BUILDING PERFORMANCE

Progress towards identifying potential earthquake-prone buildings 2025

NOVEMBER 2025

MINISTRY OF BUSINESS, INNOVATION & EMPLOYMENT
HĪKINA WHAKATUTUKI

Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa
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Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) Hīkina Whakatutuki – Lifting to make successful

MBIE develops and delivers policy, services, advice and regulation to support economic growth and the prosperity and wellbeing of New Zealanders.

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Definitions

Term	Definition
Determination	If a territorial authority accepts an engineering assessment in accordance with the criteria set up in the methodology[1], the territorial authority must then determine whether the building is earthquake prone in accordance with sections 133AB and 133AK of the *Building Act 2004*.
District	A geographic area managed by a territorial authority (defined in section 7 of the *Building Act*).
Earthquake-Prone building (EPB)	A building, or part of a building, is earthquake-prone if it will have its ultimate capacity exceeded in a moderate earthquake, and if it were to collapse, would do so in a way that is likely to cause injury or death to persons in or near the building or on any other property, or damage to any other property.
Earthquake-Prone Building (EPB) methodology	The document guides territorial authorities and engineers to identify, assess and make decisions on potentially earthquake-prone buildings. It is set up by the Chief Executive of MBIE under the *Building Act*.
High seismic risk	An area that has a Z factor that is ≥ 0.3. Z factor is the seismic risk factor of an area determined in accordance with Standard NZS 1170.5:2004.
Medium seismic risk	An area that has a Z factor that is ≥ 0.15 and < 0.3.
Low seismic risk	An area that has a Z factor that is < 0.15.
MBIE	Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment.
Priority buildings	Buildings in high and medium seismic risk areas that pose a higher risk in the event of an earthquake due to their construction, building type, use or location.
Remediation	Carrying out building work to ensure that the building, or part of the building, is no longer earthquake prone. Remediating an EPB can involve either strengthening to 34% New Building Standard (NBS) or above or demolishing the building (or parts of the building that are earthquake-prone).
Territorial authority (TA)	Defined under the *Local Government Act 2002* as a city or a district council.

[1] EPB methodology: The methodology to identify earthquake-prone buildings

The purpose of this report

This report provides the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) with an annual update and evidence on the progress of Earthquake-Prone Buildings (EPB) system implementation in terms of:

- how territorial authorities (TAs) have tracked in achieving their deadlines,
- TAs' progress towards meeting future deadlines, and
- TAs that are not tracking as expected and may require support.

This report also assures New Zealanders that life safety risk from existing buildings in the event of an earthquake are being identified and managed, and that risks are being addressed.

This is the seventh year of reporting since the national system for managing EPBs came into effect on 1 July 2017. This year's report looks at the progress made by 37 TAs with medium seismic risk areas.

This report does not include individual TA-level progress.

There are 37 TAs with medium seismic risk areas. Table 1 below lists the TAs required to report in 2025 by seismic risk area.

Table 1. TAs required to report in 2025 by seismic risk area.

High/Medium	Medium	Medium/Low
Ashburton District Council	Central Otago District Council	Clutha District Council
Buller District Council	Hamilton City Council	Dunedin City Council
Mackenzie District Council	Kawerau District Council	Gore District Council
Marlborough District Council	Matamata-Piako District Council	Hauraki District Council
Queenstown Lakes District Council	Nelson City Council	Invercargill City Council
Rangitīkei District Council	New Plymouth District Council	Ōtorohanga District Council
Ruapehu District Council	Rotorua Lakes Council	Southland District Council
Tasman District Council	South Taranaki District Council	Thames-Coromandel District Council
Taupō District Council	South Waikato District Council	Timaru District Council
Whakatāne District Council	Stratford District Council	Waikato District Council
	Tauranga City Council	Waimate District Council
	Waipā District Council	Waitaki District Council
	Western Bay of Plenty District Council	Waitomo District Council
	Whanganui District Council	

What we found in 2025

Most TAs have completed the identification process.

As of 1 July 2025, 35 out of TAs have either finished identifying all priority EPBs, do not have any priority areas, or do not have buildings in medium seismic risk zones. The remaining two TAs are still working on the identification process. Of all TAs surveyed, 36 were able to report the number of priority potential EPBs, amounting to a total of 1,384 buildings.

