

Latest building consent news from Selwyn

In this newsletter

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Changes to our fees and charges

We've made some adjustments to our [fees and charges](#) from 1 July.

Our hourly rates and quality assurance levy have increased. This affects everything that we charge at time and cost. It has also meant an increase to the cost of some of our fixed fees as follows:

- Project information memorandum (PIM) only
- Building consent application for minor works
- Residential swimming pool fencing inspection
- Notice to fix

Please remember:

- The cost of your building consent depends on the type of application, amount of work involved, the level of detail provided, and levies (if applicable) payable to the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, and BRANZ.
- The Quality Assurance levy helps support our BCA accreditation costs and overheads to ensure we continue to meet the accreditation requirements.
- The estimated value of building work needs to be an accurate estimate, considering all actual costs and any additional materials or labour provided free of charge to the project.

Building warrant of fitness (BWOFF) audits

If you own a commercial building with specified systems, you would hopefully have received our email in March, which asked for your feedback on how to structure our fees and charges for annual building warrant of fitness administration and audit functions.

Thank you to those who provided your feedback. It helped:

- determine a fair fee structure that considers businesses with only one specified system, and
- inform further work we need to do with building owners and industry partners to ensure that our role as a council in administering the BWOFF regime is better understood.

Our updated [fee schedule](#) lists the fees and charges as follows based on feedback received:

- Annual base fee for administering a BWOFF (includes a single specified system) – \$150
- Annual variable fee for administering a BWOFF per specified system – \$40

Noting that multiple features (ie a Type 2 and a Type 4 fire alarm system within one compliance schedule) is under the same specified system and recognised as one charge.

Please note that compliance schedules, compliance schedule statements, amendments and administration involved in these, and on-site BWOFF auditing, continue to be charged at actual time and cost basis.

When and how will a BWOFF be carried out?

As a territorial authority our role is to proactively review a certain percentage of buildings with BWOFFs per year. We decide how often we carry out audits, and this will be likely to be on an annual to five year cycle. The frequency is determined by the perceived risk for the use of that building. This means that high risk, high occupancy buildings may be carried out annually, while low-occupancy industrial buildings less frequently.

BWOFF audits will be carried out as a desktop audit, or a combination desktop and onsite audit. Our team will contact you to arrange a time if they need to carry out an onsite audit. You will receive a copy of the audit findings.

More information on BWOFF's, including your role, independently qualified persons' (IQP) role, and our role, are covered on the [Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment \(MBIE\) website](#).

Update on our workload

Inspection timeframes

Our inspections are currently around 3 days' timeframe from booking. Please note that some days this timeframe may expand out due to school holidays and winter ills and chills.

Processing timeframes

At the end of June:

- The average working days for building consents being issued is 16 days (note this is an average)
- 67% of applications were processed within 20 working days

Note:

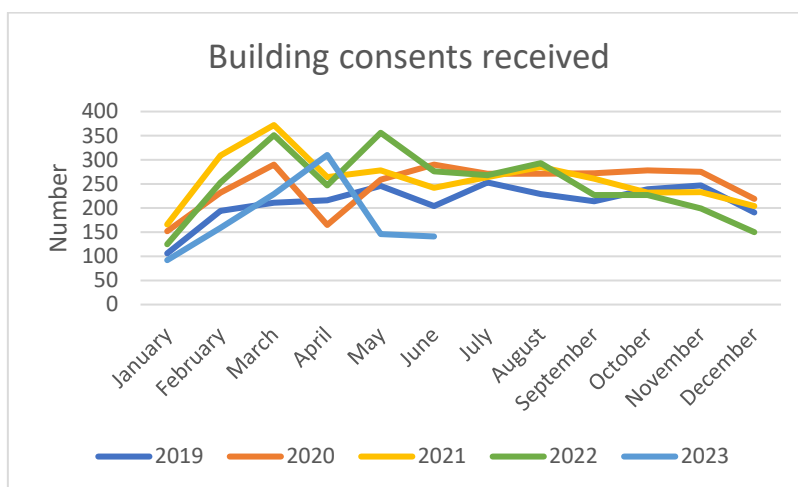
- The bubble of applications received at the end of April due to the new H1 insulation requirements from 1 May affected our timeframes last month, but we expect to resolve over the next month

- New commercial consents are being processed generally within 24 working days

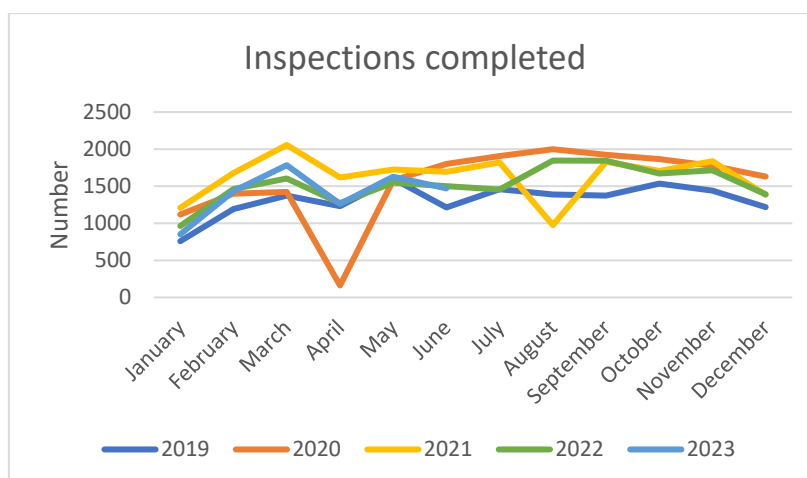
Note that timeframes depend on the quality of your application.

