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The Dilemma: Legislative upgrades and conservation

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NZIBS PRESIDENT Darryl August

Little gestures can go a long way

Firstly, thanks to everyone who attended the March Training Day. The speaker lineup was great and I hope everyone enjoyed the content.

A special thanks to all of our speakers and of course our presenter Peter Wolfkamp for donating his time yet again. For myself, I found the speakers insightful, and the variety of subjects certainly made for an entertaining day.

Our keynote speaker Simon Bridges had me worried, turning up at the last minute, but I think the members found his speech quite refreshing and humorous. I will be meeting with Simon in the next few weeks to see if there are joint initiatives our two organisations could be working on together and help promote Building Surveying to a wider audience.

I also want to thank our two main sponsors, Winstone Wallboards and Resene Construction, for their ongoing support and attendance at the event. As always, we continue to work closely with our sponsors and look forward to other events throughout the year.

It was good news to hear that Winstone Wallboards have been able to cease the order allocation process and resume normal ordering processes, albeit I suspect the demand on supply has probably slowed as financial pressures start to impact the industry. We can only hope that any financial pressures caused by increased inflation are short-lived and do not have an impact on too many businesses.

Already this year we have seen a number of construction firms placed into liquidation. As Contract Administrators, we play an important part in the industry to ensure that projects are administered in a fair and reasonable manner. For approx. 20 years, the fluctuation clause (12.8), under NZS3910, has generally been excluded from construction contracts relating to remedial works. With the increased pressure on the supply chain, and merchants unable to provide secure pricing for any length of time, the inclusion of 12.8 will assist in the success of projects, albeit someone needs to pay for the fluctuation increase.

I recently heard of a Contractor who had an agreed fixed contract rate of \$60/hr for a carpenter and is paying that carpenter \$58/hr, up from \$48. Contractors do not stay in business by just covering costs and this situation is the start of a downward spiral for both the Contractor and the project if it is not addressed, particularly if the Contractor is forced into liquidation.

I recently spoke with a Contractor to understand how they see the market and received the following feedback,

- Timber pricing is set to drop. The export market has slowed and despite the recent weather events, there is an ample supply of timber in New Zealand.
- Alternative plasterboard suppliers have dropped pricing. Apparently, they stockpiled too much and now need to move the product.
- Aluminium supply cost will increase which will mean further increases for products such as window and door joinery.
- Labour is by far the biggest risk item with significant cost increases, as highlighted above.
- At the moment, the Hawke's Bay rebuild has not fully impacted the market as they are still at the assessment and scoping stages, however once the rebuild kicks in we may see pressure on the supply chain.

The Contractor I spoke to noted that the most significant issue they face is the mental health of staff and sub-contractors. They have had situations where subcontractors have essentially turned off their phones and refused to communicate despite having contracts to complete work and sighting the fact that they simply cannot cope.

This echoes some of the content that Lance Burdett covered in his presentation at the March Training Day in respect of the impact of lockdowns. As leaders in the industry and generally leading project teams, we need to ensure we portray a positive environment and think about, not just the project control group, but also the entire workforce. Little gestures like telling someone they're doing a good job go a long way.

NZIBS are committed to mental health improvements in our industry and with the help of the members we can make some good progress. Any suggestions from the members in respect of improvements are welcomed.

With the March Training Day now completed, we switch our focus to preparing for the Annual Conference in September in Nelson and look forward to catching up with our members then. Throughout the year we will continue with our webinar series along with chapter meetings in the regions.

EDITORIAL



EDITOR Victoria Richardson Executive Committee – Special Projects Chair specialprojects@buildingsurveyors.co.nz

We are well versed in rolling up our sleeves

The start of 2023 has certainly made it a year to remember, and not for good reasons.

The devastation inflicted on the North Island has been truly horrific to see. For those directly impacted by the floods and Cyclone Gabrielle, our thoughts are with you.

In total contrast to the wet weather in the north, the South Island has been tormented by drought conditions, only seeing the relief in recent days with the arrival of some rain.

It is clear we are not ready for these extreme weather events. Becoming ready will require change which comes at a cost, and it won't happy quickly. We're all now in this strange waiting room, waiting for change and bracing for the next disaster.

As Building Surveyors, we are not disaster shy. Whilst we wish these things didn't happen, we are well versed in rolling up our sleeves and getting stuck in when they do. For those involved in the recovery, we know your expertise will be a great help. Stay safe.

Included in this issue is a link to an excellent BRANZ Bulletin with recommendations on repairing a home after a flood. If we can't prevent floods, there is some comfort in at least knowing how best to manage the aftermath.

