

Background to the building law reforms

The building law reforms are a long-term programme of work to address long-standing issues within the building regulatory system.

Preliminary work

As New Zealand's fourth-largest employer, the building sector is vital to our economic and social success. However, the sector faces a number of long-standing problems including low productivity, inefficient practices, skills and labour shortages, and poor health and safety.

During 2018, MBIE met with a wide range of people and organisations to hear what they had to say about how the regulatory system functions. These conversations helped MBIE develop a better understanding of the problems facing the sector, and revealed three common themes:

- Roles and responsibilities are not clear
- Information isn't available when it's needed
- It's difficult to hold people to account for the quality of their work

Public consultation

In April 2019, MBIE released a discussion paper setting out its initial thinking on how to best address the problems facing the building sector. The paper proposed a number of legislative reforms across five key areas:

- Building products and methods
- Occupational regulation
- Risk and liability
- The building levy
- Offences, penalties and public notification

After inviting feedback on the discussion paper, MBIE received 470 submissions from people and organisations across the building sector. There was a high level of support for many of the proposals. Valuable feedback was also received on how the proposals can be refined to make sure they achieve the goals of the reform programme.

The sector was also very clear that the reforms shouldn't be implemented all at once – it would be too much change at one time. A phased approach makes sense, as it allows the Government to keep up the momentum with the reforms while continuing to work on those proposals that need further development and testing.

Documents:

- [Discussion paper \[PDF, 2.5MB\] \(https://www.mbie.govt.nz/dmsdocument/5009-building-system-legislative-reform-discussion-paper\)](https://www.mbie.govt.nz/dmsdocument/5009-building-system-legislative-reform-discussion-paper)
- [Summary of submissions \[PDF, 1.7MB\] \(https://www.mbie.govt.nz/dmsdocument/6590-building-system-legislative-reform-programme-summary-of-submissions\)](https://www.mbie.govt.nz/dmsdocument/6590-building-system-legislative-reform-programme-summary-of-submissions)

Current status and next steps

On 11 October 2019, the Minister announced the Government's first set of decisions on the proposed reforms.

MBIE is now working with key sector partners to develop the detailed design for each of the proposals agreed by the Government. MBIE is also developing further proposals to strengthen occupational regulation within the sector, and will report back to Government in 2020 on options to address issues with risk, insurance and liability.

MBIE expects a Bill will be introduced to Parliament in the first half of 2020 on the first set of reform proposals, and a separate Bill on occupational regulation could be tabled before the end of 2020. There will be further opportunities to engage on the reforms as the details take shape, and also through Parliament's select committee processes.

Documents

- Cabinet paper: [Lifting the efficiency and quality of the building system: Overview \[PDF 1.3MB\]](https://www.mbie.govt.nz/dmsdocument/7020-lifting-the-efficiency-and-quality-of-the-building-system-overview-paper-a-proactive-release-pdf) (<https://www.mbie.govt.nz/dmsdocument/7020-lifting-the-efficiency-and-quality-of-the-building-system-overview-paper-a-proactive-release-pdf>)
 - Cabinet paper: [Lifting the efficiency and quality of the building system: Proposals for Bill One \[PDF 1.4MB\]](https://www.mbie.govt.nz/dmsdocument/7021-lifting-the-efficiency-and-quality-of-the-building-system-proposals-for-bill-one-paper-b-proactive-release-pdf) (<https://www.mbie.govt.nz/dmsdocument/7021-lifting-the-efficiency-and-quality-of-the-building-system-proposals-for-bill-one-paper-b-proactive-release-pdf>)
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New Zealand Government

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