

# Latest building consent news from Selwyn

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## Update on our workload

### Inspection timeframes

Our inspections are generally back at 48 hours from booking. This may change at short notice as we anticipate many projects aim to complete before Christmas. Please bear this in mind with your scheduling of work and inspection requirements.

### Processing timeframes

At the end of November:

- The average working days for building consents being issued was 10 days (note this is an average)
- 92% of applications were processed within 20 working days.
- New commercial consents are generally being processed within approx 16 working days.

Note that timeframes depend on the quality of your application.

## Holiday season close down reminder

A reminder about when you can contact us before the holiday season, and when we'll be back:

### Inspections

- Last full day of inspections – Friday 20 December 2024
- Inspections resume – Monday 6 January 2025.

**Note:** reduced inspection numbers may apply dependant on available resource to allow for our team to have a break too. This is not normally an issue at the time of year given most builders and trades take leave at this time.

## Office

- Office closes – 5.00pm Tuesday 24 December 2024
- Office reopens – 8.30am Friday 3 January 2025.

Remember the processing statutory clock stops on 20 December 2024 and restarts again on 10 January 2025 in accordance with the definition of 'working day' under the Building Act 2004.

This does not mean that we don't work on lodged applications; just that the days don't count as working days. Please ensure your customers understand this.

Applications can continue to be submitted 24/7 as normal during this period via the AlphaOne online system.

## Up country inspections increasing

We have decided to increase the frequency of when we'll carry out inspections in our high country areas e.g. Lake Coleridge, Castle Hill, Arthurs Pass, etc.

Going forward inspections are able to be carried out two days a week – Tuesdays and Thursdays (previously it was only Wednesdays).

This is to assist meet the needs of the industry due to the increase in projects and associated inspections needed in these areas. And the added benefit is that should an inspection fail, you may be able to get a reinspection the same week.

## G7 natural light and illuminance considerations

With smaller lots and dwellings closer together we are seeing more and more instances where illuminance compliance can't be achieved using the acceptable solutions offered in G7 natural light.

The projects in particular that need consideration are those that have rooms deeper/longer than twice the height of the windows serving the space and where the windows of these areas face roofed patio areas.

Building code clause G7 was updated on 29 November 2021. Some of the changes to the updated building code clause now excludes windows facing a covered area like a verandah or patio from the acceptable solutions.

[There is however a verification method that uses modeling for verification of the design](#) where the acceptable solutions can't be used to confirm that there is no less than 30 lux at floor level for 75% of the standard year. Designers can use a number of resources for projects that fall outside the acceptable solution to show how it complies.

## Soakpit locations

On smaller lots stormwater drainage design with soakpits are being located beneath the driveway.

This is usually due to difficulty of excavation equipment being able to access more desired locations on the site.

The fact that the soakpits are located under driveways means that the design is assessed with SED input to ensure the below are sufficiently considered.

What the building code performance requirements say (but not limited to):

- B1.3.1 – Buildings, building work and siteworks shall have a low probability of rupturing, becoming unstable, losing equilibrium or collapsing during construction or alteration throughout their lives.
- B1.3.7 – Any siteworks and associated supports shall take into account the effects of: (b) water, weather & vegetation and (c) ground loss & slumping.
- E1.3.3 – Drainage systems for the disposal of surface water shall be constructed to: (d) Provide reasonable access for maintenance and clearing blockages, and (f) Avoid the likelihood of damage from superimposed loads or normal ground movements.

## During the inspection

Drainlayers under their licence can reconfigure the layout of the consented drainage plans. This is usually considered as a minor variation by the inspector on site.

Please note that if this includes the relocation of the soakpit, the same design input that would be required at processing stage must be provided and will be requested by the inspector. This will delay the forming of the driveway until design approval is obtained.

## Professional partnership programme (PPP) – Reflecting on 2024 and reimagining the PPP

2024 has been a productive year for the PPP, with approximately 225 building consents processed via the programme.