Also in this issue, we also have articles from building performance and health and safety specialists. I'm sure you'll all find their insights informative, and we are grateful for their contribution and for sharing their unique perspectives.

From everybody at The Journal, we hope you enjoy this issue.



RUTH WILLIAMS BEng PhD CEng MCIBSE DIRECTOR OF INSIDE OUT ruth@insideout.co.nz

Building performance: H1 and on and on...

Building Performance Engineering is a critical, but often misunderstood, area of building design. Ruth Williams, of Inside Out, shares with us her insights on changes to H1 and explains what building performance engineering is, and how it can help us build better, healthier buildings.

What is Building Performance Engineering?

Building performance doesn't hold the building up or make it weathertight but is involved in pretty much everything else. Designs for the form, the structure, the facades, the materials and the building services all impact on the internal conditions and affect the thermal environment, moisture management, indoor air quality and light levels. The overall effect is measured by energy and carbonefficient, operable, and durable building together with success in comfort, health, productivity, and satisfaction for the people using it.

People often ask me what I mean when I say that I'm a building performance engineer and, after so many years, I still stop in my tracks. The difficulty in description is that my discipline is at the intersection of so many others.

The most important people, but also those hardest for the building performance engineer to talk with, are at either end of the development process – the owner or developer and the occupants. Then we have the design team, consenting, suppliers and contractors, building surveyors, project managers and quantity surveyors, and finally, facilities management whose unenviable task is to take what is provided and try to make it work.

Through all of this and at every stage, building performance engineers can identify or confirm outcomes from the integrated degradation to the building. When the two are fitted to each other we get a building that works.

Why do we still have 'bad' buildings in 2023? What are we doing wrong?

One of the key building blocks of building performance is that every building can be better. We've had industry-wide and sometimes global failures over the years –

Building performance doesn't hold the building up or make it weathertight but is involved in pretty much everything else.

system of options to evaluate the ways in which a building and its occupants affect each other. I think we can all agree that when people use their building it should be a resource, not a constraint and that our occupation shouldn't cause think about weathertightness, seismic design and fire safety – and we are in the midst of others currently, whether we recognise it or not. The fears and challenges I hear about most often are to do with condensation, overheating,



indoor air quality, climate change, and energy and carbon efficiency.

Considering what we are doing wrong, I think there are several very general issues:

- Building Code does not a design make – we have a performancebased code that simply lays out a legal minimum (would you be content if your car was just about legal?)
- Expectations if we measured self-worth by the demands of our buildings, we'd send ourselves off pretty quickly to assertiveness classes
- Cookie cutter design doesn't work – just because it was what was done on another building doesn't make it right for this one
- Silo design typical design processes mean that disciplines often focus purely on their own design without sufficient reference to other disciplines, and integration of ideas and preferred outcomes
- New Zealand isn't actually unique – reinventing the wheel is not efficient and there is plenty we can incorporate from overseas knowledge

The future is coming – much as we would like to hide, recent weather emergencies, global resource issues, climate change response, and international economies mean that we have to be prepared

How can building surveyors and designers help?

Chatting with building surveyors, I realise a lot can be about 'will it do the job?', 'is it degraded (or even safe)?', or 'how do we look after it to extend its useful life?'. Other disciplines are equally focussed on their specialist outcomes. Through the lifetime of a building, the expertise of each discipline is vital to a long lasting and useful building but we do have to learn how to integrate the right expertise to make our designs better.

Communicate and question

One of the best things anyone can do for the success of our buildings is to spot potential issues and opportunities and make sure you share your thoughts with those with the right skills to deal with or take advantage of them.

Recognising how superior outcomes can be delivered in

the process of meeting a known problem might just become your forte. For example, think about how projects such as seismic strengthening or watertightness remediation can allow for thermal upgrades during the works. Even replacing a façade allows for the consideration of glazing performance choices and ventilation options.

As you go about your role, you're bound to see problems that there must be a cause for. Think about possible causes (they are often indicated by a pattern of building behaviour) – they could be due to orientation to the sun, insulation and façade choices, heat or moisture becoming trapped, uncontrolled air flows – the list goes on. It's not your job to know all about any of these things but you can be a part of making sure unintended consequences are kept to a minimum.

I'm going to draw on the approach of the security industry here and remind everyone of the useful catchphrases we can make work for us. A campaign in the United States of America uses "If You See Something, Say Something[®]" and the United Kingdom version is "See It. Say It. Sorted."

