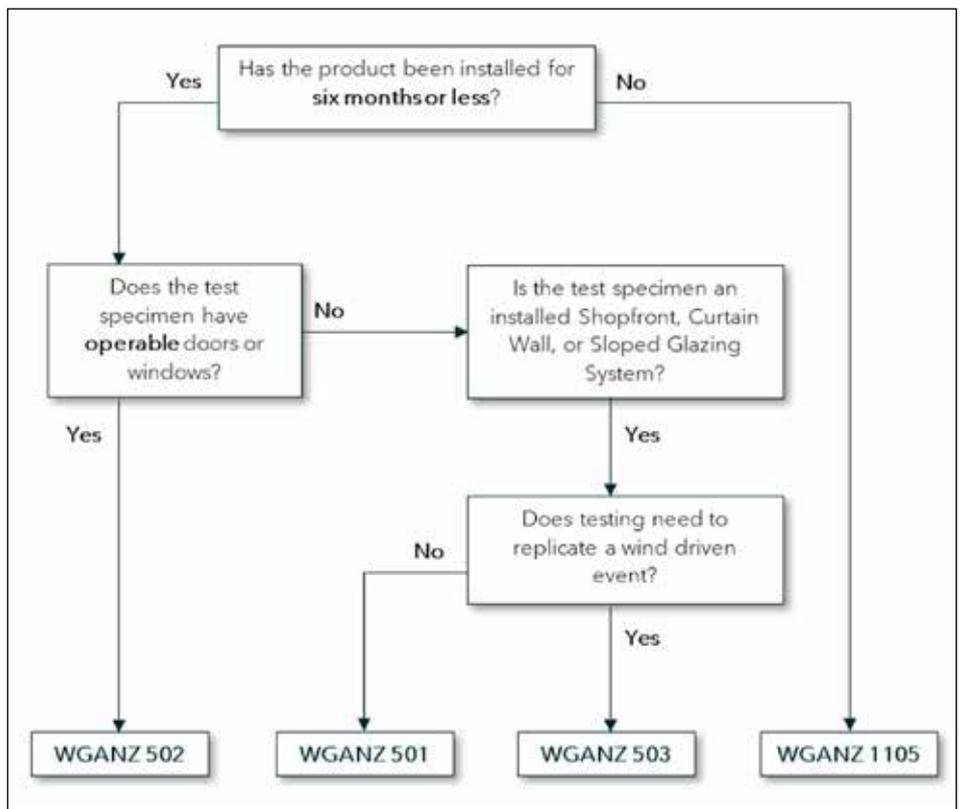
## What is Field Testing?

There are two reasons to Field Test windows and doors:

- For Quality Assurance during the construction phase of the project, to ensure the product being delivered to, and installed on, the site will perform as expected, and
- For forensic purposes once the project has been completed, when trying to establish the possible cause of a failure.

Each of these has a different test method. In fact, there are four tests offered within the Association's programme, and their correct selection is an important part of being tasked with the test.

To this end, we have included this guide to their selection into the Test Procedures Manual.



The Window & Glass Association's Test Selection Chart.

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## You can't just go with the flow . . .

From page 28

### The Window & Glass Association Field Tests

There are occasions when the on-site, or field testing, of a window, door or facade element is required to establish weathertightness of the unit and/or its installation.

The Association's programme was developed in line with widely accepted testing procedures to establish a reputable Field Testing Industry in New Zealand, to provide a structured approach to field testing, and to ensure field testing is performed and reported on consistently, fairly and accurately, using appropriate and calibrated equipment.

If you are familiar with Field Testing, then some of the test numbers might appear familiar.

And for good reason, as each of our tests have been derived from existing international test procedures, but have been modified to suit New Zealand conditions in terms of pressures, water spray and relationship to the Standards the windows were originally tested to.

If you are testing to the AAMA or ASTM Standards then you are essentially creating a new set of test parameters for the window or door that it may not have been exposed to previously, thus given the reasons for testing above, delivering an inappropriate test.

It was recently quoted to me that a majority of windows fail a Field Test. Yet all too often we see tests being selected inappropriately and performed poorly and, as a result, building projects brought to a halt and home owners brought to unnecessary expense.

Testing is a documented, meticulous and repeatable activity, and to avoid unnecessary delays and costs then the test operator must know what they are doing.

To return to the quotation above, too often it is

believed that squirting a hose at the window represents realistic "testing" of it.

If that were the case, we could scrap our expensive test facilities and instead invest in a length of Nylex hose and a spray nozzle.

Our Field Testing Programme has been designed to remove these issues, and to bring some structure to the industry, to ensure reliability in the delivered results.

The Programme sets out test methods for determining the water penetration resistance of a representative sampling of all fenestration products, including installed windows, doors, curtainwalls, shopfronts and sloped glazing systems under the simulated conditions determined appropriate for the window and/or building project.

