

Latest building consent news from Selwyn

In this newsletter

- Holiday season closedown
- Update on our workload – inspection timeframes, processing delays
- H1/AS1 Energy efficiency changes
- Guidance on high country township design load and weathertightness envelope design
- New code of ethics for LBPs
- Building Code updates consultation outcomes

Holiday season closedown

Now is a good time to plan for the holiday season. Our closing and reopening times are:

1. Inspection:

- Last full day of inspections - Wednesday 21 December 2022
- Inspections resume - Wednesday 4 January 2023.

Note: inspections will be at reduced capacity between 4 to 13 January to allow for our team to have a break too.

We'll be back to regular inspection bookings again for bookings made from Thursday 12 January onwards.

2. Office:

- Office closes – midday Friday 23 December 2022
- Office reopens – 8.30am Wednesday 4 January 2023.

Remember the processing statutory clock stops on 20 December 2022 and restarts again on 10 January 2023 in accordance with the definition of 'working day' under the Building Act 2004.

Update on our workload

Inspection timeframes

In general our inspection workload is currently allowing inspection bookings within 48 hours. Please bear in mind that some days this may change due to inspector and contractor availability.

You can continue to help us by:

- ensuring you have completed the work required for each inspection to eliminate the need for reinspection's,

- submitting required documentation early – you know the drill; you don't have to wait for the inspector to request it, and
- being organised – so if things change on site, let us know so we can cancel your inspection and rebook it for a suitable day.

And thank you for your ongoing patience.

Processing workload

At the end of November:

- The average working days for building consents being picked up is currently sitting on 23 working days (note this is an average, with a large number of applications still going well over the 20 day statutory timeframe)
- 40% of applications were processed within 20 working days, with our team processing more applications in November than we received
- We received an increase in applications for fast track consenting from more partners than before – for more details on fast tracking consents see our information on the [professional partnership programme](#)

What are we doing to reduce the timeframes?

We're:

- getting our trainees to help with low risk and complexity projects (although under supervision),
- continuing to use contractors as they are available, although they are also inundated with work from across the country,
- welcomed another new contractor on board,
- working actively with our professional partnership partners to fast track more applications through this route, and
- continuing to push back applications that aren't complete.

H1/AS1 Energy efficiency changes

Residential building consent applications submitted after 3 November 2022 need to meet increased window performance requirements required by the building code under recent amendments to clause H1: Energy efficiency.

This is the first of a 2-step transition that increases requirements. The second transition on 1 May 2023 will complete the full changeover of increased performance requirements which include increased performance requirements for insulation to windows, ceilings, and floors.

What does this mean for my residential application?

The new requirements apply to applications received by Council on or after these dates.

Because the components of the IGU aren't visible at the time of inspection (ie IGU spacer, IGU gas, and low-E glass) to achieve the minimum of R0.37 (refer table above), we will require the specific information with your application and at inspection that:

- details window frame type and glass details on your application, and
- documentation at the inspection that confirms that the windows installed meet the specification of the consented documents.

More information is available [on our website under Building Code Updates](#).

Guidance on high country township design load and weathertightness envelope design

The information on our website on design loads for wind and snow in high country areas has been updated.

- it now also includes considerations on weathertightness envelope design, and
- will assist with the design of buildings for Selwyn District high country townships and general alpine regions.

The aim of the guidance is to clarify our expectations regarding:

- B1 structure and E2 external moisture for these buildings, and
- the minimums that will be accepted.

You'll find this information on our website under [Planning Your Build/Design Considerations](#).

New code of ethics for LBPs

As of 25 October 2022 all licensed building practitioners (LBPs) must comply with the LBP code of ethics that has been transitioned in since October 2021.

The purpose of the code of ethics is to ensure high standards are maintained in the building industry by:

- stating the required standards of ethical behaviour expected of all LBPs, and
- providing the public more confidence that LBPs are reputable and operate ethically.

More information is available on the [LBP website](#).

Building Code updates consultation outcomes

In case you've missed it – there was clear support to make changes to the requirements for two of the proposed changes:

- Lead in plumbing

The Acceptable Solution G12/AS1 will be amended to limit the maximum allowable content of lead permitted in plumbing products, including products such as pipe fittings, valves, taps, mixers, water heaters, and water meters.

There is a long transition period for this change, which the transition period ending on 1 September 2025.

- Hollow-core floors

The deemed to comply pathway in B1/VM1 for the design of the supports for hollow-core floor systems will be removed to help minimise the chance of poorly designed systems being specified in new building work.

This change will take immediate effect when the amended Verification Method B1/VM1 is published along with other documents in November 2023.

The other proposals part of the consultation is being worked on by MBIE with the remaining decisions announced before publishing the Building Code acceptable solutions and verification methods in November 2023.

Have safe and happy holidays, and our best wishes for the New Year!

Selwyn District Council Building team