A summary of how things are tracking

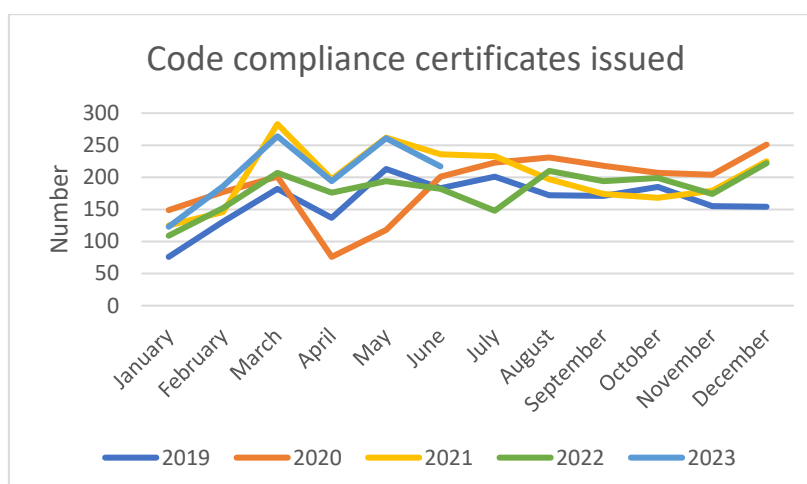
We had a peak this year in April as a large number of applications came through before the changes to H1 came into effect on 1 May 2023. The last two months have plateaued off.



Our inspection workload however is still sitting relatively high as the building consents issued earlier are being constructed.



Which in turn has increased the number of code compliance certificates being issued as buildings are completed.



Guidance on wing wall construction

Wing walls are a design feature that we've been seeing more of in new builds as a feature. However, designers aren't always getting the details quite right.

So to help out we've put some guidance together on [designing wing wall construction without specific engineering design](#).

The guidance has been developed for designers for what to consider when detailing foundations, wall structures and the connecting roof structures for wing walls when using NZS 3604:2011 as their means of compliance.

It doesn't apply to foundations for specific engineering design (SED) slabs such as raft slabs. Specific engineering design (SED) overrules this guidance where there is SED for a project for the wingwall foundation and/or wall structures.

Licensed building practitioners (LBPs) & other trades practitioners

We acknowledge that things change on site all the time, and that schedules change too. And as part of that, this may lead to changes in who the LBPs are that are carrying out the restricted building work, or other licensed trades.

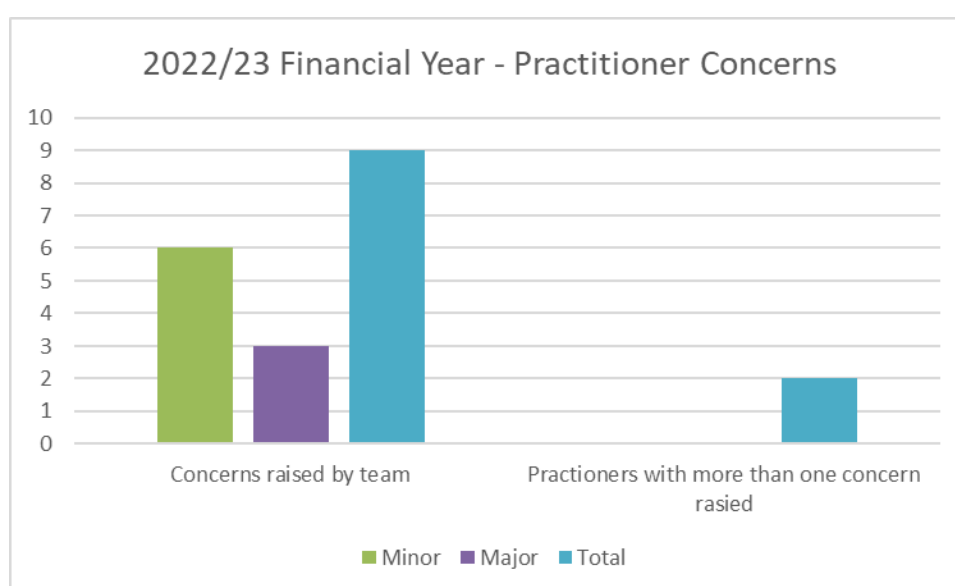
So please let us know if you have changes in who your LBPs or trades are. This helps to:

- avoid delays with inspections and acceptance of required documents, and
- ensure a complete record of who was involved in the building work for the homeowner.

Expect to be asked for LBP or trade details at the time of booking an inspection involving LBP or trade work.

We take our role as a building consent authority seriously and expect trade professionals to uphold to their relevant professional body's code of ethics. Where we have concerns about the capability or professionalism of a trade practitioner, they will be added to our building practitioner complaint register, and depending on the seriousness of the issue, submit a complaint to the relevant professional body.

The graph below provides an overview of the concerns raised by staff over the past year, noting major concerns are raised as complaints with the relevant professional body.



Product substitution – let us know

Recently you may have seen in the media a story about an LBP that substituted roofing cladding that wasn't approved by us as the building consent authority. This led to a complaint made by us to the LBP board.

So, this is a timely reminder to seek approval before substituting products on site, or you may well find that it comes back to haunt you later. Remember – if you substitute a product it must meet the building code requirements.

The responsibility sits with you to verify that the building system component is suitable for use (in all respects) – which means you should:

- make sure it meets the required performance levels from the supplier (ie that the component performs the same as the original specification),
- check with the building consent authority that they will accept the change, and
- see if there are any implications around warranties provided by the original manufacturer or supplier of the specified system if you are switching components in specified building systems.

Check our [website information on product substitution](#) to find out more.