Importantly, all tests are to be performed by an accredited testing facility, with a suitable quality management system, whose scope of accreditation includes the Window & Glass Association Field Testing Procedures, or a Window & Glass Association-accredited test operator.

### Next step

The release of the Programme is planned for May, with an update to the current web



content, including the current version of the Field Testing Procedures Manual, an outline of the Accreditation Programme, templates for equipment and calibration registers, and a Register of Accredited Field Testers.

If you are interested in becoming an Accredited Field Tester, or have any questions at all, please do not hesitate to contact the Association.

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# Weathertightness and the NZ Building Code

Building Code clauses do not show how to build — rather, they give minimum performance criteria that the buildings must meet or exceed to ensure that they will meet the purposes of the Building Act.

The key clauses that relate to weathertightness performance are B1 Structure, B2 Durability, E1 Surface water, and E2 External moisture.

A designer must identify all the clauses that are relevant to a particular building and design to meet or exceed the relevant performance requirements.

The following provides very brief extracts of key performance requirements of the above E1 and E2 clauses.

For the full list of requirements, go to [www.legislation.govt.nz/regulation/public/1992/0150/latest/DLM162576.html](http://www.legislation.govt.nz/regulation/public/1992/0150/latest/DLM162576.html).

## Clause E1 Surface water

Surface water resulting from an event having a 10% probability of occurring annually and which is collected or concentrated by buildings or site work shall be disposed of in a way that avoids the likelihood of damage or nuisance to other property.

Surface water resulting from an event having a 2% probability of occurring annually shall not enter buildings.

Drainage systems for the disposal of surface water shall be constructed to:

- convey surface water to an appropriate outfall using gravity flow where possible.
- avoid the likelihood of blockages, leakage, penetration by roots or the entry of ground water where pipes or lined channels are used.
- provide reasonable access for maintenance and clearing blockages.
- avoid the likelihood of damage to any outfall.
- avoid the likelihood of damage from superimposed loads or normal ground movements.

The Acceptable Solution E1/AS2 for stormwater was introduced in November 2020. It references AS/NZS 3500.3:2018 Plumbing and drainage Part 3: Stormwater drainage (with modifications) as an Acceptable Solution for the design and installation of surface water drainage systems.

## Clause E2 External moisture

The clause states that building exteriors must prevent the penetration and accumulation of water.

It also allows for the fact that, in extreme

situations, water may penetrate the building exterior, and requires that the building be designed to allow water to dissipate without causing damage to components.

### Details of Clause E2

#### Objective

“To safeguard people from illness or injury that could result from external moisture entering the building.”

Leaks may cause deterioration of building components that may make the building:

- structurally unsound, as a result of water-based rot.
- unhealthy, as a result of harmful mould and fungal decay.

#### Functional requirement

“Buildings must be constructed to provide adequate resistance to penetration by, and the accumulation of, moisture from the outside.”

#### Performance

E2 incorporates seven performance criteria:

- E2.3.1: Roofs must shed precipitated moisture. In locations subject to snowfalls, roofs must also shed melted snow.
- E2.3.2: Roofs and exterior walls must prevent the penetration of water that could cause undue dampness, damage to building elements, or both.
- E2.3.3: Walls, floors and structural elements in contact with, or in close proximity to, the ground must not absorb or transmit moisture in quantities that could cause undue dampness or damage to building elements, or both.
- E2.3.4: Building elements susceptible to damage must be protected from the adverse effects of moisture entering the space below suspended floors.
- E2.3.5: Concealed spaces and cavities in buildings must be constructed in a way that prevents external moisture being accumulated or transferred, and causing condensation, fungal growth or the degradation of building elements.
- E2.3.6: Excess moisture present at the completion of construction must be capable of being dissipated without permanent damage to building elements.
- E2.3.7: Building elements must be constructed in a way that makes due allowance for the following:
  - the consequences of failure.
  - the effects of uncertainties resulting from construction, or from the sequence in which

different aspects of construction occur.

- variation in the properties of materials, and in the characteristics of the site.

These performance clauses recognise that, at some stage, all buildings may leak.

They allow for some external moisture to enter exterior assemblies, as long as this water does not cause undue dampness or damage to building elements, or that it is not being transferred and causing condensation and the degradation of building elements.

The performance clauses also allow for moisture that may enter and be absorbed by components during construction, as long as this moisture is capable of being dissipated without permanent damage to building elements.

Designers must consider how water will be removed from within wall assemblies when they design construction details.

### Acceptable Solution E2/AS1

Building Code clauses have Acceptable Solutions which are documents that set out methods of complying with the Building Code.

Anyone who complies exactly with the methods described in the Acceptable Solution for a Building Code clause is deemed to comply with the Building Code.

It is not mandatory to follow an Acceptable Solution. There are other ways of achieving Building Code compliance.

Designers need to prove to the BCA that these alternative methods of construction comply with the relevant Building Code requirements.

Once they have done this, the alternative methods become Alternative Solutions.

