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September 2025

Volume 35 Number 8

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BRIGHT FUTURE DUE TO SURGE IN SOLAR CAPACITY

Solar company claims data reveals every NZ home could be solar powered by 2032

NZ'S TOP 100 HOME BUILDS ANNOUNCED

RMBA House of the Year finalists showcase skill and innovation of Master Builders

NZTIF PRESIDENT: STRATEGIC SUPPORT CRITICAL

NZ's timber manufacturing industry "firmly in the grip of a challenging period"

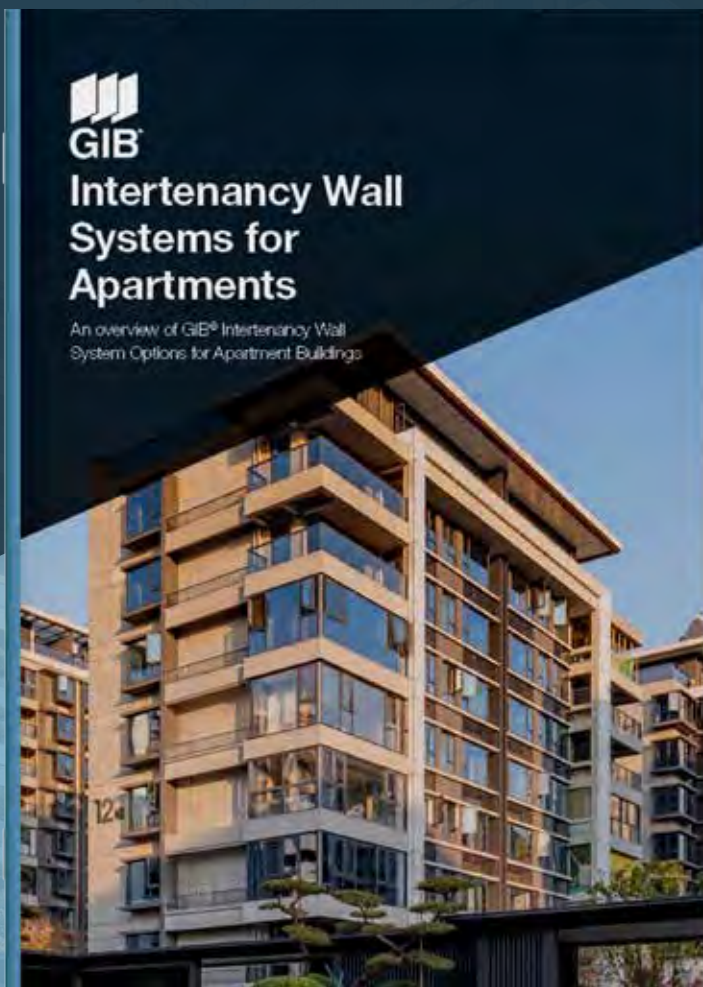
ALSO INSIDE: CRANE COMPANY FINDS RENEWED INDUSTRY CONFIDENCE



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BUILDING TODAY

September 2025

Volume 35 Number 8

From the editor

The winter of New Zealand's economic discontent continues as new Centrix data shows company liquidations are up 26% year-on-year to August 31, 2025.

The findings show that the construction sector has been the hardest hit, with 765 company closures in that period.

And in this issue, New Zealand Timber Industry Federation president Bruce Larsen says the country's timber manufacturing industry is firmly in the grip of one of its most challenging periods in recent history.

It makes grim reading, but there is also some optimism being expressed regarding the much hoped-for industry upswing.

Cranes are a great barometer of construction and infrastructure activity, according to NZ Crane Hire managing director Deane Manley. A survey undertaken by his company claims new developments and restarting paused projects are driving positive momentum in the sector.

And new statistics for the month of July show an increase of more than 600 consented dwellings on the June tally. A continued increase in those figures would be warmly welcomed.

Andrew Darlington
Editor

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The power of inspiration: Why we need role models in our lives

RMBA president Kieren Mallon reminisces about what sparked his journey into the construction industry – and the inspiration his uncle provided in shaping his values and workmanship standards.

When I think back on what sparked my journey into building, I always end up in Milton, just outside Dunedin.

My uncle, Peter Mallon, was a builder there, and I always knew he was a proud member of Master Builders.

Even as a kid, I understood that meant something — that it represented the best of the best. He was always happy to show me around the shed and the tools, and whatever project he was working on.

Another thing that really stuck with me was that, as a family, we would often drive down on Sunday from Dunedin to Milton to have lunch with my grandmother. And as we drove along the streets into Milton it was a race between my sisters, brother and myself as to who could see the church steeple first in the distance. That meant we were getting close.

Secretly though, for me the highlight was driving past the rugby fields and seeing my uncle's name advertising his services on a hoarding around the field. It read simply: "Peter Mallon Master Builder, 03417818, and the MB logo."

To a young kid, that was the coolest thing imaginable. That banner wasn't just an ad — it was a sign. A sign that building could be more than work; it could be identity, pride, and belonging.

I remember on some school holidays being able to go out onto site with him. One of the first tasks he helped me do with him was to cut window scribes for a weatherboard house.

The tools we used were a carpenter's pencil, a carpenter's meter ruler, a tenon saw, and a crosscut saw.

I know there were a couple of scribes that I needed to redo as the gaps were too big when they went on the weatherboards.

There was no "the painters will fix that". The lesson was simple but lasting — take pride in your work, own your mistakes, and fix them.

Peter lived his values. He wasn't just particular about his workmanship — he was particular about his reputation. He knew that being a Master Builder meant something to his clients, his community, and his family. And he carried that with dignity.

Looking back, I see now that what Peter gave me wasn't just a start in a trade, but a way of seeing the world.

He showed me that excellence comes from caring about the small things, that respect is earned by giving it, and that pride in your craft is something worth carrying through life.

And it hasn't stopped with him. His son



Peter Mallon, Kieren's inspirational uncle, was a Master Builder from Milton, Otago.



Tony has since taken up a career in building too — and is now also a Master Builder.

When we first join, we might see it simply

as a mark of credibility for our clients. But the deeper we go into the organisation, the more we embrace our membership, the more we realise its true worth.

It's not just about a logo on the signboard. It's about being part of a network of skilled craftspeople and businesspeople whose standards challenge us, whose wisdom we learn from, and whose company strengthens the pride we take in our own work.

Life isn't a straight road. There are bends, setbacks, and stretches where you wonder if you'll get through. And in those times, it's often the memory of someone else's example that steadies you.

The echo of their standards, their encouragement, their belief in what's possible — it fuels you in ways you might not even recognise until years later.

That's why inspiration matters. Motivation from within is powerful, but the inspiration we draw from others — whether it's a family member, a colleague, or the collective weight of our organisation — can be transformative.

Passing it on

Of course, inspiration isn't meant to stop with us. Just as Peter's example helped set me on my path, we each have the chance to be that spark for others.

Whether it's through the pride we take in our work, the time we give to guide others, or simply the way we show up each day — our actions ripple out further than we ever imagine.

And in the building industry, Master Builders helps multiply that inspiration. It's a place where standards are upheld, excellence is recognised, and members are reminded that they're part of something bigger than themselves.

As we go about our lives, it's worth pausing to ask: Who inspired me? And how am I passing that forward? Because when we carry those influences with us and live them out, we're not just honouring those who came before — we're extending their legacy.

We don't often let the people who inspire us most even know the difference they've made, or we may not realise just what an influence they were until one day, years later, you realise they quietly set you on the path you're walking still.

This is not an obituary. While the hoarding may no longer be around the rugby field and Peter has hung up his ripsaw, he is still passing on those same values to his grandchildren — just as he once passed them on to me.

Complexity with clarity

Hargraves Homes

2024 Builders Academy New Home
\$1.5 million - \$2 million
category winner



Successes

Winning the Builders Academy New Home \$1.5 million–\$2 million category at the 2024 National House of the Year Awards marked a proud milestone for the Hargraves Homes team.