Find building performance advice

So, how do you know that you will have a building that works? The first thing is knowing what your answer should be. What do you need for your occupants and from your building? Accessing building performance guidance as early in the project as possible is a huge benefit in the design of durable and energy efficient buildings that are comfortable and productive – and very possibly less costly to build or maintain.

Whether you have a new design or an existing building, it's always good to have evidence-based advice supported by state-of-theart simulation and monitoring. Overarching questions can include:

- Which materials and systems to specify, where and why?
- How well do the designs for the building structure, materials and services integrate?
- How to consider success for the occupants' comfort, health, and productivity?
- Is the building fit for purpose?
- Has money been invested in the right things?
- Will your expectations and intent be reflected in the final building?
- Can the design be futureproofed?
- Will the building be affected by its occupants or how it is run?

When we plan for successful occupancy and a building which will stand the test of time, we optimise systems and designs to meet the function of the building and the prevailing loads. These are caused by a combination of the climate and occupancy and can be met using the best arrangement of materials, plant, features and controls. The important thing is to use the right ones in the right place at the right time and that is unique to your building.

Use models and simulation

Modelling and simulation, or in-use monitoring, gives you a way to anticipate and demonstrate building performance. It makes it easier to understand the complex system that a building offers and allows you to balance outcomes and match them to your unique situation and constraints. A range of scenarios can be tested to identify the relative impact of design or remediation choices including:

- Fabric performance and nonstructural façade design for insulation, membranes, glazing, shading, thermal mass, and openings
- Natural and mechanical ventilation and operation protocols



 HVAC and passive thermal management opportunities and controls

Outcomes can be evaluated and weighed for:

- Operational energy and carbon efficiency
- Indoor air quality and ventilation efficacy
- Moisture management

 interstitial/internal
 condensation and mould risk
- Solar gain and daylight availability
- Occupant thermal comfort
 and overheating risk

Simulation can enable you to undertake true 'value' engineering and ascertain building code compliance (H1 – energy efficiency, G4 – natural ventilation, G7 – daylighting, E3 – internal moisture). Dependent on the study, building performance engineers typically use dynamic thermal simulation, hygrothermal modelling and daylight raytracing.

In existing buildings, alongside simulation, we can also use thermographic imaging for fault finding; environmental monitoring for thermal comfort, light and indoor air quality; and occupant surveys, post-occupancy evaluation and building wellness checks to see how everything works.

Keep up to date

Many people will be aware of the recent changes to NZBC Clause H1 (Energy Efficiency). Although there has been a lot of apprehension across the industry about implementing these changes, we are predictably starting to get a handle on it now.

H1 compliance is relatively straightforward, although can require a lot of detailed information about the design. There are three methods for compliance that have constraints on their application - the schedule method is for the least energy-efficient risky buildings; the calculation method allows more flexibility; and the modelling method means that you can have the most choice in construction element R-values. Because we have a performance-based code, we don't have to stick to the schedule R-values as long as our proposed building is more efficient than a reference building. This is where a building performance engineer can help you.

Further to the recent H1 and G7 changes, expect the building code to change again to become more integrated in the next handful of years – H1 (Energy Efficiency), G4 (Ventilation), E3 (Internal Moisture), G5 (Indoor Environment) are under holistic review for redevelopment.

There are various other building performance-related regulations and frameworks such as the Carbon Neutral Government Programme that has been set up to accelerate the reduction of emissions within the public sector; and district, regional or unitary plans that have a variety of constraints on building development across Aotearoa.

Keep an eye on the future for the implementation of a new government carbon reduction programme called Building for Climate Change. It is aimed at new buildings and will delineate allowable carbon emissions from both embodied and operational sources. We expect to hear more about this delayed programme in early 2024. Watch out for more news.

The Dilemma: Legislative upgrades and conservation

Conservation is about preserving and protecting. Bringing buildings in line with current code requirements is also about preserving and protecting. Yet despite the common goal, the two are usually in conflict with one another.



It is this conflict that often relegates historic buildings into the 'too hard' or 'too expensive' basket and they become lost to time and decay.

The Chateau Tongariro Hotel has recently been in the news after announcing it was closing its doors permanently in February. Whilst a detailed account of the reasons behind the closure is yet to be made publicly available, representatives of the hotel have said a recent seismic assessment has played a part in the decision.

The future for this Category 1 Historic Place now seems uncertain and it risks becoming another example of lost heritage. Sadly, Chateau Tongariro is not alone. Upgrade costs are a concern to many historic building owners, and it is a dilemma without an easy fix. ►

From vibrant asset to



functionally obsolete in a generation

Building Codes evolve to make our built environment better, and we upgrade buildings to make them better. For heritage buildings, better can come at a hefty cost if we don't learn to balance conservation with upgrading.