For non-priority potential EPBs, 36 out of 37 TAs have either completed the identification process or confirmed that there are none in their medium seismic risk areas. The one remaining TA plans to start identification by the end of 2025. As of 1 July 2025, the total number of non-priority buildings identified is 2,726.

TAs are progressing with notifications and determinations.

Following the identification of potential EPBs, TAs are required to notify the building owners that their buildings are potentially earthquake prone.

Once notified, building owners must obtain a seismic assessment and provide this to their TA. After receiving the seismic assessment, the TA determines whether the building is earthquake prone or not.

Table 2 below shows the number of notifications and determinations issued up to 1st of July 2025. These are the total number of buildings notified to date, not just those identified in the current reporting period.

Table 2. Number of Notifications and Determinations as of 1 July 2025

	Priority	Non-priority	Total
Notifications	1,677	2,023	3,700
Determinations	2,631	5,238	7,869
• **EPB**	890	811	1,701
• **Not EPB**	1,741	4,427	6,168

Some TAs are not publishing information on the EPB Register.

Once the TA determines a building is earthquake prone, it must issue an EPB notice, and record information about the building in the EPB Register.

This year's survey asked TAs whether they had published this information on the EPB Register. Currently, six out of the 37 TAs are facing barriers in publishing building details on the EPB register. Of these, three have cited staffing and resourcing constraints, two have reported IT system-related issues, and one is progressing toward completion.

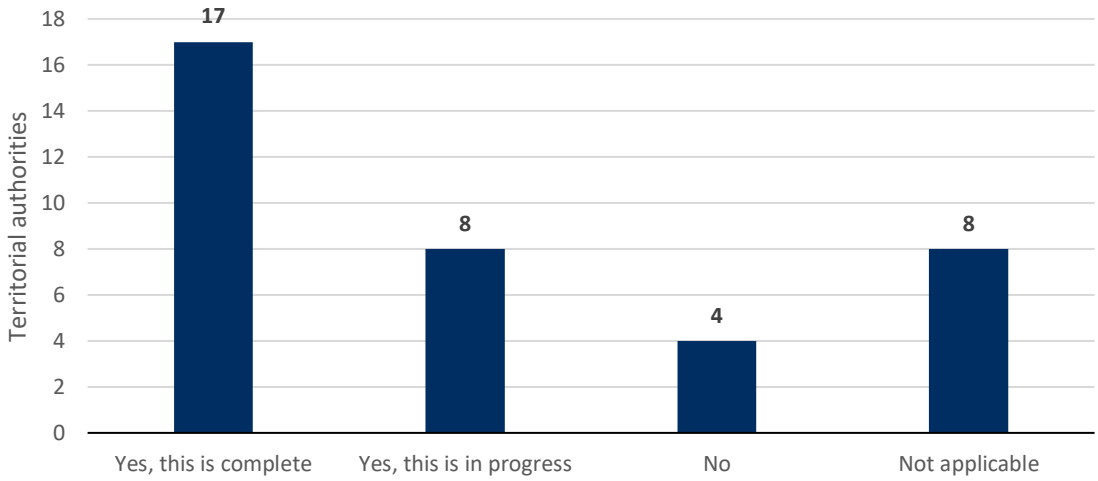
Of the TAs that have published EPB details on the EPB Register, three have reported buildings where the deadline for strengthening or demolition has passed. Altogether, 16 buildings have missed their notice expiry dates and have not yet undergone the required remediation actions. The corresponding TAs are in the process of reissuing extensions, which likely means that most expiry dates for these buildings have yet to be updated.

Most TAs had either completed or are working on the re-issuing of notices.

The Government passed the *Building (Earthquake-prone Building Deadlines and Other Matters) Amendment Act 2024* that extends earthquake-prone building remediation deadlines by 4 years. Buildings that have an EPB notice with a deadline on or after 2 April 2024 will have a 4-year extension to their notice expiry. TAs are required to promptly re-issue EPB notices to these buildings and to update the EPB Register.

Most TAs surveyed had either completed the re-issuing of notices or are currently working on it. Figure 1 below shows the breakdown of responses from TAs. Of the 12 TAs that reported their re-issuance process is ongoing or yet to begin, eight expect to finish updating all eligible EPB notices and the National Register by the end of 2025, one has indicated April 2026 as their target, and the remaining three did not provide an estimated completion date.