The design of most buildings will be made up of a combination of Acceptable and Alternative Solutions. The main Acceptable Solution for meeting the requirements of E2 is E2/AS1.

This is a non-mandatory guidance document that provides a range of solutions for designing and building weathertight buildings.

When a building is designed and built in line with E2/AS1, it will meet the requirements of clause E2 and will, therefore, be Code compliant with respect to that particular clause.

Designers and builders need to read and understand E2/AS1 as it is often used as a means of Building Code compliance by designers when preparing building consent documentation.

It can also provide useful general guidance information on weathertight construction.

# 1000 women respond to Trade Careers survey in one week

**T**rade Careers is the first project of the newly-formed Women in Trades Collective (WITC).

It is supported by the BCITO, Connexis, Skills, and Competenz, and funded by the Tertiary Education Commission.

WITC launched two nationwide surveys in early April to understand more about why women are not entering trade careers, and what may be preventing employers in the trades from hiring more women.

To date, 22,000 women have lost their jobs in New Zealand due to Covid-19. Women make up half the population yet, in total, there are only 13.5% of women in the trades, including in administrative roles.

The survey inviting women who have lost their jobs due to Covid-19 to consider entering the trades received 1000 responses in just under a week.

The first two focus groups, in Whangarei and Manakau, have sold out. A cross section of women are attending, and are keen to share their experiences.

When asked about the considerations for looking for a job in the trades, a range of key issues have come up so far, including the need to earn while they learn, the physicality of the work, and the application of transferable skills.

Responses included:

- "I'm practical and smart, and like to have variation in my work. A trade would make me feel useful and secure if it was in an in-demand industry. The opportunity for decent pay, self-direction and self-employment is attractive versus being employed in a more traditional job.

"The ability to train while being paid in the job is vital to those who are already responsible for a mortgage and family, and can't just move back into a cheap flat while studying."

- "Physical work outdoors appeals after a career spent at a desk 40 hours a week, in a growth industry with plenty of work and, once qualified, excellent remuneration."

- "The chance to learn and gain the skills on how to renovate and build homes. To help shape the future I may hope to build."

- "I'm 52 and I'm keen to learn more about how I can get an administrative job or project manager role in construction.



*A survey inviting women who have lost their jobs due to Covid-19 to consider entering the trades received 1000 responses in just under a week.*

"It seems to be a well-paid industry with good job security and options for starting your own business, plus you will acquire many practical skills."

Others have been clear about wanting to close the gender pay gap.

- "I want to be paid equivalent to what a male would earn. I do not want to work on reception. I wanted a job that keeps me fit and to see results from my work. I also wanted to be treated with the same respect that a male would get in the workplace.

"I do not like sitting still for long periods of time or doing boring things like data entry or serving coffees. University was not an option for me."

Women in Trades Collective spokesperson Kelly Bennett says there has been an incredible response.

"It shows that many women are keen to learn more about how they can enter the trades, either by getting on the tools or using their transferable skills.

"It also shows employers that lots of women are interested in joining the sector," Bennett says.

There have been a number of women who are currently working in the trades who have also taken the survey, and have shared what attracted them to the industry:

- "I've always felt that I had a practical and logical kind of intelligence. I'd rather work on a tangible project and figure out how to overcome any setbacks by thinking it over and finding the right tools for the job.

"As a woman growing up I was more encouraged to develop my artistic and humanitarian side, rather than my practical side. It took me some time to recognise I was good with the tools and to give it a go."

- "At the start I wanted to prove a point that women can do male-dominated jobs but, rather quickly after starting, I fell in love with my job and still love to do it."

- "I wanted a career that would last long-term and with different options, so I chose to be an electrician — they are always needed. I also wanted better hours, coming from hospo work."

- "I like leaving my work at work, not having it spill into family time."

With the current need for skilled employees within the construction industry, getting more women into the industry is a high priority.

Trade Careers is keen to hear more from employers. So far, only 50 employers have completed the survey asking them about the opportunities and challenges for hiring more women.

For more information visit [www.trade-careers.co](http://www.trade-careers.co).

# Like a runaway climate change train on a

Ross Middleton says we might be a humble building industry magazine, but that doesn't mean we have no room on the roof for Friedrich Nietzsche, Joe Biden, David Bowie and Dr Martin Luther King Jr.

When Bowie saw "the gathering omens of doom" and sang "five years, that's all we've got", on his breakthrough 1972 album, he was out by several decades, but his sentiment was on the money.

It's taken the global community a wee while to get the Ziggy message.

A close associate of mine says he is an "incrementalist". This was in relation to a discussion about climate change and the future of humanity.

Upon further debate, he said, as in the past, we would do just enough to keep ahead of impending disaster. It was a concept I struggled with.

Much of the scientific evidence seems to imply that the world is going to adapt to climate change in a big hurry, and it is going to be a painful experience for our current business models.

Climate change exacerbated by humanity is the biggest issue facing the housing industry over the coming years.