“Honestly, we were delighted. It was a hugely proud moment and felt like all our hard work had truly paid off,” says Royce Hargraves, Director of Hargraves Homes.

“This recognition is a real boost for our reputation and opens doors to new projects and clients. It’s a rewarding way to celebrate our team’s effort, while pushing ourselves to keep raising the bar.”

Judges’ comments

This exceptional home showcases innovative design on a compact section, where clever spatial planning transforms limitations into opportunities. By positioning the garage and rumpus room strategically, a spacious, light-filled internal courtyard emerges, flowing into the beautifully crafted kitchen and dining area.

The open gable structure, combined with materials like brick, timber, and concrete, creates an elegant yet relaxed ambiance that enriches the home’s aesthetic. This residence is a remarkable testament to maximising space without compromising on functionality, setting a high standard for thoughtful, efficient design.

Challenges

Managing a site in Point Chevalier, Auckland, presented a few challenges for the team to overcome.

“There were a few curveballs such as tricky site conditions, tight timelines, and some complex design elements, but we were able to navigate these and deliver a result we are proud of.

“The awards are not just about the win. It’s a great way to celebrate your work, your team, and push yourselves to the next level,” Royce concludes.



Check out some of our 2025 House of the Year winners at: houseoftheyear.co.nz

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CATEGORY

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ENTRANT

Timaru Construction

PROJECT PARTNERS

Temuka & Districts Historical Society
(Client Representative),
Timaru Construction Ltd
(Construction Company)



SUCCESSES

Winning the Commercial Project Under \$1 million Value Award and a Gold Award at the 2025 Commercial Project Awards was a standout moment for Timaru Construction.

“We’ve carried out several seismic upgrades before, but the scale of this project was unique, requiring a complete strip, full strengthening, and meticulous reinstatement to its original form,” says Graham Cadigan, Director of Timaru Construction.

“The engineer introduced innovative solutions that were new to our team and together we explored alternative methods to make the work more efficient. At the heart of it, our mission was to preserve the building’s heritage so it endures for generations to come.”

JUDGES’ COMMENTS

The restoration and strengthening of the Temuka Courthouse Museum was a well-executed project that protects a much-loved heritage building. A small, dedicated team approached the project carefully and pragmatically, enhancing the building’s resilience without compromising its historic charm. The true brilliance lies in how unseen the engineering is, as the team undertook a rigorous process of reinstating interior linings over a grid of steel bars inserted throughout the brick walls, and installing a plywood ceiling diaphragm. The engineering brilliance can also be seen externally through the brickwork, parapets, and chimneys, ensuring the building meets current code requirements. This thoughtful planning and craftsmanship from the team is deservedly recognised with the Commercial Project under \$1 million Value Award.

CHALLENGES

Graham and the project team faced a unique set of challenges working with a building more than a century old.

“Health and safety were a key focus. Working in enclosed, dust-filled spaces required full extraction systems and PPE, while every item also had to be meticulously labelled and stored for reinstatement later.

“Budget was also another challenge. With fundraising driven by a small team of volunteers and no real contingency, we had to make every decision count,” Graham concludes.



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HFC Structures Ltd (Civil Engineer),
Pacific Process (Engineer)



SUCCESSES

The team at Breen Construction felt a mix of shock and pride when they won the Supreme Under \$10 million award at the 2025 Commercial Project Awards.

“It was a huge surprise! To take away the Supreme win was an incredible reward for all who worked on this job. All the subcontractors, partners, the client, and of course, our team, were absolutely delighted,” says Peter Breen, Director at Breen Construction.

“Teamwork was paramount to the project and helped foster a culture where we could challenge one another and problem-solve collectively. The awards were a great way to recognise everyone’s hard work and has instilled a strong sense of pride across the board.”

JUDGES’ COMMENTS

The future-focused approach taken for the Scapegrace Distillery is evident in its unique design. A clear commitment to sustainability shaped key decisions throughout the build, such as adopting laminated timber frames and electric boilers. Working in difficult weather conditions and with multiple specialist contractors, the team showed effective coordination and care in delivery. Process engineering had to be adapted for the challenging weather to maintain quality and the health and safety of all involved. The external and internal claddings are well crafted, and the complex processing components is executed to a high standard. This is a standout project that the team can rightly be proud of and is worthy of the Supreme Award under \$10 million.

CHALLENGES

Developing a Supreme award-winning build didn’t come without its challenges for the Breen Construction team, who had to navigate harsh weather conditions.

“Set high in the Bendigo hills on the 45th parallel, the build site was an ideal climate for ageing whiskey but posed significant weather challenges for the team.

“The wind up there is almost as certain as the sun coming up. Despite this, we were able to reprioritise critical path elements and still deliver on schedule,” concludes Peter.



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SAM HOSKINS

Southern Master Builders
CARTERS Apprentice
of the Year 2024

Sam Hoskins is employed by Dunlop Builders and his training provider was BCITO.



SUCCESSSES

Competing at the Master Builders CARTERS Apprentice of the Year national competition was a proud and memorable milestone for Sam Hoskins.

"Being surrounded by such a high calibre of workmanship drove me to focus, plan meticulously, and perform at my best under pressure.

"The entire competition was an amazing experience. Being surrounded by industry professionals and other hard-working apprentices was a highlight, and it was a pleasure to be a part of."

CHALLENGES

The practical competition was unlike anything Sam had experienced before, with time constraints testing his abilities.

"The nature of the practical was super challenging. It was hard having the pressure of working in that environment with time constraints and everyone watching your every move.

"It was pretty overwhelming because I had never been challenged in that sort of environment. However, the practical tested all elements of building which was great experience," Sam concludes.



BEING SURROUNDED BY INDUSTRY PROFESSIONALS AND OTHER HARD-WORKING APPRENTICES WAS A HIGHLIGHT

JUDGES' COMMENTS

Sam was outstanding in the competition. His submission was well laid out, detailed, and reflected his strong technical knowledge. In the practical challenge, Sam showcased excellent planning skills, working smoothly and confidently.

Sam's strong communication skills and willingness to learn were evident during his interview and site visit. Working with a solid team, Sam is on the path to becoming a well-rounded and skilled carpenter. Congratulations Sam!

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NZ's top 100 home builds announced

The Top 100 Homes for the 2025 Master Builders House of the Year competition have been announced.

House of the Year shines a light on the country's stand-out residential builds, celebrating craftsmanship at its peak. This year, nearly 300 projects ranging from small urban spaces to striking architectural homes were entered from seven regions.

Each home faced a rigorous, on-site evaluation by a panel of seasoned judges who drilled into every detail – workmanship, design integrity, aesthetic flair and overall liveability. The result is a perfect showcase of what New Zealand's best builders can achieve, no matter the challenges.

Registered Master Builders chief executive Ankit Sharma says the House of the Year awards have showcased the skill and innovation of Master Builders members for more than 30 years.

"Every year the bar gets higher. These awards celebrate the craftsmanship, dedication and quality our members bring to building homes that New Zealand families are proud of," Sharma says.

"This year's Top 100 proves our members are continually lifting their game. From smart material choices and sustainable design to precision detailing, they are



This entry by Master Stroke, winner of the Southern Region New Home over \$4 million category, is one of the Top 100 homes to go forward to a second round of judging in the 2025 Master Builders House of the Year competition.

delivering excellence at every price point.

"It is a clear sign the industry is committed to building homes that meet the needs of New Zealanders today and for generations to come."

The Top 100 homes, representing the best entrants from this year's regional competitions held throughout July and August, will undergo a second round of judging by the national judging panel.

This process will determine the winners of the top awards at the 2025 National Awards Gala in Christchurch on November 22.

The National Awards Gala will honour the Supreme House of the Year over \$1 million, Supreme Renovation of the Year, and Supreme House of the Year under \$1 million.