Figure 1. Number of TAs that have begun re-issuing EPB notices.



Less than half of the TAs are monitoring the posting of EPB notices.

Currently, 18 TAs monitor posted EPB notices on buildings. Of these, 13 TAs specifically report conducting site visits as the method of monitoring. Seven TAs monitor this at least annually, while two TAs incorporate it into their Building Warrant of Fitness (BWOF) inspections.

TAs are taking actions regarding buildings that are nearing or have exceeded the remediation deadlines.

Only six TAs responded, as the others do not manage buildings with EPB notices that have passed or approaching their remediation deadlines.

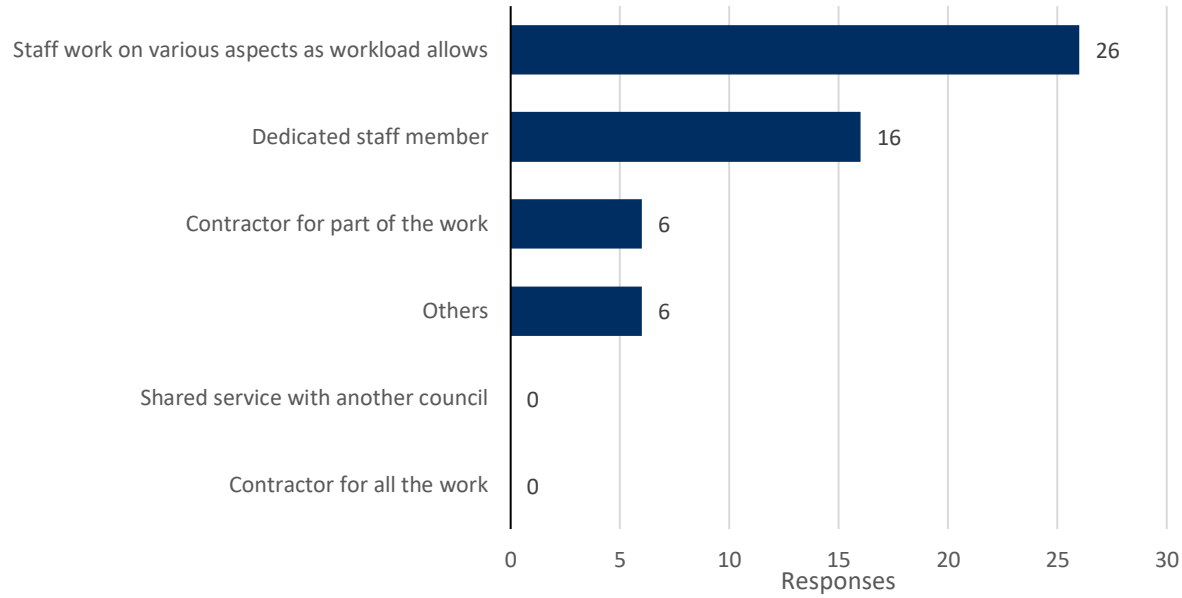
For buildings approaching their remediation deadline, three TAs reported that they have reminded owners by sending letters, emails, or making phone calls. Two TAs indicated they are still developing a process, while one TA is meeting directly with building owners to discuss available options.

Four TAs currently have buildings where the EPB notice deadlines have already passed. Of these, one TA has met directly with building owners, two are still developing their response procedures, and the last has only a single notice, which has been extended to 2026.

Most TAs rely on internal staff to implement the EPB system.

At present, most TAs rely on their own internal staff to perform the tasks required for implementing the EPB system. Only six TAs have outsourced some of this work in addition to what is managed internally. Figure 2 below provides a breakdown of responses. Please note, it reflects all responses received, TAs can select from more than one option. Of the six responses marked as “other,” most relate to internal staffing arrangements.

Figure 2.Resourcing for EPB system implementation



Resourcing and funding are the biggest challenges affecting TA’s ability to implement the EPB system.

