

Latest building consent news from Selwyn

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Update on our workload

Inspection timeframes

Our inspections are currently around 48 hours timeframe from booking.

Processing timeframes

At the end of March:

- The average working days for building consents being issued was 8 days (note this is an average)
- 96% of applications were processed within 20 working days.
- New commercial consents are generally being processed within 25 working days.

Note that timeframes depend on the quality of your application.

Long-Term Plan consultation

Community consultation with residents and other key stakeholders on our draft LTP is now open until 2 May. This follows the adoption of our consultation document at the 27 March Council meeting last week.

Submissions from the community to understand what they think of our proposed plans, identify what they do and don't agree with, and see what other suggestions they might have for our activities and services, are now welcomed.

Submissions can be made online through our [Your Say Selwyn](#) webpage, but we're also accepting feedback via email and in writing.

For further information on the Long-Term Plan please refer to [our website](#).

The building levy is changing

From 1 July 2024 building work with a value less than \$65,000 including GST will be exempt from paying the building levy. The rate of \$1.75 including GST per \$1,000 of building work value will not change.

This comes as a result of a Cabinet decision, based on a public consultation on proposed changes to the building levy by the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) last year.

You are still expected to supply an accurate estimate of the building work taking into account all actual costs and any additional materials or labour provided free of charge to the project when you submit your application (as per section 10 of the Goods and Services Tax Act 1985).

For more information on the changes refer to [Government lowering building costs](#).

NZVD2016 required for cadastral surveys

From 1 July 2024 all cadastral surveys must use the NZ Vertical Datum (NZVD2016).

What does this mean for my application?

If our team have any concerns about the datum used on your application they will query this and seek confirmation that the survey information provided meets the cadastral survey rules 2021.

Further information is available on [Cadastral Survey Rules 2021 \(LI 2021/95\) \(as at 23 December 2023\)](#)
[Schedule 5 Official vertical datums – New Zealand Legislation](#).

Flooding assessment certificate (FAC) pre-construction inspection

A temporary change has been made for inspections where a flooding assessment certificate (FAC) is involved.

A pre-construction meeting will be added to the inspections list. The purpose of this is enable a meeting on site with the contractors/project managers to discuss the certificates requirements and help clarify what is included on of the certificates and what is required for the foundation.

What if the project is already completed to a ready to pour stage?

Where the slab does not comply with the current certificate, the inspector will take a siting from

- the highest point of the kerb at the front of the site, or
- in the case of a right of way, the highest point directly adjacent to the road boundary of the right of way

to determine if the floor level is 400mm or greater above that point. If there is no clear line of sight or there is a substantial distance to the highest point you may need to involve a Licensed Cadastral Surveyor.

If the required FFL's does not comply with the current certificate:

- you will need to apply for a new FAC reflecting these new levels (note: processing of a new FAC will take up to 10 working days and it will not be released until the invoice is paid), OR
- where there is a consent notice stating about the FFL you must be in accordance with your consent notice and cannot get a reassessment FAC because the FFL is registered against the title of the property.

If the latter situation applies it is up to the developer to apply for a resource consent to cancel a consent notice, which they should discuss with the Duty Planner.

[Change to information requirements for flood assessment certificate applications](#)

Council is changing the information requirements for a Flood Assessment Certificate (FAC) application from 1 May 2024.

We will require all FAC applications for a residential unit on a single urban site to:

- include a site plan that includes existing site ground levels in relation to a datum reference for the top of the kerb in the road immediately adjacent to the site, confirmed/certified by a Licensed Cadastral Surveyor to datum mark which is permanent for use during the build, and
- reference the New Zealand Vertical Datum NZVD2016 format.

Finished floor levels will then be set at a level above this datum reference.

Why are we making this change?

In reviewing many building consent applications for the purpose of issuing a FAC we have observed that:

- in some cases the datums referenced on the plans are not consistent with the datum references of flood information we hold, and

- in some cases the site levels on the plans are not very accurate in relation to the actual site or road levels.

Having a reliable NZVD 2016 datum will overcome these issues.

This will provide a benchmark for all other aspects of the proposed building that can be used by the designer and the builder. It is better the survey is carried out earlier than later in the project.

Setting finished floor levels in relation to a confirmed datum reference is:

- simpler to comply with,
- reduces the potential for errors, and
- gives certainty to the Council and homeowners that residential units and principal buildings are being constructed to the appropriate finished floor level.

Using a known datum reference also better accommodates development on lots that are not completely flat.

What if I already have a FAC but would prefer the finished floor level to set in relation to a known datum reference?

You will need to reapply for a new FAC if you would like us to set the floor level in relation to a known datum reference.

We will process this at no charge if your FAC was issued prior to 1 May 2024 and has not expired.

For further information on FACs please see our [website](#).

Delays in resource consent processing

The resource consents team have been experiencing a high volume of complex work since the end of 2023 and this is impacting on our ability to process consents within standard statutory timeframes.

The delays are being caused by a number of factors but can mostly be attributed to the particular stage of the planning cycle we are in right now where the Partially Operative District Plan still has live appeals, which means we are often still having to assess proposals under the Operative District Plan. This will start to improve over the course of 2024 as appeals are resolved. In the meantime, we have bolstered the team with a number of external planning consultants and are working hard on the backlog.

You can help us to help you by ensuring that all applications submitted include all relevant information required by Schedule 4 of the RMA. [Resource Management Act 1991 No 69 \(as at 24 August 2023\), Public Act Schedule 4 Information required in application for resource consent – New Zealand Legislation](#)

If you have any questions, please contact us at contactus@selwyn.govt.nz or 03 347 2800.

Interconnected smoke alarms required in additions and alterations

In case you missed it in [our November 2023 newsletter](#), there is a new requirement for smoke alarms to be interconnected in housing. The 12 month transition period for this ends November 2024.

This requirement does not only apply to new housing – it is also required for any building consent applications for alterations and/or additions to existing houses if C/AS1 or C/AS2 are being used to demonstrate compliance with the building code.

Updates from MBIE

Building consent system review

Building consent system review consultation [published summary of feedback on the Building Performance website](#) is available online.

The consultation focused on potential options for improvement to the building consent system. MBIE advise that:

- the overall feedback indicated that the system is not fundamentally broken but there are opportunities for substantial improvement, and
- that this aligns with the Government's intention to address long standing issues within the consenting process.

Lead in plumbing products

Following consultation in 2022 MBIE are now proposing an extension to the transition period to May 2026 to align with Australia.

[Learn more about the proposed extension.](#)

Improving competition and lowering costs

Many will have seen the recent announcements from Minister Penk on initiatives to reduce barriers, improving competition in the building system and lowering costs.

MBIE are now progressing options to change to Building Act to facilitate these initiatives.

We'll keep you informed as information comes to hand.