Forget consenting processes, ownership issues and even the potential for still more severe global pandemics in the future. If we are frying or drowning then pandemics and paperwork matter not.

Recently one of Jacinda's drones at the hive, David Parker, said, "In the building and construction sector, we have introduced the Building for Climate Change programme to improve the operational efficiency of buildings, reduce carbon emissions across a building's whole life cycle, and improve buildings' resilience to the impacts of climate change."

Like the answers to the housing "crisis", in the case of global warming, rhetoric is thick on the ground. Action? Maybe not so much.

Globally there seems to be a political and commercial will to focus on profound climate change action.

The hope will be that the rest of the world doesn't catch the Jacinda bug in which an awful lot is said, sympathy is evinced, Facebook is



massaged, and very little actually gets done.

Yet like it or not, that change is coming, like a runaway train on a downhill line. Where and when it will hit us is almost certainly beyond the scope of our Parliament, but the boffins say "button down". Maybe another 50 years of good profit. Then who knows.

The warnings are stark. Every year seems be warmer than the one before. One day last year the Antarctic recorded a high above 20°C for the first time. The boys and girls at the base were digging out their T-shirts and jandals.

**The warnings are stark. Every year seems be warmer than the one before. One day last year the Antarctic recorded a high above 20°C for the first time. The boys and girls at the base were digging out their T-shirts and jandals.**

Just recently, the International Energy Agency warned global greenhouse gas emissions, which had been slowed by the pandemic, will surge this year, to levels above 2019.

"We are on the verge of the abyss," UN secretary general António Guterres said of rising temperatures.

At no other point in history have we faced

more hazards such as megafires, extreme weather, unusually large desert locust swarms and emerging biological threats, like Covid.

Nor have they been seen at such frequency, intensity and complexity, the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) said in a new report.

These disasters devastate livelihoods, inflicting cascading negative economic consequences from household to national levels, that could potentially endure for generations.

According to the FAO, disasters happen three times more often today than in the 1970s and 1980s. To quote Friedrich Nietzsche: "The earth has a skin and that skin has diseases; one of its diseases is called man."

But all storms don't have to be doom and gloom. There is, of course, the perfect storm (sorry, it's a Freudian pun) we have at the moment when construction meets crisis, materials meets shortage, cost meets Covid and change meets that runaway climate train.

But hey, we'll adapt — gunge houses out of a 3D machine, build matchbox accommodation on hillsides and stack 'em 100 storeys high.

All over our local media has been professor of construction management at AUT, John Tookey, breaking down the cost of building a house, from buying the land, gaining resource consent and putting in sewerage, to fitting the windows.

In explaining the complexities of fixing the sector, he says we have to lower our expectations of the house we want to build.

As construction adapts to meet these influences it will slowly but surely start to look very different to today's normal.

Tradespeople will be constantly adapting to new building methods, new materials and new regulatory expectations.

And while educated guesses can be made, nobody knows what those changes are going to look like.

For example, the University of Washington has been looking at how plants will fare as carbon dioxide levels continue to rise. Some aspects of plants' survival may get easier, some parts will

# downhill line

get harder, and there will be species winners and losers.

The resulting shifts in vegetation will help determine the future direction of climate change. The good news is their results show that multiple changes occurring in plants' leaves and competition between species could preserve these ecosystems' ability to absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

It is no wonder we are now commercialising peanuts in Northland and grapes in Central Otago.

Trump pulled out of the Paris Climate Agreement because the Republicans thought it might kill jobs. Biden jumped back in because not to do so might kill us all.

Biden has pledged to cut United States emissions nearly in half by the end of the decade, a target that will require Americans to transform the way they live.

He then hosted an Earth Day summit of global leaders, even including that bloke from China and climate laggards like Ardern.

As the United States pulls out of Afghanistan, Taliban leaders paraphrased it all rather nicely, suggesting that while the Americans had all the clocks, they had all the time.

The concomitant philosophy that such actions will cripple economies implies that there's an alternate universe in which we pay nothing for climate change — there isn't.

## Enormous human suffering

In reality, not tackling climate change will cost everything, causing enormous human suffering and ecological damage, while transitioning to a greener economy would benefit most people and all ecosystems.

Continuous research by commercial leaders and the companies they work for has found sustainability trumps profit when it comes to business priorities.

With greenwashing being replaced by greening, it is somewhat ironic that it takes commerce and its understanding of profit and loss to put things into action. But perhaps that was always the case.



*The climate change train has pulled out of the station, but the engineer is crook.*

In New Zealand, literally thousands are having a say on the Climate Change Commission's proposals, and it will be worth following for all businesses, given the importance of how it could shape the country's future.

Reserve Bank governor Adrian Orr says, "The draft [CCC] advice makes a strong start at exploring linkages between investment and climate resilience, and we appreciate that it recognises the interplay between the environment, economics, finance and well-being.