Minimum intervention is a wellestablished approach taken in conservation. It seeks to prevent the removal or alteration of parts of a building that have cultural or social value. Building code upgrades do not play nice with minimum intervention.

We cannot expect a historic

building to jump in a modern legislative Tardis and pop out the other side unscathed. Improvements to seismic performance, fire protection and accessibility are all important considerations for a building. However, they do leave a mark. That mark may be a steel brace system that cannot be hidden, or it could be far worse – an unusable building.

It is often the cost of bringing a building up to an acceptable standard that stops owners in their tracks. If they can't afford to make the building safer, the building can become functionally obsolete in its current form. This is a terrible outcome for a building and means it can no longer serve its intended function. When a building meets this fate, the outlook is quite bleak.

Ghost buildings

When a historic building becomes functionally obsolete, it will typically turn into a ghost building that is no longer used. This is usually the most devastating phase of any building's life.

If a building isn't being used, it isn't making money or providing some other sort of benefit to the owner. Understandably, the desire to spend money on the maintenance of an empty building is often not there. This leads to a lack of upkeep which usually results in deterioration and decay. Leaks develop, water damages the internal fabric, and the layers of craftsmanship are gradually reduced to a dilapidated mess.

If a historic building once seemed uneconomical in respect of upgrades, the now dilapidated state only compounds the issues around cost. Once a building becomes dilapidated, it moves from needing to be conserved to needing to be restored. This is often a lot more expensive than normal conservation work.

Striking a balance and establishing priorities

If we want to stop historic buildings from falling into disrepair or losing them altogether, we need to make sure they keep being used. If we are to keep using them, we need to find ways to strike a balance between code upgrades and conservation. This requires compromise, and it starts with getting to know the true social value of a building and understanding the risks that may exist without upgrades.

Heritage buildings communicate more than just their age. They link us to our history, traditions, beliefs and so much more. When we are thinking about upgrades or conservation, we need to know what is important about a particular building. Is it the architectural form? Is it the function of the building? Is it the unique carpentry inside?

By getting to grips with what the social value of a building is, we can establish some parameters on what should be conserved. Similarly, by understanding where a building sits in terms of the current code requirements, we can also establish priorities for upgrades. You don't get to see the potential solutions though until you fully understand the problem and the priorities – what needs to be saved and what needs to be improved?

The compromise

Whilst all options for upgrading and conserving a historic building have a price tag, compromises can lead to solutions. If a building has been gutted inside and nothing original remains, a façade retention approach may provide a solution to seismic requirements. If accessibility is an issue, perhaps the unfortunate looking 1980s extension, which is of no social value, could be sacrificed to make an accessible entrance.

With funding and the right team, the need to upgrade a building in line with current code requirements does not have to be a kiss of death. There are many examples of historic buildings being adapted to secure their continued use.

The Mason Bros building in Auckland is an example of adaptive reuse. The architects took a tired old character warehouse and gave it a new lease of life with a new use. Some of the original building was demolished, but notable features of historic and architectural importance were retained.

Keeping the past current

Legislation might judge our historic buildings in terms of compliance with building codes, but we will also face judgement if we get things wrong. We have a limited amount of heritage buildings in New



Zealand, and future generations will judge us harshly if we allow their inheritance to slip through our fingers.

For most historic buildings it is the ongoing use of that building, and the continued presence of people within its walls, that gives it the greatest chance of survival. We need to keep having conversations about balancing the needs of conservation with requirements to upgrade and looking for solutions through compromise. This is how we can give historic buildings a fighting chance.

INDUSTRY UPDATE

INDUSTRY UPDATE

BRANZ Bulletin: Restoring a home after flood damage

We've all noticed flooding becoming more frequent and the sad reality is New Zealand is simply not prepared for these events.

When we're building new properties, we can certainly design with flooding in mind, but what about all of our existing buildings? Whilst some may never be rebuilt, some will, and we need to know how best to do that.

BRANZ has thankfully been looking at how to deal with the aftermath of flooding and Bulletin 666 provides a detailed breakdown of the steps to be taken at each stage – from the immediate aftermath to the repair stage.

Whilst this bulletin is focused on restoring a home after flooding, a lot of the information can be applied to commercial properties. It's definitely worth taking a look at if you are working on flood-damaged buildings.

BU666 Restoring a home after flood damage (2021)



This bulletin is intended to assist with the putting right that is so important after a flood. It covers health and safety considerations, tips for cleaning up inside and outside, drying out the house and repairs. It does not cover making residential properties resilient to flooding.'

https://www.branz.co.nz/pubs/bulletins/ bu666/



MOLLY PUDDICK LT MCGUINNESS MollyP@mcguinness.co.nz

Are we safe yet?

The Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 (HWSA) has been in place for a few years now. So, is it doing what it was intended to do? Are we safe yet?

Molly Puddick shares her views on what has been achieved since the HSWA was implemented, and how consultants can play their part in improving safety. Molly oversees health and safety on a large busy construction site in Wellington, and this gives her a unique perspective on health and safety matters.

The HSWA brought accountability to ALL parties involved in the work. This saw the creation of the 'PCBU' (Person Conducting a Business or Undertaking) and its new application to the work front. Responsibility under this Act is now shared over all PCBUs across a project. From the plumbing companies to the plant manufacturers, and then all the way up to the building owner – everyone has a shared interest in health and safety in its many varying forms.

The effect of this has definitely been noticed. Clients, as of 2015/2016, have had an interest in health and safety in their buildings. Currently on most commercial projects building owners (whether privately owned companies or publicly owned) are heavily involved in maintaining and promoting health and safety. Companies such as main contractors are held accountable to the same extent as which they hold their sub-contractors responsible for safety.

Are there any aspects of the Act that have fallen short or would benefit from changes?

It's hard to pinpoint which part of HWSA has fallen short for our fallen workers. What we do know is that the number of deaths at work has not decreased – or at least not enough. However, it is hard to tell whether or not HWSA itself is the problem or the lack of our 'Regulator'.

As someone on the 'coalface' of construction, and a past in large-scale demolition, I'm well aware of the ever-growing distance between WorkSafe and the work site. I have been a part of notifying WorkSafe of serious injuries and incidents. In all of the notifications I have had a part in, WorkSafe has not once investigated. If you speak to anyone else in the industry, 90% of them will also tell you they have not seen anyone from WorkSafe on their sites. It is also in the statistics, there were around 30 prosecutions to the approximately 50-something deaths and 25,695 injuries resulting in more than one week off of work. In all fairness, a percentage was probably reasonably explained resulting in no prosecution, but for how long can we continue to use operator error as an excuse?

It will still take time to see if the Act itself has fallen short. But for now, I believe that we truly will not know until we can see it enforced.

What would you like consultants to be mindful of? Thinking about the design, construction, and maintenance of buildings in the context of health and safety.

Unbeknownst to most on the 'coalface', consultants play a huge role in the health in health and safety

Asbestos is a great example of where product specification can change life expectancy. Yes, the law did change the ability to use the product, but the health effects were known decades before these were put into effect. Before the law changed, some chose to stop using asbestos in their buildings because of the health risks associated.

onsite.

Here we see, product selection on the designer's part likely saved countless lives.

The agricultural industry is another great example of where product selection can increase life expectancy and health outcomes. The Round-Up controversy of the 2010s showed the world that manufacturers will manufacture, regardless of the effect on human health. Looking back, if someone on the product selection team decided "Hey let's try something without Glyphosate" years before the ever-growing tragedy, the health effects now known to those working in the industry, could have been greatly decreased.

Product selection is where consultants can affect the health outcome of our workers onsite. We do not need to wait for a law to change to save the health of the workers. Consultants can lead the way in the use of products that are safer alternatives to their predecessors. A perfect example is the use of some adhesives (glues). The safety data sheets (SDS) of some adhesive products specify that they cannot be used in non-ventilated areas as well as having no more than four hours of exposure (due to an increased risk of cancer). Easy enough? No. It is someone's job to lay pipework for 10 hours a day. This product is being used for 10 hours a day even though it contravenes the SDS.

cancer rates to increase or the law to change to improve health outcomes for those in the workforce.

What can we do as individuals and organisations to make construction safer?

As an individual, look to see what is within your power to make construction safer. This will vary from individual to individual, but every person has a part to play.

Starting with our guys on the tools, you have one of the key roles in promoting health and safety onsite. You can influence the culture and promote a change in attitude to safety within your team. This could be from promoting the use of PPE, encouraging the guys to report hazards, and engaging with your management teams to be present on site.

> Off the tools, if you're working in a management position, try and get involved. Your presence alone promotes a safety culture and allows our teams to ask questions or report hazards in a less formal way. Often at times, the formalities such as paper-based incident reporting discourage workers from reporting hazards.

As an organisation, make safety easy

and simple. The constant inflow of paperwork and politics is slowing the safety culture change and actively causing animosity toward it. If you speak to an older builder about modern health and safety, they will say "it's bulls---, it's all just paperwork now". As an organisation, yes you will need the paperwork – but simplify it so the workers can equally be involved in processes such as reporting and proposed policy change. They are the ones who are ultimately affected by it.