Sixteen TAs did not report any issues affecting their ability to implement the EPB system. However, another 16 TAs cited resourcing and funding as challenges. Four TAs raised concerns about the quality of engineering assessments, and two pointed to issues with the National EPB register. Additional issues, each mentioned by one TA, included: difficulties in encouraging building owners to undertake seismic strengthening due to political shifts; council decision-making processes; and a general lack of knowledge among building owners about what is required.

Financial challenges are the main obstacle for building owners to remediate.

Sixteen TAs did not report any issues affecting building owners to meet their obligations for their EPBs. Sixteen TAs identified financial difficulties as a challenge for building owners, and five pointed to a shortage of suitably qualified engineers. Other issues, each mentioned by a single TA, included: challenges in encouraging building owners to undertake seismic strengthening due to political changes or shifts in government policy; the current economic downturn affecting owners’ willingness to borrow for earthquake strengthening; situations where the building owner does not own the land and therefore cannot secure financing; difficulties dealing with insurance matters; and complications arising from Resource Management Act (RMA) rules.

The information on the Building Performance website has been positively received though further support remains necessary.

To further improve the support provided to TAs, we asked whether the information available on the Building Performance website was sufficient to help them carry out their duties regarding EPBs. Thirty-three TAs said it was sufficient, while four either did not use the site or found the information lacking. Twelve TAs offered specific suggestions for improvement included: five requested clearer guidance for councils and building owners, especially on exemption decisions, remediation deadlines, and the placement of EPB notices; two highlighted the need for more engineering support, particularly for smaller councils without in-house expertise; two recommended financial assistance and resourcing to help with implementation activities; and two expressed concerns about the administrative burden caused by frequent rework, which they attributed to ongoing policy changes and government directives.

Conclusion

In summary, the 2025 report shows that most TAs with medium seismic risk areas are making steady progress in identifying and managing EPBs. While some challenges remain, particularly around resourcing and engineering capacity, continued support from MBIE and collaboration with TAs and building owners will be essential to ensure the success of the EPB system.

Next Step

MBIE will assess the feedback provided through this year's survey and may follow up with specific TAs to better understand their challenges and improve the quality of support we provide.

Appendix – Background

The *Building (Earthquake-prone Buildings) Amendment Act 2016* introduced major changes to the way EPBs are identified and managed under the *Building Act*. The system uses lessons learned from past earthquakes in New Zealand and overseas. It also provides a consistent approach across the country and focuses on the most vulnerable buildings. These provisions affect building owners, TAs, engineers, building professionals and building users.

The EPB system works as follows:

- TAs identify potential EPBs. Additionally, building owners who suspect their building may be earthquake-prone can obtain an engineering assessment at any time.
- Owners of potential EPBs who are notified by their TA must obtain engineering assessments of the building carried out by suitably qualified engineers.
- TAs determine whether the buildings are earthquake-prone, assign ratings, issue notices and publish information about the buildings on a public register.
- Owners of EPBs must display notices on their building and remediate (strengthen or demolish) their building by their deadline.

The EPB system also divides New Zealand into three seismic risk areas: high, medium, and low. Each area has different reporting schedules and timeframes for action. TAs with high seismic risk areas were required to report every year until 2022. Those with medium seismic areas are required to report every two years until 2027, and TAs with low seismic risk areas are required to report every three years until 2032.

Table 3 below shows the deadlines for identifying and remediating EPBs in each area as stated in the *Building (Earthquake-prone Buildings) Amendment Act*. In November 2024, earthquake-prone buildings that had a remediation deadline on or after 2 April 2024 received a four-year extension to their deadlines with the passage of the *Building (Earthquake-prone Building Deadlines and Other Matters) Amendment Act 2024*.

Priority buildings are those that are considered important due to their construction, building type, use or location. For example, they are critical to recovery in an emergency, may pose a higher risk due to being on a high pedestrian or vehicle traffic thoroughfare, or may impede emergency response routes if they were to collapse. They therefore have shorter timeframes than non-priority buildings.

Seismic risk area	TAs must identify potential EPBs by:		Owners of EPBs must carry out seismic work within (time from issue of EPB notice):	
	Priority	Non-priority	Priority	Non-priority
High	1 January 2020	1 July 2022	7.5 years	15 years
Medium	1 July 2022	1 July 2027	12.5 years	25 years
Low	N/A	1 July 2032	N/A	35 years

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