"We agree that interventions in all areas need to be properly considered and coherent. We believe that climate change could lead to material, economic and financial stability risks."

As the construction sector changes under external influence, what will it look like and where will the profit-taking be?

Trump-style insularity may well be the panacea for the times. In the case of building, local

materials being processed, manufactured and utilised locally by local companies for the betterment of the locality? What condition are those mothballed sawmills in again?

Dr Martin Luther King Jr noted: "It really boils down to this: that all life is interrelated. We are all caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied into a single garment of destiny.

"Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly. We are made to live together because of the interrelated structure of reality."

To summarise: change related to climate and environment is inevitable for the building sector in New Zealand.

Like most forward-thinking commercial operations globally, construction companies will need to accept this change and build it into their operating models for the future.

To do less will be to stymie that pie-in-the-sky for democratic capitalism: growth.

That incrementalism may also be a death knell.

## Leaky buildings, remediation contract cost escalation, and building defects

Timothy Bates and Bodene Robertson-Wright of Auckland law firm Tim Bates & Co consider how the Body Corporate of an apartment block manages to prevent judgment being executed until such time as its counterclaim for defective works is heard.

In this month's article, we review the High Court decision of *Hellaby Resource Services Ltd v Body Corporate 197281 (2020) NZHC 2131*, in which the second plaintiff, TBS Remcon Ltd sought leave to apply for summary judgment against the defendant, the Body Corporate.

There are a number of issues considered in this case. However, in this article, just the summary judgment and Construction Contracts Act 2002 issues will be discussed.

### Background

The property concerned is an apartment block with 99 apartments built in the early 2000s. In 2008, weather damage issues were discovered which instigated a building investigation that estimated \$1,346,100 worth of repair work.

Subsequently, an investigation by Maynard Marks saw this estimate increase to more than \$8 million.

The Body Corporate entered a construction contract with TBS for the repair work which said it would cost "\$7,590,272.58 or such greater or lesser sum as shall become payable..."

The contract was described as "lump sum with a portion of cost reimbursement items".

TBS found the damage was even worse than previously identified once work commenced, which led to variations to the contract which were agreed to be paid for on a "cost plus agreed margin" basis.

Ultimately, this dramatically escalated the costs of the remediation work.

In June 2018, a guaranteed maximum price was agreed upon between the Body Corporate and TBS, of \$35 million excluding GST — which was nearly five times the indicative figure provided for in the contract.

The Body Corporate then refused to pay the final \$2.8 million of the guaranteed price, claiming that despite obtaining Code Compliance Certificates, certain areas were incomplete, defective and non-compliant with the Building Code.

### Payment claim under the Construction Contracts Act 2002

TBS was sold to Hellaby, who was assigned all contractual rights against the Body Corporate



under the construction contract, including the right to sue for the unpaid balance.

Hellaby demanded that the Body Corporate pay the unpaid balance of \$2,826,299.65.

These monies were not paid and, thereafter, Hellaby issued proceedings to recover the debt, and sought summary judgment.

The application for summary judgment was dismissed on the basis that the assignment was not effective due to the Body Corporate not giving its consent to the assignment as required under the construction contract.

In July 2020, Hellaby joined TBS as a second plaintiff, and again sought the payment of the debt. Following this, TBS applied for summary judgment of the debt, and said that the payment schedules issued between November 2017 and July 2019 gave rise to the claimed debt.

The Body Corporate admitted that TBS issued the payment claims for the unpaid balance, and that the Body Corporate did not amend the provisional payment schedules issued by Maynard Marks as engineer.

The Body Corporate denied that the issuing of these payment schedules in respect of the payment claims give rise to a statutory debt under s 24 of the Construction Contracts Act 2002, and further said that the amount owing to TBS was uncertain due to its counterclaims.

### TBS's application for summary judgment

The legal principles governing a summary judgment application are well established, and state that the court may give judgment against a defendant if the plaintiff satisfies the court that the defendant has no arguable defence to a cause of action in the statement of claim.

The court has some discretion — however, this should only be invoked to avoid oppression or injustice to the defendant under certain circumstances.

TBS submitted that the Body Corporate had no

arguable defence to its application for summary judgment because the amount claimed was a debt due and payable according to s 24 of the CCA.

The Body Corporate opposed the summary judgment on the basis it had an arguable defence on the merits, there were serious policy and natural justice reasons weighing against summary justice, that summary judgment would not finally determine the substantive dispute, and that ordering summary judgment would be oppressive and unjust.

Associate Judge Gardiner stated that neither of the Body Corporate's arguments established an arguable defence in the context of the CCA, for if a payer does not provide a payment schedule within the time required by that construction contract, the payer is liable to pay the claimed amount.

It was not accepted that the Body Corporate's allegations provided an arguable defence to TBS's claim to the debt, as these allegations were pleaded as a counterclaim against TBS, not a defence or abatement.