As part of our commitment to continuous improvement, we are currently reviewing the program to identify opportunities for enhancement. This process includes engaging with our partners and gathering valuable

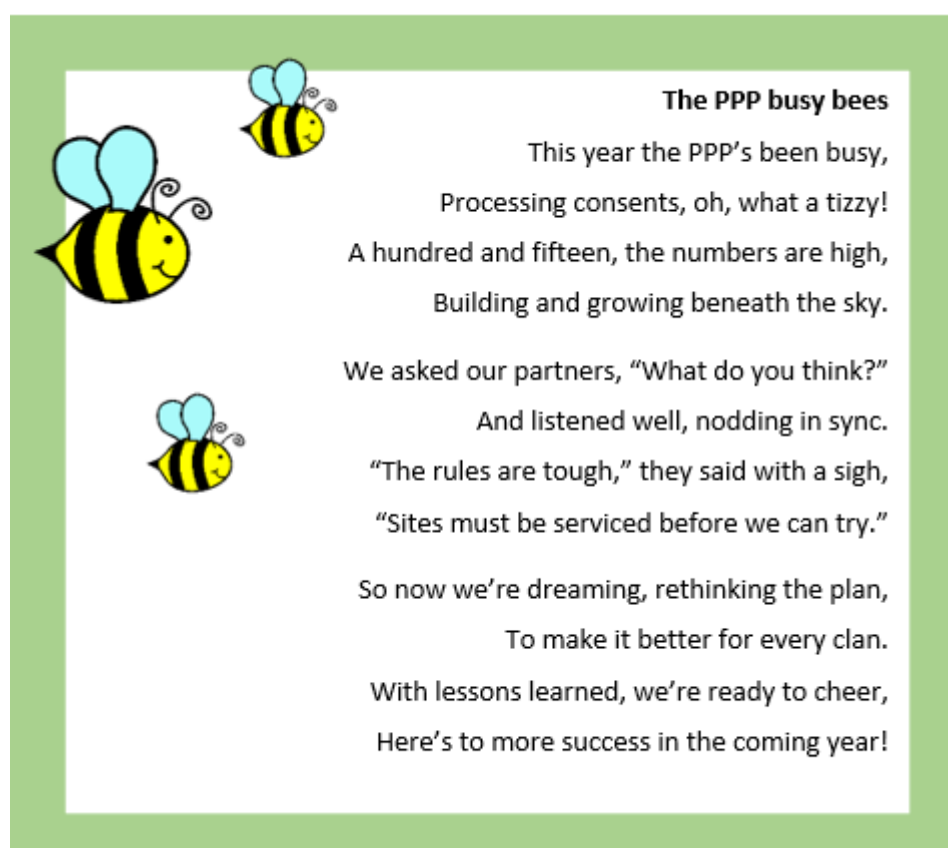
feedback on their experiences.

One key insight has been the challenges posed by the program's criteria, particularly the requirements for sites to be fully serviced and to have s224 or engineering acceptance.

Taking this feedback on board, we are reimagining the program to better support our partners while managing risk effectively.

We're excited about the opportunities ahead and look forward to another successful year working together.

More details to come in the new year.



## Reminders on legislation and building code changes

### Have your say

The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) are currently consulting on the [building code fire safety review](#) to seek feedback on fire safety requirements in the Building Code to offer better protection from fire for people and property. Submissions close on 6 December 2024.

## Legislation

The Building (Earthquake-prone Building Deadlines and Other Matters) Amendment Act came into effect on 26 November 2024. This brings an extension of remediation deadlines for earthquake-prone buildings, strengthens the building warrant of fitness scheme, and introduced other minor technical changes including:

- Clarifying which small heated pools (such as a spa pools) are exempt from the requirement for periodic inspection – that is, small heated pools that have a safety cover that complied at installation, or currently complies, with the Building Code.
- Clarifying that if a certificate of acceptance for building work is issued by a territorial authority, it is not necessary to apply for a building consent for that work.

We wish you all safe and happy holidays!