But why? Because the consultants specified the use of this product and not an alternative. On top of this, the pipework is probably behind the programme due to lastminute changes by the consultants – though it will still need to meet the original deadline. The option to use the product safely is no longer available.

But what can you do? Investigate the alternatives. Like asbestos and Round-Up, you can mandate safer alternatives as a consultant. You don't need to wait for the



VICTORIA RICHARDSON Director of Copper Seed Ltd Victoria.richardson@copperseed.co.nz

No contractors allowed

I have the privilege of being part of the Introduction to Building Surveying lecture on the Building Surveying Module of the University of Auckland Property Degree. As part of my talk, I touch on equality – I'm female but, for me, this has never been an issue in my career. Although, I have been on the receiving end of some surprising discrimination.

Regardless of what the statistics say, I've never felt like a minority. Men and women have supported me throughout my time as a Building Surveyor, and I have always felt our shared enthusiasm for the built environment is what unites us. That said, I have experienced some discrimination in my career – but it might not be the kind you would expect.

We all know Building Surveying can be a dirty job at times, and I don't know many surveyors who haven't suffered a wardrobe incident whilst doing an inspection at some stage or another. For me, I find abseiling is particularly brutal on my clothes, so I wear normal tradie-style gear to keep me comfortable and to limit the chance of a wardrobe malfunction when my backside snags a piece of aluminium.

Contractor attire may be suitable workwear for some tasks, but it can create some unexpected issues. Here are a couple of examples:

Bathroom breaks

On one building I worked on, I asked the receptionist on the floor we were transiting through if I could use the bathroom. She told me they didn't like contractors using the toilets. This wasn't the first time I had experienced this, so I simply set off to find an alternative bathroom.

About two weeks later, I was in the same reception waiting to deliver a presentation on my inspection findings to the landlord of the building. I was wearing a fancy outfit. I asked the same receptionist if she could let people know I would be back in a few minutes and was just off to find a bathroom. She told me I was welcome to use their bathroom. "Really? I wasn't allowed when I was here a couple of weeks ago - I looked like a contractor that day though." I could see the penny dropping in the receptionist's brain, and I like to think the experience may have prompted a change in their discriminatory bathroom policy. Incidentally, the bathroom was not even that nice.

Riding lifts

Abseiling gear is heavy. Lifts rarely get us all the way to the roof so we usually have a few flights of stairs to deal with when we get as far as a lift will take us. On some buildings, the contractor isn't allowed to take the lift to the top floor though.

In some buildings, the top floor tenant will not permit contractors to transit through their floor, from the lift to the stair core. In those buildings, we have to get out on a lower floor and endure an extra flight of stairs.

It seems ironic that we have to submit very detailed health and safety information to Facilities Managers to prove we will do the job safely, and yet making us lift heavy gear upstairs unnecessarily is totally fine.

The worst example of this was on a newly finished building. The façade installation team were still completing work by abseil and I was checking on the work. From the moment the tenants moved in, we were not allowed to use the lift after 7:30am. My basic PPE weighs over one-third of my weight – when you are not on ropes, you feel every gram of it. The contractor and I had to climb seven flights of stairs for each abseil drop, simply because people in suits didn't want to share a lift with us.

Personally, I find it odd in this day and age, where we are so focused on equality and being publicly opposed to discrimination, these types of rules are allowed to exist. Sometimes, I don't think it even occurs to the policymakers that their rules are discriminatory. What astounds me, even more, is the contractors I work with are so used to being treated like this, they just accept it. I have never seen a single one of them push back on these things. They just politely acknowledge the offensive instruction they have been given and carry on. I find their grace and professionalism truly remarkable.

I believe we all deserve to be treated with respect at work. Whether you are working in a building as a contractor, or whether it is your permanent office space. We have become complacent in our policymaking, and I believe there are a lot of organisations out there that would benefit from taking a fresh look at them. If a company is genuinely committed to equality and doesn't want to discriminate, it should practice what they preach with contractors and not just its staff.

The good news is, not all buildings present these challenges. We often encounter lovely courteous people who treat us like equals. A couple of weeks ago, a lady came to the window whilst we were abseiling and offered us lollies. Unfortunately, there were no openable sashes, but the gesture was appreciated, and it made us smile.

I'm not sure what the answer to this issue is, but I believe it warrants some discussion. From my experience, Building Surveyors are a pretty grounded bunch. So, perhaps we can help bridge the gap between the policymakers and the contractors. And, if we see these unfair policies, point them out – it might make a difference.

