

Report released about Tauranga City Council's actions related to Bella Vista

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Building Controls Update 247

On 26 March 2019, the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) released a review report about Tauranga City Council's actions relating to the failed Bella Vista development.

The review was completed by the Building System Assurance team and included interviews and an in-depth review of the Bella Vista site and similar developments in and around Tauranga. The review examined how the Council performed its functions and exercised its powers under the Building Act 2004 and associated regulations, in order to:

- identify how and why the Bella Vista development failed;
- establish whether there were similar problems occurring elsewhere in Tauranga at that time; and
- consider any measures needed to prevent a similar failure occurring again.

The review did not identify a systemic issue with houses built in Tauranga around the same time as the Bella Vista development (2015–2018). MBIE considers the extent of the Council's failure to be an isolated incident with a unique set of circumstances.

Key findings from the review include:

- the Council did not follow its documented building control processes and procedures for the Bella Vista development;
- record keeping and reasons for decisions were not well documented;
- sequencing of construction works were not performed well on what was a geographically and geotechnically complex site;
- there was a lack of enforcement action by the Council to either stop non-compliant building work or require non-compliant building work to be fixed; and
- the Council did not follow protocol when managing variations to the issued building consents.

As a result of this review, the Council must provide MBIE with revised building control policies and procedures within two months of receiving the review report, and a progress update within the next 12 months. MBIE will also undertake a follow-up visit to the Council in the next six months.

As part of the review, MBIE also consulted with the appointed building consent accreditation body (International Accreditation New Zealand) and the Ministry for the Environment regarding its findings and areas for future improvement.

MBIE recommends all Building Consent Authority staff read the report to better understand the reasons for the failure.

Read MBIE's [Review of Tauranga City Council](https://www.building.govt.nz/building-officials/technical-reviews/review-of-tauranga-city-council/) (<https://www.building.govt.nz/building-officials/technical-reviews/review-of-tauranga-city-council/>)

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