In addition to the three Supreme

Awards and 17 other award categories, the event will also present the Mitre 10 Trade Craftmanship Award, two Feature Home Awards, and five Lifestyle Awards, including the APL Environmental and Sustainable Excellence Award, Plumbing World Bathroom Excellence Award, Kitchen Excellence Award, and Outdoor Living Excellence Award.

The House of the Year awards are made possible thanks to the support of Altus Window Systems, Bunnings Trade, GIB, Master Build 10-Year Guarantee, Mitre 10 Trade, Plumbing World, Resene, and APL Window Solutions.




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NZ homes could be fully solar-powered by 2032

A surge in solar capacity has put New Zealand on track to generate enough solar energy to power every home in the country within the next seven years, according to new research.

Analysis of government installation data by Harrison's Solar, the nation's largest residential solar provider, shows the total capacity installed reached 665 MW last month, up 43% on the same time last year, and more than double the capacity of two years ago.

Based on this growth rate, the country's solar capacity could reach over 10,250 MW by 2032, enough to offset the annual electricity needs of all 2.05 million households (based on an average home consuming 7100 kWh annually).

Harrison's Solar managing director Phil Harrison says New Zealand has reached a tipping point in its transition towards a decarbonised energy future.

He says the adoption of new, more efficient solar technologies is set to help cut the number of years the country will take to become self-sufficient from non-renewable power sources.

"For the first time, we can realistically forecast a future where New Zealand will have enough solar capacity to power every home in the country — and that milestone is now firmly within reach," Harrison says.

He says in just under a year, New Zealand's solar capacity will reach 953 MW, the equivalent generation of the coal-fired Huntly station.

Despite record growth in residential solar and increased consumer interest driven by rising power bills and grid instability,



Harrison's Solar managing director Phil Harrison.

solar currently contributes less than 2% of New Zealand's total electricity generation.

"Our analysis of Electricity Authority data shows that residential installations made up around 54% of total installed solar capacity last month. The number of Kiwi homes with rooftop solar is now almost 68,000, and growing at around 8700 annually.

"While it took New Zealand seven years to reach the first 100 MW in solar capacity, that same amount is now being added every 18 months."

Harrison says the current phase of growth is similar to other significant home energy shifts.

"We're moving through a similar adoption curve to what we saw with heat pumps. Early hesitation is now giving way to mainstream acceptance as the economics and the technology both improve.

The number of New Zealand homes combining solar with battery storage is also rising sharply, reflecting a growing appetite for energy independence and resilience.

According to new data, the total number of households with solar panels and batteries has increased by 72% since July 2024.

"We're seeing a fundamental shift in how New Zealanders engage with energy. As more homes generate and store their own power, we're moving towards a decentralised electricity system — one that's more resilient, less reliant on the grid during peak times, and better equipped to handle disruptions.

"Over time, this transition could ease pressure on national infrastructure, and open the door to innovations like energy sharing between households, and community-wide power networks."

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SITESAFE
Te Kaitiaki o Haumarū

New planning tool tests how zoning changes can reduce future flood risk

A new land-use model, funded by the Natural Hazards Commission (NHC) Toka Tu Ake, gives planners a powerful new way to explore and test how different policy and investment decisions could reduce flood risk — before putting them into practice.

Developed by Dr Robert Cardwell of Market Economics, the model allows users to test the knock-on effects of different flood policy settings in a virtual environment.

“Urban planning decisions are hard to reverse. Once zoning rules are applied and infrastructure is built, the consequences last for decades,” Cardwell says.

“Our model helps avoid a situation where, 10 years after a development is approved, a major flood hits and people ask, ‘why was this allowed in a floodplain?’”

While the model doesn’t forecast exactly how many homes will be built in specific places, it helps planners and decision-makers understand the drivers behind urban development, anticipate where future risks may emerge, and test options for reducing those risks.

With 12% of New Zealand’s housing stock located in flood hazard areas — mostly in urban centres, and particularly in Auckland and Canterbury — this work comes at a critical time. Housing continues to be built on flood-prone land, often without enough risk mitigation.

To test the model, Cardwell used Auckland as a case study. He applied floodplain data to simulate a future where urban land in flood-prone areas was rezoned as Discretionary — the second most restrictive category.

Over a 50-year period, this policy setting led to significantly less development in high-risk areas, including:

- 1200 hectares (19%) less of lifestyle block development,
- 300 hectares (11%) less stand-alone housing, and
- 86 fewer (23%) terraced housing developments.

“These changes reflect a wide range of factors,” Cardwell says. “Things like neighbouring land use, terrain, accessibility, zoning, population growth, and time since

last land use change all influence where development goes.”

The model also suggests that restricting development in risky areas doesn’t mean development stops altogether.

“In the Auckland scenario, nearly 75% of the development that couldn’t happen in flood-prone zones shifted to nearby areas with lower flood risk.”

NHC smarter land use planning champion Dr Wendy Saunders says the tool is a valuable step towards balancing risk-based decisions with the ongoing demand for housing.

“Smarter land-use decisions can help us avoid disasters that are often entirely predictable,” she says.

“No model can perfectly predict future technologies, policies or immigration patterns, but tools like this can help councils and decision-makers determine the most suitable policies for their communities.”

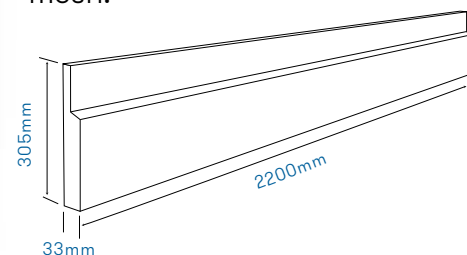
Cardwell hopes to integrate economic and transport models alongside the land-use change model in the future.

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Crane operator survey reveals renewed confidence in

New developments and restarting paused projects are driving positive momentum in the construction sector, according to a survey by crane operator NZ Crane Hire.

The survey asked 105 customers, including leading construction companies, about their outlook for the rest of 2025 and into the first half of 2026.

A quarter (25%) of customers were anticipating their crane needs will increase and 61% expect demand to remain stable.

"Cranes are a great barometer of construction and infrastructure activity," NZ Crane Hire managing director Deane Manley says.

"It's not just about the number of tower cranes people can see on the cityscape. They represent a very small part of the industry," Manley says.

"The busiest cranes are workshop gantry cranes, Hiabs on flat deck trucks, or mobile cranes operating on a wide range of projects around cities and towns."

While the customer survey found the past year was subdued, with 77% of respondents saying their crane needs either declined (31%) or remained the same (46%), the data indicates a shift in momentum in the construction industry.

"After a lean few years, it's great to hear customers talking more positively about opportunities for growth and increased productivity in the sector, which is key to driving new projects and finishing projects that had stalled."

Manley says the data and sentiment is in keeping with NZ Crane Hire's pipeline of confirmed and potential work in the next year. While several respondents noted the market was still "tough", there were hopes of a rebound, especially in commercial builds, infrastructure and large-scale residential work.

It's a view shared by Spiral Drillers managing director Jon Faber, who says after an incredibly tight period, he's cautiously optimistic about the next 12 months.

"Right now, the market remains incredibly tight and highly competitive. While it's encouraging to see some signs of renewed interest, particularly in the form of more requests for pricing and discussions around future commercial and infrastructure projects, this hasn't yet translated into confirmed work for us."

Faber says cash flow is still tight across the entire sector, with many businesses operating on razor-thin margins and unpredictable workloads, increasing the



NZ Crane Hire managing director Deane Manley.

risk of liquidations and skilled tradespeople leaving for the greener pastures of Australia.

"After several tough years, the industry has been cut to the bone. Unless a stable pipeline of work returns soon, we risk losing the capability needed to deliver once the work does arrive," Faber says.

"We're hopeful that over the next 6 to 12 months, momentum will build into stronger pipelines as key projects are greenlit. If those larger projects get the go-ahead, the industry is ready to respond, but we need more than promises. We need decisions, and we need them sooner rather than later."

