

Royal Commission of Inquiry into Building Failures caused by the Canterbury Earthquakes: Unreinforced Masonry (URM) and Earthquake-prone Buildings Policies



	Request	Response
1).	The Royal Commission would like a brief summary of your Council's policy prior to the Canterbury earthquakes, noting any changes that have been made or proposed since the events.	Hastings District Council's current policy can be viewed on our web site www.hastingsdc.govt.nz Principally the policy takes both a passive and an active approach to the identification of earthquake-prone buildings. The period an owner has to undertake any upgrading work identified as being necessary is a matter to be negotiated on a case by case basis.
2).	Has your Council taken steps to review any aspect of its earthquake-prone buildings policy since the Canterbury earthquakes occurred? a. If the answer to (1) is no, why not and does your Council have any plan to do so in the future? b. If the answer to (1) is yes, what steps have been taken?	Hastings District Council commenced the review process of our Earthquake-prone Buildings Policy in March 2011, by forming a Councillor Working Party to receive recommendations from staff and approve changes to the policy. The timing of this review was as a direct result of the legislative requirements under Section 132(4) of the Building Act 2004. The earthquakes in Christchurch during this time heightened the requirements of the policy and brought the subject to the forefront of everyone's mind. The Working Party has meet twice since March 2011 which received suggestions from staff that included: 1. Inserting a 67%NBS suggested upgrade requirement. 2. Setting a more restrictive timeframe for upgrade, (current policy has negotiated timeframe) 3. The Working Party also resolved to put the review of the Policy on hold until the Royal Commission of Enquiry report had been released. 4. The Policy review remains on hold pending the release of the Royal Commission findings.
3).	If your Council has taken steps in relation to its earthquake-prone buildings policy since the Canterbury earthquakes, or intends to do so, please advise to what extent your Council has or intends to consult with the following groups: a. Property owners b. Tenants c. The community generally	Hastings District Council has taken steps to communicate with property owners by holding open forums with owners of buildings that have been identified as being potentially earthquake-prone. We have also presented to the Hawkes Bay Property Valuers group along side representatives from the Insurance industry. There have been a number of press releases relating to earthquake-prone and risk buildings within the Hastings District. We have also published the list of Potentially Earthquake-prone buildings on our website along side the Earthquake-prone Buildings Register of confirmed buildings.

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4).	The Royal Commission would also like to receive any information you may have, bearing on whether insurers are taking a more demanding approach to the earthquake strengthening of existing buildings following the Canterbury earthquakes.	Hastings District Council has not had any direct contact with, or received any formal information indicating insurance companies are applying pressure on the property owners. However anecdotally we are aware that some pressure may have been applied to local engineering companies.