GIB

March update

David Thomas

Winstone Wallboards – General Manager

Earlier this month, we announced that our GIB® plasterboard will move away from the supply allocation model that has been in place since last year, with this coming into effect from 3 April.

I am sure you'll agree that it is great to have supply back to a balanced state and to have good stock levels re-established.

I would like to thank you all, our customers, as well as the wider New Zealand building industry, for your patience and understanding over these challenging times."

You can read the full announcement at https://www.gib.co.nz/gibnews/gib-update/march-update-from-david-thomas/.

New Zealand Sign Language Week – 8th to 14th May 2023

New Zealand Sign Language Week is just around the corner. For anybody keen on learning to sign, there is an abundance of free resources available through the New Zealand Sign Language Week website – **https://nzslweek.org.nz/**





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Taking a peek under the NZIBS membership hood

Richard Cakar, Director of building consultancy practice Hexa, and Kieran Hindley share insights into what it takes to become a Registered Building Surveyor and what drew them to the industry.

What is a building surveyor?

KH: A building surveyor's role is to provide expert advice to clients (including homeowners, commercial and other construction professionals) throughout the various stages of a building's life cycle.

This can range from providing advice for material selection and compliance during the design stage, throughout the construction stage in a monitoring or management/contract administrative role, implementing maintenance plans, assisting with legal disputes and contractual tenancy agreements, reporting before residential and commercial building transactions, carrying out an assessment for defects and condition of a building and advising on how to remediate a building.

RC: As Kieran's explanation shows, the role of a building surveyor is really varied which makes it difficult to describe in a concise manner, especially to those outside of the construction industry. I often describe building surveyors as problem solvers for buildingrelated issues, but in fact, the role is so much more than that! I sometimes wonder whether the building "surveyor" title is slightly outdated as whilst surveys are still a core service offering, particularly for existing building stock, building surveyors often provide more proactive advisory roles such as contract administration or design input. Whilst a broader "building and project consultant" type title may be more fitting for a number of building surveyors, I am not convinced that this will go any further in recognising the wide range of services that can be offered by building surveyors.

What got you interested in building surveying?

KH: I had an interest in and recognised the opportunities in the construction industry, however, it is the project variety, widespread skillset, and flexibility that attracted me the most to building surveying.

RC: Whilst variety makes it difficult to define the role of a building surveyor, it was also the main drawcard for me in joining the profession. In a typical week, you can go from negotiating lease covenants on behalf of a landlord or tenant to flying a drone over a building searching for roof defects.

What route did you/are you taking to become registered?

KH: I enrolled with the NZIBS as a Transitional Member when I started my building surveyor career



in New Zealand. The transitional membership period includes completing class-based and sitebased modules (for the NZIBS Diploma in Building Surveying), quarterly mentorship reports with a Registered Member and a final interview which includes a presentation on a chosen case study.

RC: I also followed the transitional membership route to becoming a Registered Building Surveyor with NZIBS. I then became a mentor to help other surveyors, like Kieran, navigate through the pathway to becoming registered.

Why do you think registration is important?

KH: Achieving registration with the NZIBS shows that your peers believe that you have the required technical knowledge, promote and act in a way that shows trust in the industry, and provides confidence to those whom you will work with and for.

What has surprised you about the registration process (as a candidate and/or mentor)?

KH: The amount of in-depth knowledge that you have to show along with the hard work and consistency it takes to ensure that you are on track with the process.

RC: There is no doubt that you have to be organised and accurate to not only manage your transitional period but also to present a successful final submission to become a Registered Building Surveyor. There is a lot that goes into it, from completing the training modules, maintaining a diary record and allocating time to each of the required fields of experience, and carrying out regular catch-ups with your mentor to check in on your development. All of this puts you in good stead for your career, as communication, organisation, and accuracy are vital skills when acting as a building surveyor.

What have you learned from one another? – either through the registration process or working together generally.

KH: From Richard, and other work colleagues, I have learned the key principles and skills required to be a building surveyor. ►

A competent building surveyor can review documentation (plans, leases, literature, etc) and extract key information, methodically undertake any type of inspection to gather notes and photographs, produce well-written reports, and be able to communicate with a range of people from other professionals to clients. Technical knowledge and experience will always improve as long as a building surveyor has good fundamentals in place.

RC: Since becoming a mentor, I have found that the attitude of a candidate makes all the difference. A positive can-do mindset and eagerness to learn reflects really well on the surveyor, and I encourage Transitional Members to be proactive, ask plenty of questions and always look to further develop their understanding and skillset. This goes a long way in preparing for the final interview stage where you are showcasing yourself as a competent professional.