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the industry

Need for stability

Manley, who is also president of the Crane Association of New Zealand (CANZ), says this caution is running through the industry.

“Even among those predicting growth, the uncertainty is understandable given industry volatility, and economic pressures continue to persist because of interest rates and labour shortages which create a wait-and-see attitude.”

He says the construction industry’s latest boom-and-bust cycle, which saw many big projects stall two years ago, is the worst he has seen in his 40 years in the industry.

“At the end of last year people were really hurting,” he says.

To help avoid the boom-and-bust nature of the industry Manley believes New Zealand should follow Australia’s lead by implementing an overarching infrastructure programme.

“It means the industry is free from political whims and vanity projects to enable the country to get on and build the things it needs.

“The state of infrastructure in New Zealand is shocking. It needs investment, and it needs it fast, but it is also key to reduce the compliance requirements and red tape needed to do business.”

He believes the country wastes significant time and money by not completing projects fully the first-time around, citing the Puhoi to Wellsford connection north of Auckland.

“To build each section of that road takes significant set-up costs. Yet when work stops after each section is completed the infrastructure is dismantled and removed. By the time the road is finally finished the set-up costs will have been paid multiple times.”

Increased stability is essential to enable industries such as the crane sector to plan and invest in its people and equipment, Manley says.

“It’s going to be expensive to get these big projects going, but injecting money into the economy and the wider community is key.”

SARNZ farewells CEO

Scaffolding, Access & Rigging NZ (SARNZ) chief executive Tina Wieczorek (right) will be stepping down from her role on October 1.

SARNZ board president Paul Cunningham says it’s with gratitude and a touch of sadness that the organisation farewells Wieczorek after four years of exceptional service to SARNZ and the industry.

“Tina’s leadership has been nothing short of transformative. Her dedication, drive and unwavering commitment have not only put SARNZ firmly on the map, but have seen us punching well above our weight in influence, visibility, and impact,” Cunningham says.

“She has championed our members, advanced the professionalism of our sector, and built strong relationships across the wider construction industry and key stakeholders.

“During her time with SARNZ, Tina has been more than just a leader — she has been a driving force for growth, a passionate advocate for our industry, and a source of inspiration for so many in our community.”



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Rebalancing the narrative: why whole-of-life thinking matters

By Sustainable Steel Council executive officer Jeremy Sole.

The choices made by architects, designers and specifiers shape more than just the buildings they create. They also impact the long-term environmental legacy of those buildings — and of the materials they're made from.

A growing paradox exists in the current sustainability conversation. There's strong emphasis on reducing upfront embodied carbon — the emissions generated during the production of materials — but often far less attention to what happens to those materials over the full course of their existence.

And that's a problem because a product that appears sustainable today can become an environmental liability in future.

To design truly sustainable buildings, we need to start thinking not just about the life of the building, but the life of the material.

No perfect options

Construction is, and always has been, resource intensive. Since humanity moved beyond thatched roofs and into engineered spaces, we've relied on materials such as timber, steel and concrete to provide structure, durability and performance. Each material plays an essential role in our built environment and social well-being.

But let's be clear — none are perfect, and they all carry environmental costs.

The question is not which material is best, but how can we use the right material, in the right way, at the right time — while understanding its full environmental impact, including end of life.

Timber's overlooked legacy

Timber is often seen as a carbon-friendly choice because of its ability to sequester carbon during growth. While this is true, the benefits fade when the timber reaches end of life — particularly if it is chemically treated, as much of New Zealand's structural timber is.

Chromated Copper Arsenate (CCA)-treated timber continues to be used widely.

When disposed of in landfill, it gradually releases copper, chromium and arsenic into the soil and groundwater. As it decays, it emits methane and carbon dioxide, reversing its carbon benefit and introducing toxicity into the environment.

Engineered timber products such as glulam and laminated veneer lumber (LVL) often contain synthetic adhesives such as formaldehyde and polyurethane, which create further complications at disposal.

While some timber can be downcycled or repurposed, in practice, much of it is



buried, delaying but not preventing its environmental impact.

Steel and concrete are changing

Historically, concrete and steel have been viewed as carbon intensive. But that is changing — and fast.

Concrete production can now incorporate recycled aggregates and new cement blends that cut embodied carbon by up to 70% in advanced formulations.

While reductions of 20 to 30% are already achievable in typical New Zealand applications, the potential exists for much more.

Steel is also evolving rapidly. New Zealand's first electric arc furnace (EAF), currently being developed at Glenbrook, is due to be commissioned in late 2025.

This facility will allow recycled steel to be produced domestically, powered by renewable energy.

Early production is expected to yield emissions around 1.6 tonnes of CO₂ equivalent per tonne of steel — a significant reduction from typical levels.

What's more, international benchmarks show emissions can potentially fall as low as 0.3 tonnes CO₂e per tonne as scrap content increases and processes are optimised.

A powerful local example is the award-winning Hinuera Sheds project in Waikato. Steelworks NZ reused nearly 200 tonnes of 1990s port demolition steel in a new structure.

Steelworks NZ director Grier Fuller told ConstructSteel magazine in October 2024: "By addressing the challenges of damaged components, we demonstrated how recycled steel can meet design specifications and standards."

Steel is also infinitely recyclable. When structures are designed for disassembly, steel components can be reused in future buildings with little to no processing and no loss of quality. In fact, reused steel in a new structure may contribute close to zero additional embodied carbon.

Smarter specification, better outcomes

Another major factor in sustainability

is how materials are used. Steel, in particular, is often over-engineered, which significantly increases its carbon footprint. Structural fabricators in New Zealand report that many specifications are 100 to 300% larger than necessary.

This issue isn't just environmental — it's economic. Specifying more steel than a project needs means paying for and transporting extra material, all while unnecessarily adding emissions.

Early engagement with engineers can ensure steel is optimised for performance, cost and sustainability.

It's also worth noting verified low-carbon steel — defined as less than 0.75 tonnes of CO₂ equivalent per tonne — is already available in New Zealand, and suppliers are actively looking to meet demand.

A call for whole-of-life thinking

The Sustainable Steel Council is not here to promote one material over another. All materials — timber, steel and concrete — are needed for a thriving, resilient built environment. But decisions should be made with integrity, transparency and a whole-of-life perspective.

If we credit timber for sequestering carbon during growth, we must also acknowledge its emissions and toxicity at end of life.

If we criticise steel for high upfront carbon, we must also credit its recyclability and reuse potential. If we see concrete as inert and emission-heavy, we must also recognise its new circular pathways.

Kaitiakitanga — stewardship of our resources — means thinking long-term. Kotahitanga — working together — means recognising the roles different materials play in achieving shared goals. Both should be top of mind in the New Zealand context.

Designing for future generations

It's time to shift the narrative. Sustainability is not just about today's emissions. It's about how materials behave over time, and the legacy they leave behind.

A greater focus is needed on answering questions such as "when a building reaches the end of its life, what happens to the materials inside it? Can they be reused? Will they pollute the land? Will they release carbon?"

These questions aren't abstract. They are central to ethical design. So, I urge architects, designers and specifiers to think in generations, not just project life cycles.

Look beyond aesthetics, trends and marketing claims. Demand evidence. Ask hard questions. Specify with the future in mind.

That's how we build for tomorrow — not just for today.

Roadside Assistance launched for light commercial vehicle customers

Vero Insurance has launched an extra benefit included with all Vero light commercial vehicle insurance policies — Vero Roadside Assistance, delivered by AA Roadservice.

Whether it's a tradie with a packed schedule or a courier racing against the clock, a breakdown can mean lost income, missed deadlines, and unhappy customers. Vero Roadside Assistance is designed to keep business moving, no matter what the road throws in the way.

"Vero Roadside Assistance is more than just a service — it's a safeguard against business disruption," Vero executive general manager, business, Sacha Cowlrick says.

"We've teamed up with the trusted AA Roadservice to deliver fast, expert help when it matters most.

