



Media Release
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Earthquake-prone building notice for Leeston Library and Medical Centre

The Leeston Library and Medical Centre has been identified as an earthquake-prone building.

An engineering report has shown parts of the building are below 34% of the building code, meaning it is classified as earthquake-prone. While the report shows no urgent risk to the safety of people using the building, the Council had already removed an area of brick work that was identified in the report as being of concern.

The building has not been closed, as the likelihood of an event causing significant damage is low, and the Council has received advice from the engineers who assessed the building that it is safe to continue using it. The Council also wants to ensure people can continue to safely access the medical centre, Council Group Manager Property Douglas Marshall says.

However, the Council is putting an action plan in place to increase safety for library staff and users. This has included removing some objects that could have been unsafe, and will include limiting the use of a storage area and assessing whether some items are safe or need to be removed from around the building.

These changes are not expected to cause significant inconvenience to library users, but the Council appreciates people's patience.

The Council has sought costings for strengthening work and is discussing the options for the future of the building.

As part of its work to address earthquake-prone buildings the Council has also completed earthquake strengthening for the Rolleston Community Centre spin class building which was identified as earthquake prone in March.

The Building Code was updated following the Canterbury earthquake sequence, with stricter requirements for buildings.

"Earthquake-prone buildings are not considered any more dangerous than they were before being identified, so business can continue as normal," Mr Marshall says.

"What it does do is provide a timeframe for shoring up buildings to make sure they are as safe as possible during future earthquakes.

"There is no way of knowing for sure which buildings will fall down or be damaged in an earthquake. The notice is there to help people make an informed choice about entering a building. In any building people should be aware of the safety procedures and what to do in an earthquake."

Earthquake-prone building notices have been put up at the Library and Medical Centre today and the building has been added to the national earthquake-prone building register.

Following the issue of an earthquake-prone building notice the building owner has 15 years to complete strengthening work, or demolish the building.

To date earthquake-prone building notices have been put up on four buildings in the district. These are Sheffield and Leeston Fire Stations, Leeston Library and Medical Centre and the Rolleston Community spin class garage, where the notice has been removed following results of an engineering inspection on strengthening work.

The Council building team is awaiting the results of engineering assessments for a further 73 privately owned buildings it has identified as having design features which could mean they are earthquake-prone. This is part of the Council's process to identify earthquake-prone buildings as required by the Section 133AG of the Building Act.

More information on earthquake-prone buildings and the different notice types can be viewed at www.selwyn.govt.nz/property-And-building/building/earthquake-prone-buildings

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