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Government UPDATE



The new year has certainly seen a burst of activity from within government. Developments relevant to the building and construction sector are summarised below with links to official media releases.

New Acting Minister of Housing

Hon Maurice Williamson has been appointed acting Minister of Housing, in addition to his role as Minister of Building and Construction. This follows the resignation of Phil Heatley after he misused his Ministerial credit card. The Prime Minister will review the situation once the Auditor-General has completed her enquiry into Mr Heatley's credit card expenses.

Builder Licensing Streamlined

The Government has made becoming a licensed builder easier for the country's more than 5,000 qualified builders and trades people under changes announced recently. This involves streamlining the application process by allowing recognised qualifications to be evidence of competency.

The announcement was part of the Government's Better Building Blueprint package of initiatives aimed at making it easier and cheaper for New Zealanders to build good quality homes and buildings. [More...](#)

National Infrastructure Plan Released

The National Infrastructure Unit within Treasury has released the final National Infrastructure Plan. The plan outlines the Government's infrastructure priorities, describes the planned investment and provides a snapshot of public and private infrastructure. It aims to give infrastructure providers greater certainty about the Government's plans and ensure that planners and stakeholders have a clear sense of what is happening. [More...](#)

Copenhagen Accord on Climate Change

The Government has announced it will join the Copenhagen Accord following last December's international climate change conference. Under the Copenhagen Accord, developed countries have to submit details of their proposed emissions target for 2020. New Zealand has submitted a conditional emissions reduction target range of 10% to 20% below 1990 levels by 2020.

Joining the accord is a show of NZ's commitment to helping reduce climate change. The accord, whose signatories include the United States, United Kingdom, France, Germany, Japan and Australia is not legally binding but more a signal of intent in relation to future negotiations, with the next round of talks scheduled for this December. [More...](#)

Weathertightness Report

The Minister for Building and Construction commissioned a PricewaterhouseCoopers report on the size and cost of New Zealand's weathertightness problem.

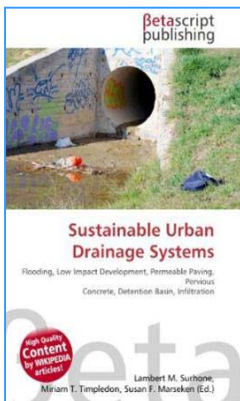
The findings of the report were released December 2009 and Building and Construction Minister Maurice Williamson says the sobering findings reinforce the Government's work towards assisting affected homes.

The review estimates that between 22,000 and 89,000 homes are affected by weathertightness problems – considerably more than previously acknowledged.

The Government accepts Pricewaterhouse-Coopers' consensus forecast that around 42,000 dwellings built between 1992 and 2008 could have been affected. Based on this number, the report estimates the total economic costs of fixing the affected homes at \$11.3 billion in 2008 dollars.

To read the [Weathertightness – Estimating the Cost](#) report visit the DBH website.

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Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems: Flooding, Low Impact Development, Permeable Paving, Pervious Concrete, Detention Basin, Infiltration

Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS), sometimes known as Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS), are designed to reduce the potential impact of new and existing developments

with respect to surface water drainage discharges.

SUDS tries to replicate natural systems that use solutions with low environmental impact to drain away dirty and surface water run-off through collection, storage, and cleaning before allowing it to be released into the environment. This is to counter the effects of conventional drainage systems that often allow for flooding, pollution of the environment and contamination of groundwater sources. Various concrete technologies are playing a crucial part in the growth of SuDS.

To borrow this item email the CCANZ library: library@cca.org.nz

Proposed Soil Standard

National Environmental Standard for Assessing & Managing Contaminants in Soil

The Government is proposing a national environmental standard (as regulations under the Resource Management Act 1991) for assessing and managing contaminants in soil.

The proposed standard is consistent with the purpose of the Act as it will promote sustainable management of resources in a way which enables people and communities to provide for their social, economic and cultural wellbeing and their health and safety.

In essence, the proposal is a mix of allowing (permitting) and controlling (requiring resource consents) certain activities on land affected or potentially affected by soil contaminants. The standard would require all 73 territorial authorities (district and city councils) to give effect to and enforce its requirements. The standard will only impact on new decisions and resource consents.

To read more about the proposed national environmental standard and the process of developing it visit the [Ministry for the Environment](#) website.

KEY DATES

March 2	RED Book Seminar / North Harbour
March 3	RED Book Seminar / Auckland
March 22	PRESSS Seminar / Christchurch
March 24	PRESSS Seminar / Auckland
March 25	PRESSS Seminar / Wellington
October 7-9	NZ Concrete Industry Conference /Wellington

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