"When a light commercial vehicle is out of action, even briefly, it can throw off schedules, delay jobs, and lead to lost earnings. Business owners rely on their vehicles to keep operations running smoothly.

"With Vero Roadside Assistance we're helping businesses minimise downtime, stay mobile, and stay in control when the unexpected happens."

Who's it for?

Vero Roadside Assistance is available to all Vero and AMP customers with light commercial vehicle insurance, at no additional premium.

Ideal for tradies, couriers, mobile service providers, and small business owners, Vero Roadside Assistance ensures that when the unexpected happens, help is just a call away.

What's included?

Vero Roadside Assistance offers comprehensive support for common roadside issues, including:

- towing to the nearest repairer if the vehicle can't be fixed on the spot,
- jump starts for flat batteries,
- tyre changes,
- emergency fuel delivery,
- lockout assistance, and
- emergency onward mobility services (covering transport costs to get home).

AA chief mobility officer Jonathan Sergel says it was a natural next step to extend AA Roadservice to Vero's commercial insurance customers.

"We've partnered with Vero to provide roadside assistance for personal insurance customers for nearly 20 years, and are pleased to see their commercial customers



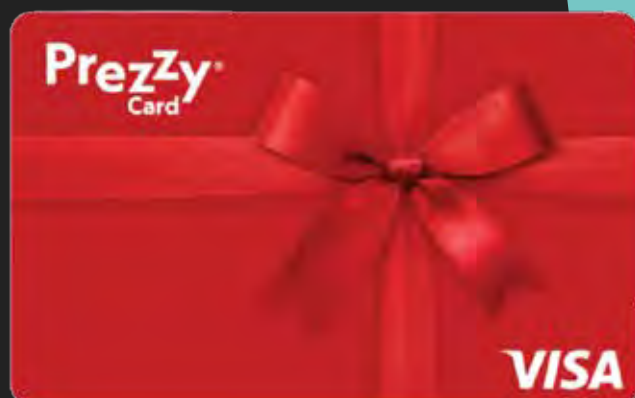
Vero executive general manager, business, Sacha Cowlrick and AA chief mobility officer Jonathan Sergel.

will now benefit from the same trusted AA Roadservice that Kiwis know and love," Sergel says.

"Many small businesses rely on staying mobile, so when a breakdown happens it can have a real impact. We hope this new offer will reassure Vero's business customers that our expert AA team around the country is here to support them."

Vero Roadside Assistance is now live and ready to support light commercial vehicle owners across New Zealand. For more information, visit www.vero.co.nz/commercialroadside.

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Congratulations go to Sarah Mosley of Auckland who won last month's \$100 Prezzy Card prize.

NZ timber manufacturing at a crossroads: Why strategic support is critical

New Zealand's timber manufacturing industry is firmly in the grip of one of its most challenging periods in recent history. A weak domestic market, escalating compliance costs and relentless price pressure are pushing mills to the brink. At the same time, uncertainty surrounds export opportunities, leaving the sector vulnerable in ways that will have long-term consequences if not addressed. New Zealand Timber Industry Federation president Bruce Larsen comments . . .

Domestic demand under strain

The slowdown in residential construction is stark. Housing consents have fallen sharply from their post-Covid highs, and renovation activity is subdued as households tighten spending amid high interest rates and job insecurity.

For sawmills, this means weaker demand for structural timber, and increased pressure from merchants and housing companies seeking lower prices.

Costs rising, margins shrinking

While revenue is being squeezed, costs are climbing. Compliance obligations — covering health and safety, environmental management and reporting, and treatment regulations to name a few — continue to add complexity and expense.

Energy prices remain stubbornly high, and labour costs show little sign of easing. Together, these factors erode already thin margins and leave mills with limited options for reinvestment or innovation.

Price competition turns toxic

In an effort to maintain at least minimum production levels, balance stock and bolster cashflow, some sawmills are forced to cut timber prices to unsustainable levels by "doing deals".

While this approach may keep machines running in the short term, it creates systemic risk — when mills fail, local capacity disappears, along with jobs and regional economic activity.

Industry contraction continues

The recent announcement by Carter Holt Harvey that it is considering the closure of its Eves Valley sawmill in Nelson underscores a troubling trend.

Each closure accelerates the decline of domestic processing, making New Zealand more dependent on exporting raw logs — a strategy that delivers the lowest possible return on one of our most significant renewable resources.

The export challenge

Logs sent offshore enter a price-taking commodity market, where international



New Zealand Timber Industry Federation president Bruce Larsen.

demand (primarily from China in this case), shipping costs, and currency fluctuations dictate returns.

In contrast, processed products including engineered wood, outdoor product solutions, other specialty products and even standard structural timber can capture significantly more value — if we can develop markets and scale production.

Achieving this requires investment in technology, marketing and logistics, along with strong partnerships across the entire value chain.

A call for strategic action

This is not a challenge sawmillers can solve alone.

Government, industry bodies, and even forest growers all have a stake in preserving and growing domestic processing capability.

That means:

- policy settings that encourage

onshore processing investment, not just raw log exports,

- innovation funding to support product development and market diversification, and

- collaboration between growers and processors to ensure log supply security and shared value creation.

If these issues are left unchecked, New Zealand risks hollowing out its timber manufacturing base, forfeiting more value to overseas processors, and undermining the resilience of its construction sector.

The bottom line

The decisions made today will determine whether timber manufacturing remains a cornerstone of New Zealand's economy or becomes another story of lost opportunity.

The sector needs strategic support, coordinated action, and a shared commitment to add value here — not to ship it away.

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Strength properties

Hyne's glulam beams are renowned for their strength and durability.

This is achieved by bonding multiple layers of high-grade Slash Pine (*Pinus eliottii*) with structural grade adhesives.

All Hyne products are manufactured to meet the requirements of AS/NZS 1328.1:1998.

Strength testing is carried out in-house and assessed by an independent testing programme, which is validated by the Engineered Wood Products Association of Australasia (EWPAA).

Beam 16 carries 'S' mark certification.

Precambered for performance

A defining feature of the product is its integrated camber, set at 600m radius.

This engineered curvature reduces the impact of deflection, enabling improved performance compared to conventional straight beams of similar dimensions.

Easy to install

Featuring industry-standard width and depth dimensions, it is the perfect substitute for traditional lintels, bearers, roof beams, rafters, columns and portals, removing the hassle out of specification and speeding up installation.

One of the most popular profiles is the 300mm x 88mm, and convenient 5.4m, 6m and 6.6m lengths — making it perfect for double garage door lintels.

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Sustainability is integral to good design — Beam 16 holds PEFC (Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification)

accreditation (PEFC/40-31-20), with all timber feedstock sourced from responsibly managed pine plantations.

Range and availability

IBuilt's Auckland warehouse stocks a wide range of commonly used sizes, resulting in minimal lead times when ordering.

- It is available in 88 x 200, 240, 300, 360, 400 and 460, and lengths up to 10.8m in 0.6m increments.

- Each beam is treated to H3.1 (LOSP), making it suitable for internal weather protected applications. It is available in a structural non-appearance grade.

Simple specification

Specification is easy with span tables readily available on the IBuilt web site (<https://nzwoodproducts.co.nz/products/details/beam-16/44/>), or by using the free Hyne Design software (<https://nzwoodproducts.co.nz/downloads/>).

Contact IBuilt to find out more about how Beam 16 can work for your next project.



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Engineered timber specialist Prolam has created a simple 5-step process to help building professionals design and build pergolas that are strong, stylish, and built to last.

Pergolas can completely transform outdoor spaces — providing shade, shelter and structure while defining areas for entertaining.

From alfresco dining to poolside retreats and garden features, they remain one of the most versatile design elements.

However, the right materials are crucial. Many builders now choose Prolam's engineered timber, manufactured in New Zealand for outdoor performance.

Prolam glulam beams, rafters and posts are easy to install, highly durable, and maintain their look over time.