Generally, the existence of a counterclaim alone does not foreclose summary judgment, and Associate Judge Gardiner concluded that the Body Corporate had no arguable defence to TBS's claim to the debt.

Further to this, Associate Judge Gardiner discussed the case law on the exercise of residual discretion, and stated that the circumstances of this case did not justify exercising the residual discretion to decline summary judgment.

Ultimately, summary judgment was entered

*Continued page 37*



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# Seek alternatives to materials supply and income streams

Terry Sage of Trades Coaching New Zealand says supply chain problems should be prompting business owners to seek alternatives for materials supply and/or income streams.

There are many stories, articles and debates going on out there about how the world is different after Covid.

In fact, there are probably too many as they all say pretty much the same thing. And if they're anything like the predictions we were getting in April 2020, they're all wrong.

However, we cannot dismiss the fact that life is different, and it's the way we adapt to the "new world order" that will separate the doers from the same olds.

There is a massive issue looming, and its full impact has not hit us yet. That issue is supply, from raw materials to imported goods, from specialists to labourers and everything in between.

I spoke to a top manager in a big telco company recently, and he asked me if I would like to order a new iPhone 12? "Well don't bother, because there aren't any coming for months," he said.

And that's going to be the same for many industries across the land. Good job I'm a Samsung chap all the way.

So I've been exploring this issue with all my clients, and my coaching tells them to seek alternatives, either with their supply chain or income streams.

The following are two discussions I've had so far.

The first is a young lady who's been in business two years, and who buys all her stock from a local Kiwi agent (the only one in New Zealand).

*From page 36*

against the Body Corporate. However, the execution of the judgment is stayed until the counterclaim of the Body Corporate can be determined.

So, ultimately, the Body Corporate probably achieved its objective whereby there was no execution against the judgment until the Body Corporate's claim is decided upon.

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

That agent has run out of the main colours of the stock she needs. She approached an Aussie supplier who had similar issues.

So we searched the globe for manufacturers, and found one in Italy who has (apparently) full stock and wants an outlet in Australasia. All well and good, but my client is set up as a user of the product, not a supplier.

Here is the doer mentality — becoming a supplier won't fix tomorrow's problem, but will fix the ongoing problems in three months' time.

It also reduces her liabilities of relying on other people and puts her destiny in her own hands — well, a part of it anyway.

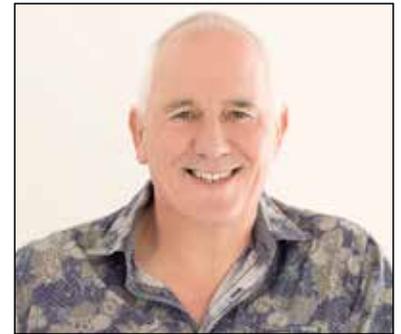
The big plus is the current supplier ships six containers a year into New Zealand, so we are talking quite large dollars.

If there is suddenly a new kid on the block who just happens to have a full range of colours then bring on the new clients!

The second discussion is about a couple who have a dream of owning a property portfolio — the kiwi dream.

As we all know, the cost of houses has gone nuts, and the return on rentals, along with new legislation, has made owning rentals questionable, to say the least.

Question. How can they get rental income



without having a place to rent? Answer? They bought a 38ft boat with kitchen, bathroom, bedroom and fittings for only \$2500.

Don't get excited, because it's current state means it wouldn't float on water anymore, but it certainly looks the part.

It is buried into the lower part of a paddock under some trees, plumbed and wired, and is now an AirB&B rental — and it cost them under \$6000 to set up.

At \$290 a night you have to love that return on investment, and it's under 30sq m so has code compliance — sort of.

The point here is even though we feel like life is the same, the world beyond our beaches is wildly different. So think about alternatives for your business.

## Become a fully-trained Business Coach

**There is an opportunity to be a part of Trades Coaching New Zealand Group and become a fully trained business coach.**

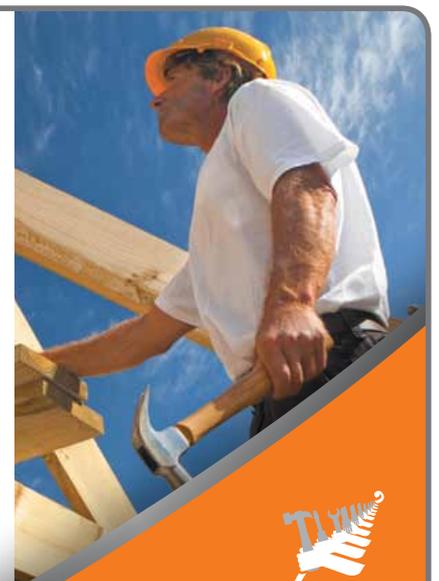
We are looking for builders and trades people who want a change in life. If you have owned and operated a successful building business, have a good insight in business practices, have exceptional communication skills and have a desire to take home a great income, we want to hear from you.