Where do you see the building surveying role going in the future? - nationally and internationally.

KH: I think sustainability will become a new area in an already widespread discipline, which is likely to be pushed along with policies set by domestic and international governments. Surveyors will also have to be aware of new technologies that arise and be eager to implement and take advantage of them in the way they work.

RC: I am really interested in the rapid development of technology and how that can evolve the role of a building surveyor. We are already seeing drones limit health and safety and cost implications that come with gaining access to roofs etc, apps that can significantly reduce reporting time and even the development of mobile phones which now readily come with 100x

zoom functions that enable the visual inspection of areas that may not have always been possible.

What advice/tips would you give to candidates?

KH & RC: Modules – We would recommend attending and completing the modules as soon as possible as they provide a well-rounded base of knowledge and understanding which can immediately assist you in your workplace. This includes surveyors from overseas as the modules provide New Zealand-specific knowledge. over your transitional period (and beyond).

Final interview – Prepare. Prepare. Prepare. Review your quarterly mentor reports and notes from the modules and practice your presentation, with mock presentations if possible. Have an understanding and be honest with your current level of technical knowledge and work experience. It is likely that you are proficient and excel in some areas but not others. This is understandable as building surveying is a vast and varied field. For the areas that you are not as strong in, make sure that you have a good understanding of the core

Since becoming a mentor, I have found that the attitude of a candidate makes all the difference.

Mentor - We would recommend taking every opportunity to regularly catch up with your mentor, as this helps to keep on track with the process and identify any areas to focus on in preparing for your final interview. Find a mentor whom you can communicate openly with and remember that your mentor does not necessarily need to be from the same company. A fresh set of eyes may be able to offer a different perspective on certain aspects of your work experience than you receive internally.

Mentor reports - We would recommend being consistent and writing a detailed account of your work experience in each of the quarterly reports. Surveyors start the transitional period at different points/with varying knowledge in their careers and you are not expected to have the required knowledge of a Registered Building Surveyor at the start. However, these reports allow you to reflect and an opportunity for you to show how you have improved, what you have learned and what areas you need to focus on moving forward

responsibilities, procedures, and risks (focus on the information from the modules in these instances).

Presentation – Often building surveying projects have a lot of different aspects to them and it can be easy to get muddled up in trying to show your knowledge in a lot of areas. Instead, choose a case study you are comfortable with and talk about a few key aspects in detail so that the presentation is concise and flows well. Use the presentation as an opportunity to not only show your technical knowledge but speak about challenges you faced, how you overcame them, and what you have learned and will use moving forward in your career. You might be asked about the other aspects that you have not focused on in your presentation, so keep that information in the back of your mind. Being a Registered Member of the NZIBS is just as much about being able to improve and evolve when registered as it is in showing a certain level of technical knowledge/competence on the day of your final interview.

Events and training: Look ahead

2023 Annual Conference

Our annual conference is being held in Nelson in September.

Book early to secure the early bird rate.



Upcoming NZIBS Modules

Module 8: Decay Fungi & Moulds	Christchurch	3 May
Module 9: Durability & Material Performance	Christchurch	3 May
Module 10: Building Remediation	Christchurch	4 May
Module 4: Condition & Compliance Reporting	Auckland	9 May
Module 5: Residential Property Inspections	Auckland	10 May
Module 7: Technical Report Writing for Expert Witness	Christchurch	25 May
Module 11: Contract Administration	Christchurch	13 June

Link to all dates: https://buildingsurveyors.co.nz/training-and-events/.

Link to training brochure: https://buildingsurveyors.co.nz/assets/Training/2023-NZIBS-Training-Brochure.pdf.

Webinar Series

We also have The Webinar Series coming up:

- 27 April 1pm 2pm: Global Survey Introduction to Laser Scanning & example use case
- June (Date to be confirmed) APC/CPD
- · August (Date to be confirmed) Compliance Processes, working with Councils
- 12 October 1pm 2pm: Unit Title Changes, Joanna Pidgeon PJ Law & Tim Jones Barrister

March Training Day 2023

It was great to see such a large turnout for the March Training Day. We had a great mix of speakers who gave us all plenty of food for thought.

Don't work if you missed out – videos of the various talks will be available for purchase soon. A video pack will contain 5 videos and cost \$200.00 + GST.

Contact Saskia for more information at office@buildingsurveyors.co.nz.

Videos will be provided free of charge to delegates, and the link will be emailed once the videos are available.



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