Why Glulam? Strength and style

Glulam (glued laminated timber) is made by bonding layers of kiln-dried structural timber with strong adhesives.

The resulting beams, posts and rafters are straighter, stronger, and more dimensionally stable than solid timber, minimising twisting and splitting — essential for pergolas exposed to the elements.

Prolam offers purpose-built outdoor products, including New Zealand's only CodeMark-certified H5 posts for in-ground use. Made from plantation-grown radiata pine, Prolam's glulam timber is knot-free, clean in appearance, and can be stained, oiled or painted.

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Making pergola design easy

Prolam's 5-step Pergola Design Guide covers layout, dimensions, materials, fixings and finishes, helping professionals streamline designs and avoid common pitfalls.

For standard designs, Prolam also offers a free pergola design service, allowing architects and builders to customise dimensions and finishes to suit any project.

Once approved, components are manufactured to specification and delivered via local timber merchants, ready to install.

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Actions speak louder: BCITO backs women in construction

At 21, Haley Watts was owner of her own Tauranga interior plastering business, learning to quote, schedule and manage cashflow while running jobs on site.

The bright-pink van is deliberate branding — she's a woman, and also a proud tradie. Early on, some people assumed she was "the office lady."

Today, the same clients book her again and again, and refer friends.

Lucy Brailsford-Hunt, 25, took a different route. Teacher training, then labouring, opened the door to a carpentry qualification.

Her goals are classic chippy — get qualified, buy and renovate her first home, then one day design and build the family place.

In 2025, she placed second in the regional New Zealand Certified Builders Apprentice of the Year.

Together they illustrate the success the BCITO has achieved in attracting more women into trades roles and apprenticeships.

Six per cent of BCITO apprentices starting out are now women, up from less than one per cent five years ago.

The number of young women participating in the BCITO Gateway programme for school students has doubled since 2022, while women doing apprenticeships have nearly quadrupled from 52 to 205.

However, there's still a long way to go. Just 3% of tradies across the whole construction sector in New Zealand are women. By 2040, the sector goal is to increase women in construction trades roles to 30%.

Retention a significant issue

Meanwhile, a New Zealand Chinese Building Industry Association report highlights retention is a significant issue for the whole industry.

More than a third of workers have been in their roles less than a year, and just 6% remain more than five years.

"The report also highlights what we've been saying for a long time — that demand for new construction is going to come back, and it's essential we have enough qualified tradies to meet that demand," BCITO director Greg Durkin says.

"Boosting recruitment and improving retention through targeted support for all kinds of workers are equally important."

All of this is behind the BCITO's new Actions Speak Louder initiative, to help



Back row from left: Lucy Brailsford-Hunt, Krystal Tufaga and Lola Williams. Front row: Ruby Cunningham (left) and Haley Watts.

attract more women into the trades and ensure they're well supported to stay.

Under the initiative, the BCITO has partnered with organisations such as Dignity, Hirepool, NZ Safety Blackwoods, Queens Workwear, Cleanline Tasman and TrainHer to provide free period products, sanitary bins, and injury-prevention programmes, along with discounted portaloo and women's workwear.

That kind of support is often vital. Watts was lucky to have an early introduction to the trades through her school's Gateway programme, along with guidance that gave her confidence to get started.

"Having a mentor I can ring any time has been huge, and learning safer techniques early on meant I could do the same work as everyone else without wrecking my body," Watts says.

"Being in a room full of women doing big things made it feel possible."

Having the National Association of Women in Construction also recognise her as a 2025 Rising Star has helped boost that confidence further.

Brailsford-Hunt is thrilled to see women's representation in the industry growing, with more avenues for girls to learn a trade that weren't available when she was going through high school.

"I believe they have a lot more opportunities now with Gateway programmes, for example," she says.

"However, the key to inclusion for me is about the culture employers provide for the team.

"Every apprentice will have a different version of what inclusivity looks like, but finding the right employer is what makes the difference. No day really looks the same as a builder and that's why I love it."

The BCITO is keen to see more women enjoy rewarding careers in the trades. For more information on Brailsford-Hunt's and Watts' stories, and the support available, visit <https://bcito.org.nz/women/building-women>.

To offer your services as part of the Actions Speak Louder programme, visit <https://bcito.org.nz/women/actions-speak-louder>.

Three critical areas to focus on to avoid devastating building project cost blowouts



Cost blowouts are the silent killers of construction profits, turning what should be profitable projects into financial nightmares that keep you awake at night. The Professional Builder founder Marti Amos presents some tips to help stop the financial bleeding.

Picture this: You've priced a job with what you thought was a healthy margin, but halfway through construction, you're watching your profits disappear as costs spiral out of control. Sound familiar?

Cost blowouts are the silent killers of construction profits, turning what should be profitable projects into financial nightmares that keep you awake at night.

We speak to so many building company owners who are fighting a losing battle against cost overruns because they're missing the fundamental systems needed to control their projects.

Without proper controls, even well-planned jobs can quickly turn into disasters that wipe out your margins and leave you wondering where all the money went.

But cost blowouts aren't inevitable. With the right strategies and disciplined execution, you can maintain control over your project costs and protect your margins.

Here's three critical areas that will help stop the financial bleeding and build a more profitable business.

• Master your labour hours with real-time tracking

Labour represents one of your biggest cost centres and the area where most jobs blow out.

The secret isn't just estimating labour hours correctly — it's tracking them religiously throughout the build and taking action when things go off track.

Start by breaking your projects into stages and forecasting labour hours for each phase.

Involve your foreman in the planning process by having them sit in the office for three to five hours to prepare, plan, and estimate the labour before the project starts.

When they help estimate the hours required for framing, interior linings, or roofing, they develop ownership of those numbers.

Your goal should be getting actual labour hours within 5% of your forecast for each stage. Track labour hours each day and compare your forecast versus the actual.

This way, instead of discovering problems weeks later, you can spot issues immediately and course-correct.

Hold weekly toolbox meetings where you share the numbers with your team. Tell them exactly where they stand against budget.

If you're 15 hours over budget on framing, address it immediately rather than hoping it will somehow fix itself.

Consider implementing performance bonuses for your foreman and crew based on productivity, quality, and communication.

When your team shares in the success of completing stages on time and under budget, they become invested in controlling costs.

You might offer bonuses of \$100 to \$250 over a 10-week job if it's completed within time and under budget.

• Implement a bullet-proof variations system

Scope creep kills profits faster than almost any other factor in construction. Those innocent requests and undocumented changes can add tens of thousands to your costs while leaving you with nothing to show for it.

There are three scenarios where you need to do a variation: when the client asks for a change, when you order materials and the client asks for something different from what you've allowed for, and when you get an invoice from a subcontractor that's different to what was quoted.

Establish a clear process where no variations proceed unless they're approved by the office first.

Include this phrase in your purchase orders: "No variations unless approved by the office first."

Make it crystal clear during your pre-construction meeting that any changes must go through the office, be priced, and receive written approval before work proceeds.

Get variations signed off before proceeding, and invoice them weekly rather than waiting until the end of the job.

This keeps cash flow healthy, and ensures clients understand cost impacts

in real-time rather than facing shocking surprises at project completion.

Train your team to recognise potential variations immediately. When clients make requests to carpenters on site, those changes often go undocumented and unpriced, leaving you wondering where all the labour hours went.

• Control your materials with smart purchasing systems

Material costs can quickly spiral without proper controls, but simple systems can save you thousands per project.

Have your office manager check every invoice against your purchase orders to ensure accuracy.

Some builders avoid paying between \$2000 and \$15,000 per job in invoicing errors simply by implementing this step.

Common errors include wrong quantities, incorrect pricing, or charges for materials that were never delivered.

Get multiple quotes for major material packages. The difference between suppliers can be substantial, and organised purchasing prevents you from accepting whatever prices suppliers offer when you're scrambling at the last minute.

Implement a purchase order system where materials aren't ordered without written authorisation.