**If this sounds like you, then contact us today!**

**Phone:** 021 280 8679

**Email:** [terry@tcnz.net.nz](mailto:terry@tcnz.net.nz)

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New Zealand**  
THE BUSINESS SIDE OF CONSTRUCTION



## Middle managers — keeping the engine running smoothly

Tradie HR director Leigh Olsen explains how to support key middle managers and get them working at their best.

Recently I had a conversation with a good friend who works as a middle manager. He looked exhausted and said that he was “over people” — in particular, managing his staff.

He added that he worked long hours in his role and, for him, he felt that it was a thankless task.

He’s tired of people not turning up to work and him getting it in the neck from those higher above, who blame him for their absences and anything else that goes astray.

Unfortunately, this is the reality of their role for many of our great middle managers. These include site foremen and team leaders, who regularly find themselves promoted to these positions without asking for it, and quickly get pushed out of a comfort zone that is scary and, often, lonely.

They’re not sure who to ask for help, and fear letting both sides down — the team and their own managers.

So what do they do? They soldier on, stumbling their way through the day, sometimes getting it right. But more often than not, it’s due to luck rather than good management.

However, often if there’s not enough support, training or awareness, middle managers can let the pressure take over by demonstrating a range of negative behaviours.

Yet these middle managers are the key to your team’s “engine” running smoothly, so how can you get your middle managers to work at their best?

### Check that your middle manager is the right person for the job

Middle management requires management skills, and an ability to understand all sides of the picture. Check that your middle manager has this ability, and that you have the right job and the right person for it.

If they have some ability but lack managerial ability, then get them support and training to help upskill in their first year.

Get them a buddy who has strong management skills to pass on their knowledge and have their back in the first year.

When choosing the right middle manager, good questions to ask are:

- Does your manager have the tools and the autonomy to succeed in their role?
- How will you or their boss support them in their first year?

- Does your manager want to be a manager, or would they prefer another role in the company?

Remember, not all people actually want to be a middle manager, so always check. I once worked with a manager who was terrified of having one-to-ones with his staff. He would put them off and avoid them at all costs, to the detriment of his team’s growth and development.

When he was asked if he would prefer another role not managing people, he broke down. He was thankful to be finally relieved of this function as he didn’t want the role in the first place, taking it because he felt he had to if he wanted to progress in the company.

### Foster great management

Research has shown that management is one of the most, if not the most, important roles in a company. Managers are charged with the daily, weekly and monthly activities used to guide, support and motivate their staff.

Chief executives create strategies, and marketing people create demand, but when it comes to dealing with customers, building products and developing solutions, middle managers make things happen.

If you want your mid-level managers to step up, then they’ll need to be continually supported and developed.

I recently held a one-hour workshop on a building site for a group of site foremen. We had an honest discussion about what they could and couldn’t say to their people.

Some honestly thought it was ok to text “get your lazy arse in here now”, while others used more colourful language.

They didn’t have the first clue about anything associated with employment law obligations, and that employers have to “act in good faith” and be “fair and reasonable” in all that they do.

Just that little bit of training around what to do and say in certain situations gave those supervisors enough confidence to be able to tackle the next time one of their team didn’t show up for work — without a “lazy arse” reference in sight.

The right training will give managers a clear idea about what is acceptable and what is not. They themselves need to model the right behaviours and create a welcoming work environment.

Their position of authority comes with special responsibilities, and they are required to treat all people fairly. It’s the right thing to do, and it’s also the law.

### Establishing and maintaining company communication

Right from day one as a new middle manager, explain to your managers the role they play in the bigger picture, and help them understand what and how you want them to communicate. Regularly check in with them about communicating to their teams.

Sometimes middle managers won’t filter down company information to their teams as they are not sure they are permitted to, or sometimes they choose not to, using this a power play.

By getting your managers personally engaged with your company’s communication, they will be better able to communicate your important messages to the frontline.

Use these three tips to make sure you’re helping to support your middle managers, and avoid them feeling like they’re over people and over their job, instead giving them the right tools to be at the centre of keeping your company’s engine running smoothly.

Helping middle managers become better people managers is key to what we do at Tradie HR. Give us a call to help your managers get their people stuff right!

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We look forward to talking with you.  
Call Leigh Olsen for a free consultation.

