

building & consent news

KEEPING YOU INFORMED OF THE BUILDING AND CONSENTS PROCESS

Issue 10 February 2011

Welcome to 2011.

The first newsletter for the year and what an interesting year this could be with the recently announced changes to Schedule 1 of the Building Act – exempting work that now can be done without the need for a Building Consent (see the story on page 3). Also ahead are further changes being proposed to the Building Act by way of Amendment 3; the approaching deadline of the Licensed Building Practitioner Scheme; and for us at Council, the need to undergo our two yearly reassessment to maintain our Accreditation status as a Building Consent Authority which will take place 18-20 April. We look forward to meeting with you during the year.

Annual Survey Results

In November 2010 we invited you, our clients, to give us feedback on our performance over the last 12 months by way of an anonymous survey. The information provided by this means allows us to gauge how well we are performing, (or not) in the eyes of our clients. This is an extremely valuable exercise for us as we continue to work both with, and for, the industry. Results of the compiled survey returns are as follows –

1. 63% found the building information on our website good or very good; the other 37% stated they don't use the site.
2. 94% found our pre-vet service satisfactory or better; 94% stated the advice given at this point was clear; and 84% of our clients were seen by the pre-vet officer within 15 minutes of arrival.
3. 88% stated the service provided by our inspectors in the field was good; 6% stated it was poor; and 1 respondent was neutral on this question.
4. 66% stated we had become more consistent with information and advice given by our staff; 22% believed we were about the same; and 12% thought we had got worse.
5. Compared to 12 months ago, 64% believed our overall service to the industry had got better whilst 36% believed it was about the same.

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Change of Inspection Areas

As of 31 January 2011, Barry (right) and Bruce (left) have changed their areas of responsibility for inspections. Barry is now responsible for the Foxton and Foxton Beach areas and Bruce is taking over the Levin area. Both will continue to provide the same friendly and informative service



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Booking of Inspections

Before any inspection can be booked, all fees must be paid in full.

To book an inspection, please phone our direct inspection booking line 06 366 0927, and we will need the information listed below. For personal service, please call between 8.00am and 5.00pm Monday to Friday, (excluding Public Holidays). If there is no answer, please leave a message and our staff will ring you back to confirm your requirements. You may also ring after hours – in which case leave a message and our staff will call you back to confirm your needs on the next working day.



Jo Molloy (left) and Teria Gibbons (right) are your friendly frontline staff for booking inspections.

In order to book your inspection, the following information is required:

- 24 Hours Notice (if the request is made by 3.00pm the day before the inspection is required, we will endeavour to book it in for the next day, subject to the workload of the inspectors)
- Your building consent number, site address, type of inspection, contact name and phone number
- Please note the inspector will arrive within the timeslot that you will be given, e.g. 9.00am – 9.30am; 2.00pm – 3.00pm etc
- The contractor is required to be on site for both the first inspection and the final inspection, along with the approved Building Consent documentation
- For all other inspections it is preferred that someone is on site. If not, let the booking officer know and tell them the location of the Building Consent documentation
- Approved Building Consent documentation must be on site for the inspection to be undertaken.



Electronic Information

Many thanks to those who have supplied email addresses to enable us to send you information electronically – these details are currently being compiled into a distribution list so that we can forward on industry- relevant information that we receive as quickly as possible. If you haven't already supplied your email address and would like to be added to the distribution list for updates, please email your details to coletteb@horowhenua.govt.nz

Changes to Schedule 1 of the Building Act

A number of recent changes to Schedule 1 of the Building Act, covering work that can be done without the need for a building consent, came into force on 23 December 2010. All exempt work must comply with the requirements of the Building Code and other relevant legislation such as the Resource Management Act. Undertaking building work that is not exempt without a building consent is an offence under section 40 of the Building Act. A person who commits such an offence may be liable to a fine not exceeding \$100,000. Full details of exempt work are given on the DBH website www.dbh.govt.nz/bc-no-consent.

Some of the key changes to existing sections:

- An increase in the height of decks from which it is not possible for a person to fall more than 1.5 metres even if it collapses (increased from 1 metre).
- Allowing the replacement or alteration of linings or finishes of any internal wall, ceiling or floor of a dwelling.
- Allowing the construction or alteration of any wall (except a retaining wall or an internal wall), fence (except a fence as defined in section 2 of the Fencing of Swimming Pools Act 1987) or hoarding of a height not exceeding 2.5 metres (2.0 metres originally) above the supporting ground.
- The modification of the requirements for water storage tanks relating to capacity and height above ground.

There are also amendments and/or additions to the sections covering the construction, alteration or removal of any:

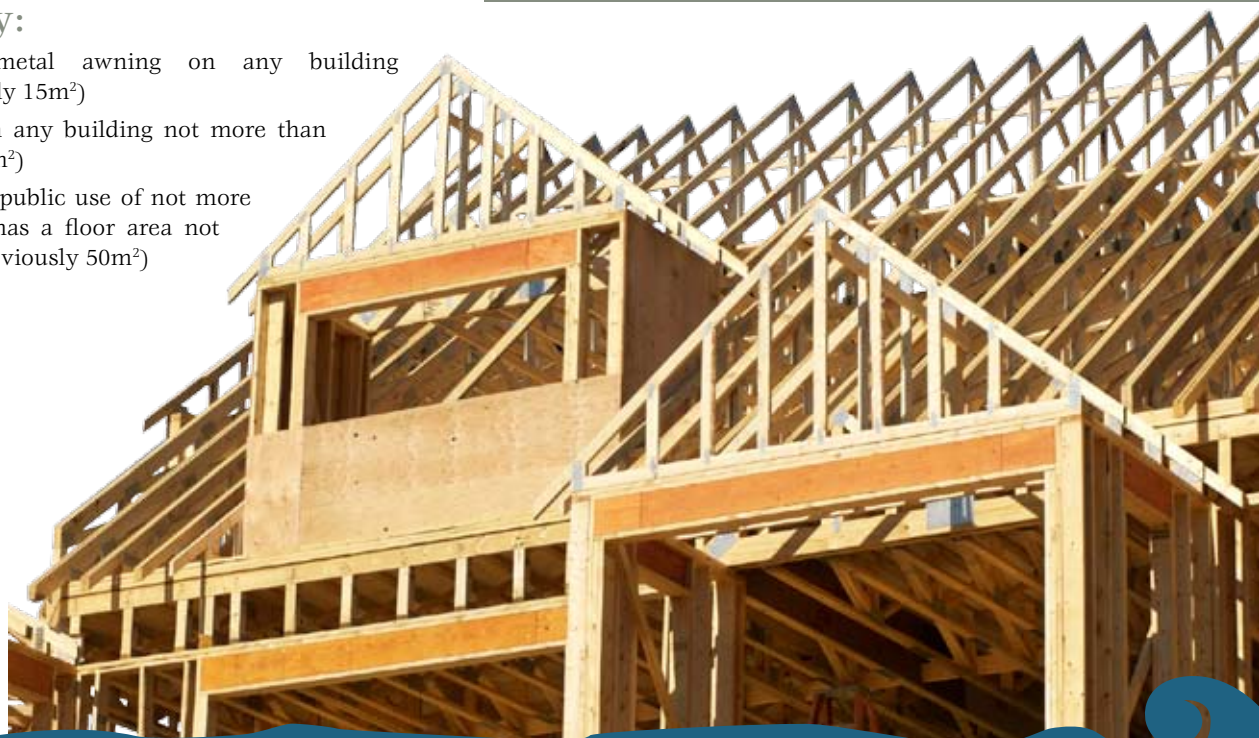
- fabric, glass or metal awning on any building up to 50m² (previously 15m²)
- porch or veranda on any building not more than 20m² (previously 15m²)
- tent or marquee for public use of not more than 1 month that has a floor area not exceeding 100m² (previously 50m²)

- stall, booth, compartment or similar structure that does not exceed 100m² in floor area and is or has been for use at a fair, exhibition or market for not more than 1 month
- carport that does not exceed 20m² in size and is on the ground level.

New sections that have been included allow:

- the installation of thermal insulation in an existing building other than in an external wall or an internal wall that is a fire separation wall
- a penetration up to 300mm diameter to be made to enable the passage of pipes, cables, ducts, hoses and the like through any existing building and any associated building work, such as weatherproofing, fireproofing or sealing the penetration
- the demolition of all or part of a damaged building that is detached (stand-alone) and no more than 3 storeys high
- the repair or replacement of all or part of a damaged outbuilding, provided the repair or replacement is made within the area the original outbuilding occupied.

Please note that all work must still comply with the requirements of the New Zealand Building Code and the Horowhenua District Plan, eg, a deck higher than 1 metre is included in the site coverage calculations, and, a retaining wall may need a resource consent due to the earthworks involved. The link to the operative Horowhenua District Plan is under Planning Services on the Council website www.horowhenua.govt.nz



Emergency Building Teams Update

You may remember that the proposal to form these teams has been on our radar for some time, but with one thing and another, has not been implemented. However the Christchurch earthquake of last year has been just the impetus needed to progress this matter. The following is an extract from our Emergency Teams' Volunteer Manual that sets the scene as to why these teams are so important:

- **In a disaster situation that has affected buildings, such as an earthquake or flood, it is imperative that the integrity of the buildings can be assessed quickly and effectively as to whether or not it can continue to be used for the designated purpose. Additionally, the information gained when carrying out assessments can be extremely vital to the decision-making needs for an overall coordinated response from Council and its emergency service partners.**

- **Existing resources of Council's Building Unit will not necessarily be able to cope with the added demands over and above normal duties. Hence the need for the implementation of 'Emergency Assessment Building Teams'.**

The initial briefing session for those who have volunteered to become part of the Emergency Assessment Building Teams will be held within the next few weeks and details will be advised to them in due course. Current potential members listed are – Rodney Caldow; Nick Spark; Alan Day Jnr; Doug Harrison; Todd Penny; Andrew Lloyd; Grant Campbell; Peter Bolton; Kelvin MacPherson and Mike Barrett. If you are interested in being part of these teams, please contact Tim on Ph 06 366 0999 extension 6811 or email him at timft@horowhenua.govt.nz.



Annual Survey Results *(cont. from page 1)*

We also invited comments, and a selection of those received are as follows –

- Keep up the newsletter etc
- Thank you for the help over the last year as we know it hasn't been easy for everyone
- Very good assistance with licensing and has encouraged me to proceed towards being a LBP
- I have always received service that can't be faulted

The survey also provided feedback on areas where we can improve our service, and these will be addressed over the coming year.

So in our view – we have made good progress over the last 12 months and believe we have made improvements in most of the areas that had previously been identified; however at the same time, we acknowledge that further improvements can, and will, be made. Finally, our thanks to those of you who responded to the survey.