This prevents subcontractors from ordering premium materials without approval and sticking you with unexpected costs.

Conclusion

Cost blowouts aren't caused by bad luck. They're the result of poor systems and inadequate controls.

By implementing robust labour tracking, a bullet-proof variations process, and smart material management, you can protect your margins and build a more profitable business.

Start with one area this week, perfect it, then move on to the next.

The peace of mind that comes from knowing exactly where every job stands financially, and having the systems to keep costs under control, will transform how you run your business.

NZ's first plastic waste management certification awarded

A new chapter in sustainable construction has begun with the very first Circular Path certificate being awarded to Keola Ltd, a company already turning heads with its commitment to building smarter and cleaner.

Keola recently scooped three awards in the 2025 Master Builders House of the Year competition, including a special award for Waste Minimisation.

Now, the company has made history again by becoming the first to be recognised under the Environmental Innovation Centre's (EIC) new Circular Path Certification.

Waste diversion on site

Keola's certification is based on its eight-unit residential housing project in Mt Roskill, Auckland, where waste management was built into the project plan from the start.

The results were impressive:

- 3.7 tonnes of timber fencing diverted.
- 2.7 tonnes of HDPE pipe recycled.
- 70kg of polystyrene saved from landfill.

The project had a target of diverting 70% of total waste from landfill, and the final outcome exceeded expectations with a 78% diversion rate.

This was achieved by creating a site-specific, sustainable waste management plan, supported by regular planning, education and action.

Why Circular Path matters

Until now, many smaller builders wanting to reduce plastic waste disposal to landfill had no clear or practical way for their achievements to be validated. The EIC would like Circular Path to fill that gap.

The certification recognises real, measurable improvements in waste minimisation. It has been designed to be practical and affordable, making it accessible to larger companies and smaller building firms who want to start taking measurable steps.

A pathway towards the circular economy

Circular Path is part of a broader vision to support a circular economy for the construction sector — whereby, instead of materials being used once and sent to landfill, a circular system keeps resources in use for as long as possible through smarter design, reuse and recycling.

For construction companies, this means less waste in skips, lower carbon emissions, and better outcomes for clients and communities.

At present, Circular Path is focusing mainly on plastic waste streams, such as



shrink wrap, polystyrene, and pipe offcuts, which are a major challenge on most sites.

Over time, the certification will expand to cover all major construction waste streams — including timber, plasterboard, metals and packaging.

How certification works

Circular Path certification is built around a straightforward framework designed for building companies of any size.

The aim is to reduce waste through a practical, step-by-step process that encourages planning, education, action and verification.

- Companies start by creating a simple waste management plan, educating staff, and putting systems in place on site — such as clear signage or waste sorting stations.
- Progress is measured through a points-based system that rewards actions such as reducing, replacing, reusing, and recycling materials. Certification is awarded once companies meet the basic requirements and show measurable results, with regular audits to keep standards strong.



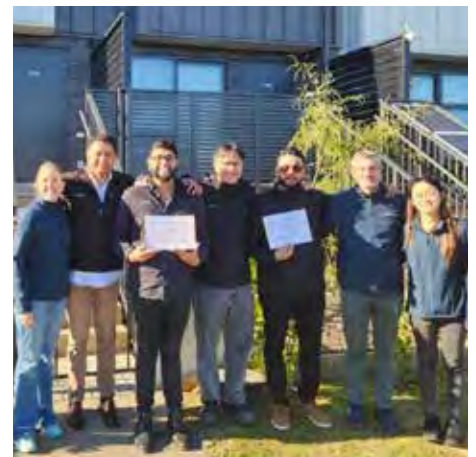
Why should builders get on board with certification?

Circular Path is one of a few types of New Zealand-based certification schemes that can be adopted. For builders, the benefits of certification go beyond environmental outcomes (for more information see the EIC article in the March 2025 issue of *Building Today*), including:

- Cost savings — less waste in the skip means fewer skips and lower disposal fees.
- Site efficiency — clear waste processes keep sites tidier and safer.
- Client trust — more home owners and developers are looking for confirmation that their builder is working sustainably.
- Industry recognition — leading companies are being noticed for their waste management efforts.

Keola sets the standard

For Keola (below), certification has confirmed the success of a waste minimisation strategy already in place, and demonstrated that ambitious targets can be met in practice. Its achievement sets a benchmark for other companies considering Circular Path.



The future of waste in construction

The EIC's aim is that more companies will adopt the certification, helping to transform waste practices across the industry. Keola's achievement shows that significant waste diversion is possible on busy, real-world projects.

This milestone is only the beginning. The goal of Circular Path is to start companies on their waste management journey, and formally recognise those that are making planned, verifiable and real differences in resource and waste management.

Circular Path is currently being tested with select companies. If you would like us to contact you when it launches, please contact penny@environmental-innovation.nz.

Where are the dollars being spent in the private, local and central government sectors?



Pacifecon research manager Philip Dawes provides an insight into where construction dollars are being spent in the private, local and central government sectors around various parts of the country.

Pacifecon's latest Market Watch report was the final in a trio looking at the private, central and local government sectors.

Each month shed some interesting light on where dollars were being spent, and on what kind of projects.

We're reporting that, at the end of July, New Zealand's local government pipeline consisted of 7100 projects at a value of \$58 billion — so there's a lot to dive into.

Market Watch is a joint effort by our 30-strong team of local researchers, providing analysis focusing on newly reported projects, progression of existing projects in the pipeline, construction starts and cancellations across each of the regions and key sectors, including commercial, residential and infrastructure for New Zealand and the Pacific Islands.

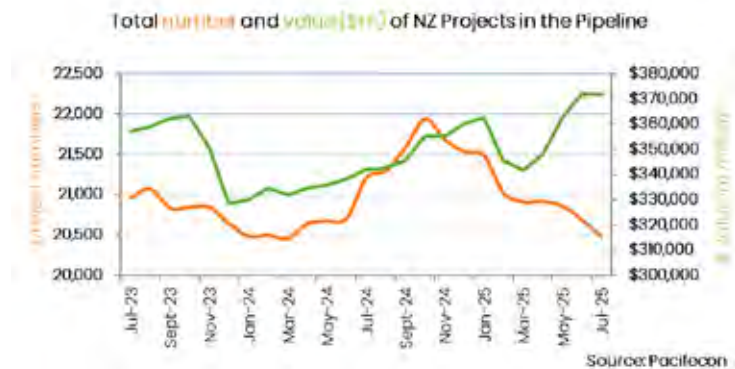
I'm responsible for managing and leading the nationwide research and edit team to ensure all information put out is accurate and of a high quality.

I'm across what's happening in the local construction industry, and I oversee each report, with a keen interest in the Market Watch report.

In the local government sector, we're seeing that infrastructure appeared often, which isn't surprising given the Government's focus on that sector.



In the latest edition of Pacifecon's Market Watch, the number of projects in the central government sector has decreased — but the value of those projects has increased, demonstrating that the spend is on higher-value infrastructure-type projects such as roads and railways.



We also note that when looking at the central government sector, the number of projects has decreased, but the value of those projects has increased, demonstrating that spend is on higher-value infrastructure-type projects such as roads and railways.

The private sector holds the largest share of the planned works among the three, with 55% of projects progressing through the planned pipeline.

Taking a closer look at these numbers, we can see that local government holds 35% of the number of projects, and central government 10%. Some other stats include:

- Civil projects were 78% of both the number and the value of the local government pipeline, which is an increase of 3% in number and 30% in value when compared to July 2024.
- At the end of June 2025, Pacifecon had 1990 central government sector projects progressing through the planned pipeline, at a value of \$109 billion.
- 54% of private sector projects are residential, at 44% of

the value.

In addition to the numbers, we also look into different projects around the country. Some of the projects in early planning, planning, and tendering stages include:

- Local government: Canterbury, a new container terminal and wharf on reclaimed land at Lyttelton Port, \$800 million.
- Central government: Auckland, a 4-track rail corridor from Westfield to Pukekohe, \$8 billion.
- Private: Waikato, an offshore windfarm north of Raglan, \$5 billion.