# Building Consents Information

For All Authorisations, March 2021

Dwellings	\$1,795,921,000
Domestic Outbuildings	\$21,951,000
<b>Total Residential</b>	<b>\$1,817,872,000</b>
Non-residential	\$770,312,000
<b>Total All Buildings</b>	<b>\$2,588,184,000</b>
Non-building Construction	\$47,876,000
<b>Total Authorisations</b>	<b>\$2,636,060,000</b>

## Number of new dwellings consented

	Mar 2021	Feb 2021	Mar 2020		Mar 2021	Feb 2021	Mar 2020
Far North District	29	33	20	Horowhenua District	45	32	20
Whangarei District	114	42	37	Kapiti Coast District	16	18	22
Kaipara District	20	10	11	Porirua City	23	25	59
Rodney District	76	80	73	Upper Hutt City	20	12	21
North Shore/Albany Wards	384	209	271	Lower Hutt City	74	30	20
Waitakere Ward	181	104	101	Wellington City	90	91	36
Auckland Wards	396	281	295	Masteron District	21	25	26
Manukau/Howick Wards	249	218	205	Carterton District	8	5	10
Manurewa-Papakura Ward	220	176	177	South Wairarapa District	6	8	5
Franklin Ward	116	108	65	Tasman District	69	33	15
Thames-Coromandel District	21	33	29	Nelson City	22	12	17
Hauraki District	13	13	12	Marlborough District	16	25	24
Waikato District	104	65	71	Kaikoura District	4	3	3
Matamata-Piako District	34	32	9	Buller District	7	8	2
Hamilton City	135	163	110	Grey District	7	5	2
Waipa District	106	62	50	Westland District	0	5	3
Otorohanga District	11	0	3	Hurunui District	16	7	7
South Waikato District	7	5	4	Waimakariri District	101	92	27
Waitomo District	14	0	3	Christchurch City	323	195	252
Taupo District	29	17	22	Selwyn District	189	121	139
Western Bay of Plenty District	59	40	29	Ashburton District	17	12	11
Tauranga City	141	110	94	Timaru District	22	20	18
Rotorua District	28	27	6	Mackenzie District	7	3	8
Whakatane District	11	8	16	Waimate District	5	2	0
Kawerau District	1	0	0	Chatham Islands Territory	1	0	0
Opotiki District	2	1	1	Waitaki District	14	11	8
Gisborne District	10	6	5	Central Otago District	26	33	24
Wairoa District	0	1	1	Queenstown-Lakes District	84	75	166
Hastings District	60	53	28	Dunedin City	58	37	27
Napier City	24	68	10	Clutha District	9	6	9
Central Hawke's Bay District	10	5	3	Southland District	16	2	17
New Plymouth District	97	50	51	Gore District	5	1	5
Stratford District	7	3	2	Invercargill City	25	24	13
South Taranaki District	9	6	12	Area Outside TA	0	0	0
Ruapehu District	9	14	3				
Whanganui District	10	13	15	<b>Total</b>	<b>4218</b>	<b>3129</b>	<b>2915</b>
Rangitikei District	14	11	5				
Manawatu District	58	19	15				
Palmerston North City	56	59	30				
Taranaki District	7	6	5				

- 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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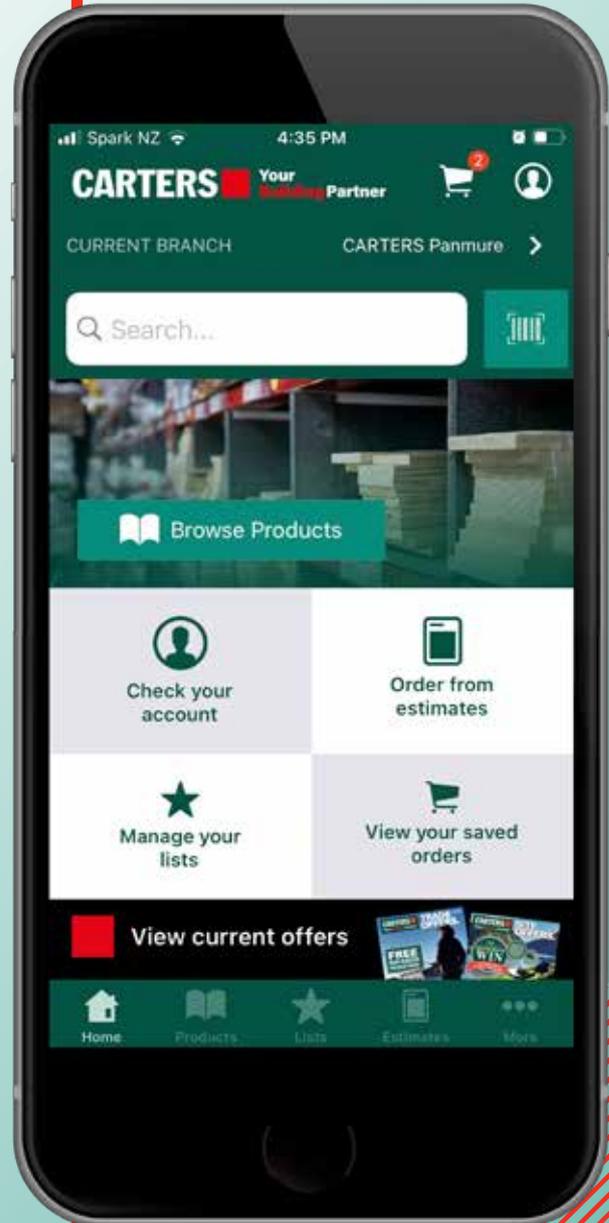
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