In July, 2092 projects started, with a total value of \$4913 million. In the 12 months to July, our team reported more than 23,000 projects starting.

In addition to a highlighted project breakdown, each Market Watch report includes commentary and graphs for the regions. It provides a comprehensive picture of planned construction across the country to help your business with forecasting and informing strategic decisions.

It's reassuring to see that projects starting remain relatively steady, and we're confident that as we move into 2026, we will see activity picking up.

Mention BT and get a free Market Watch report!

Be informed, make strategic decisions based on projects planned and what has started, drive business growth, understand which regions are right for your future, and identify which sectors are growing in the regions.

Head to pacifecon.co.nz/resources/market-watch/ to download sample reports, or contact us today to order your copy of Market Watch at projects@pacifecon.nz.

- Mention that you saw us in Building Today to receive a complimentary Market Watch report.

Liability and legislative reform in New Zealand: Whose fault is it anyway?

The recent announcement by the coalition Government of its intention to introduce a proportionate liability framework within New Zealand represents one of its pillars to drive reform within the building industry. Rob Clarke and Helena Crawford of Auckland law firm Greenwood Roche comment on what this ultimately means for the sector, and how the Government and the courts can best ensure there is balanced and meaningful protection for plaintiffs and defendants in defective building claims.

What is “proportionate liability”?

The question of liability assesses the degree of responsibility of the parties involved in the design and construction work on a project.

Under the current regime, section 17 of the Law Reform Act 1936 provides for “joint and several” liability. This means that where there are multiple parties responsible for loss on a project, any one of them may be held liable for the entire cost of the damage or repairs.

That party can claim contribution from others involved, but this is subject to those companies or individuals remaining in business (and having sufficient assets to recover these costs).

In practice, when defective building claims reach the courts, often years after a build is complete, companies involved in the project may no longer be operating, or have limited assets.

This places a significant burden on the well-resourced defendants, who are often referred to as the “last party standing”, to bear the relevant liability.

Historically, this burden has disproportionately fallen on local councils involved in the consenting process — and, ultimately, ratepayers.

Under a “proportionate liability” regime, each defendant is liable only for the proportion of the loss or damage commensurate to their level of responsibility (as determined by the courts).

This system provides greater protection for defendants (including local councils). But, ultimately, the risk of payment shortfalls (due to liquidity issues of any relevant defendants) is transferred to the plaintiffs (usually the owners).

The liability question in the courts

Concerns around the joint and several



Rob Clarke



Helena Crawford

liability regime are not new. In 2014, the Law Commission’s report Liability of Multiple Defendants (NZLC R132, 2014) considered the proportionate liability regime. The Law Commission largely recommended retaining the status quo.

However, concerns around local councils disproportionately footing the bill have remained, with the \$163m Oaks Shores claim against Queenstown Lakes District Council being an often-cited example of inherent flaws within the joint and several liability system.

Last year, in *Beca Carter Hollings & Ferner Limited v Wellington City Council* [2024] NZSC 117, the Supreme Court acknowledged the need to protect well-resourced defendants by allowing contribution claims to proceed outside the 10-year “longstop” limitation period for defective building claims under the Building Act 2004.

The court emphasised that applying the 10-year longstop limitation period to contribution claims would, in some circumstances, unfairly prevent defendants from seeking contribution before the determination of liability.

Parties normally have two years from the date of judgment to pursue claims against potential co-defendants.

The finding in *Beca* extended the time period for filing co-defendants’ contribution claims in some cases, but did not protect remaining defendants when

others have become insolvent.

The Government’s proposed proportionate liability regime responds to this gap by ensuring each party is liable only for its share, preventing solvent defendants from bearing an unfairly large portion of loss.

The structure of the new proportionate liability regime

Questions remain as to the final structure of the proportionate liability regime, particularly concerning how shortfalls will be mitigated to ensure plaintiffs will not bear any shortfall.

The Government has indicated that this may take the form of compulsory professional indemnity insurance or home warranty schemes (such as those currently provided by Master Builders), and has pointed to Australia as a successful example where proportionate liability has been operating successfully since the 1990s.

How this will operate in a challenging insurance market, and how compulsory warranty schemes will be funded and accessed will be key issues for the Government to resolve.

Of particular interest will be how closely the New Zealand Government will follow the Australian model, where most states have allowed commercial builds to opt out of the proportionate liability scheme altogether.

Provided it is paired with strong consumer protections, including warranties and insurance, the proposed regime could create a balanced system and decrease costs for councils and ratepayers, while ensuring building owners are not left to foot the bill for payment shortfalls.

How the bill intends to achieve this balancing act will be the real challenge facing the Government.

Building Consents Information

For all authorisations, July 2025

Dwellings	\$1,680,972,150	Total All Buildings	\$2,393,850,070
Domestic Outbuildings	\$23,945,899	Non-building Construction	\$41,931,957
Total Residential	\$1,704,918,049		
Non-residential	\$688,932,021	Total Authorisations	\$2,435,782,027

Number of new dwellings consented

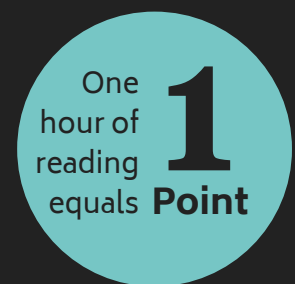
	Jul 2025	Jun 2025	Jul 2024		Jul 2025	Jun 2025	Jul 2024
Far North District	15	19	23	Palmerston North City	22	29	46
Whangarei District	41	30	37	Tararua District	1	0	2
Kaipara District	7	7	8	Horowhenua District	26	10	43
Rodney District	68	51	134	Kapiti Coast District	101	13	11
North Shore/Albany Wards	259	223	163	Porirua City	15	42	3
Waitakere Ward	203	212	124	Upper Hutt City	32	23	64
Auckland Wards	329	256	339	Lower Hutt City	34	22	37
Manukau/Howick Wards	240	206	260	Wellington City	27	12	22
Manurewa-Papakura Ward	142	115	127	Masterton District	11	13	16
Franklin Ward	101	112	143	Carterton District	12	7	1
Thames-Coromandel District	13	12	31	South Wairarapa District	1	3	6
Hauraki District	3	3	6	Tasman District	37	21	42
Waikato District	52	58	44	Nelson City	33	23	18
Matamata-Piako District	16	22	22	Marlborough District	14	22	15
Hamilton City	81	57	71	Kaikoura District	2	3	5
Waipa District	42	29	33	Buller District	2	5	7
Otorohanga District	3	3	5	Grey District	3	6	11
South Waikato District	10	2	7	Westland District	5	5	4
Waitomo District	5	0	1	Hurunui District	1	5	24
Taupo District	25	28	23	Waimakariri District	73	53	58
Western Bay of Plenty District	15	32	25	Christchurch City	385	232	351
Tauranga City	50	47	59	Selwyn District	159	187	110
Rotorua District	26	17	52	Ashburton District	34	18	27
Whakatane District	14	4	14	Timaru District	17	15	13
Opotiki District	1	5	5	Mackenzie District	6	9	5
Gisborne District	14	5	10	Waimate District	1	0	0
Hastings District	51	42	31	Waitaki District	11	8	11
Napier City	29	14	35	Central Otago District	33	21	16
Central Hawke's Bay District	7	2	4	Queenstown-Lakes District	113	75	385
New Plymouth District	17	16	61	Dunedin City	87	27	38
Stratford District	3	2	0	Clutha District	5	6	1
South Taranaki District	5	3	6	Southland District	9	17	11
Ruapehu District	4	2	2	Gore	3	0	2
Whanganui District	10	22	9	Invercargill City	14	19	10
Rangitikei District	4	3	11	Area Outside TA	0	0	0
Manawatu District	15	12	11	Total	3252	2627	3352

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