

# BUILDING TALK.



I'm pleased to introduce you to this, the first edition of our refreshed building sector newsletters. We'll be publishing these quarterly and will place our newsletters on our website so you have access to all current and past editions. Our newsletter is for building professionals, including designers, engineers and trades engaged in design and construction activity in the Grey District.

We'll keep you up to date with current issues in the building sector and provide useful guidance on some of the key challenges we see our local sector facing as we deliver building related regulatory services here at Grey District Council. Your business and success matters to us and we love to hear from you so please see our contact details at the end of our newsletter to give us feedback and to let us know what we can do to help. If you'd like to subscribe to our newsletter email us at [GDC\\_communications@greydc.govt.nz](mailto:GDC_communications@greydc.govt.nz) and don't forget to share with your colleagues in the sector.

Adrian Perrin-Smith-Kahl  
Building Control Manager

## New Building Control Team Members

Our Building Team is growing!

To ensure we are servicing the demand for Building Consents and related services we've increased the size of our team. At the start of May we hired two new Building Control Officers, Jade and Terry, both locals with backgrounds in construction, they are undertaking inspections and processing consent applications. Anna joined the team in October last year, has been processing consent applications and will start undertaking inspections soon.

If you've phoned for an inspection recently chances are you've talked to Fiona, our new Building Control Administration Officer who joined us in April.

We're really pleased to have these very talented people onboard. Their practical experience out in the field is already making a valuable contribution to our operation and we're sure you'll enjoy working with them too.

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# Utilities Connection Consents

The Building Team have noticed some confusion around Utilities Connection Consents and what constitutes approval for all work so we've provided some useful guidance here.

The Council wears many hats, and is responsible for a wide range of functions and often more than one approval is required for building work.

The public networks for water, sewer and stormwater are managed by the Council as a Network Utility Operator (NUO). Certain requirements apply to users connecting, taking water or discharging to the network which are administered by the NUO. A Utilities Consent is required for any new connection to the Council owned sewer, storm-water and water systems. This enables the Council Infrastructure team to ensure connections are made to the satisfaction of the NUO. Similarly transport approvals are required from Council operating as Road Controlling Authority for things like vehicle crossings, temporary traffic management approvals and temporary use of a legal road for construction activity.

A building consent is issued by the Council acting as a Building Consent Authority (BCA) and is verification that building work complies with the building code when completed in accordance with the approved plans and specifications.

When it comes to utility connections and the building code the Building Team BCA staff are required to assess building consent applications for compliance with building code clause G13, which includes:

## G13.3.3

Where a sewer connection is available, the drainage system shall be connected to the sewer, and the connection shall be made in a manner that avoids damage to the sewer and is to the approval of the network utility operator.

Essentially this means that the Building Team needs the completed and approved Utilities Connection Consent to be provided with building consent applications that involve connection to the Utilities, including Separation of Services Consents. We've seen plenty of cases where the information discovered when engaging with the Councils utilities team affected the design, for example the size and location of existing services was not where the designer initially thought. This causes delays if it's only discovered when the building consent is being processed and this is often after a project has been priced which can get a little tricky if the change adds cost. To avoid these problems we encourage our customers to talk to us early, engage with our utilities team and obtain a Utilities Consent ahead of applying for a building consent. Please see form [here](#).

## ZYTE Inspections



We now have the option of undertaking inspections remotely using the Zyte inspections system.

Zyte is a video calling system that enables our inspectors to gather the information they need to complete inspections remotely, through your mobile phone, without the need to download any software. All you need is a Mobile phone with a camera, a little mobile data and decent mobile service coverage at the location. Our inspector sends you a link via text, you allow access to the camera and we're live! Inspections that require locating a building or taking measurements with special equipment (moisture testing) are not able to be done using this system for now, but most simple inspections can be.

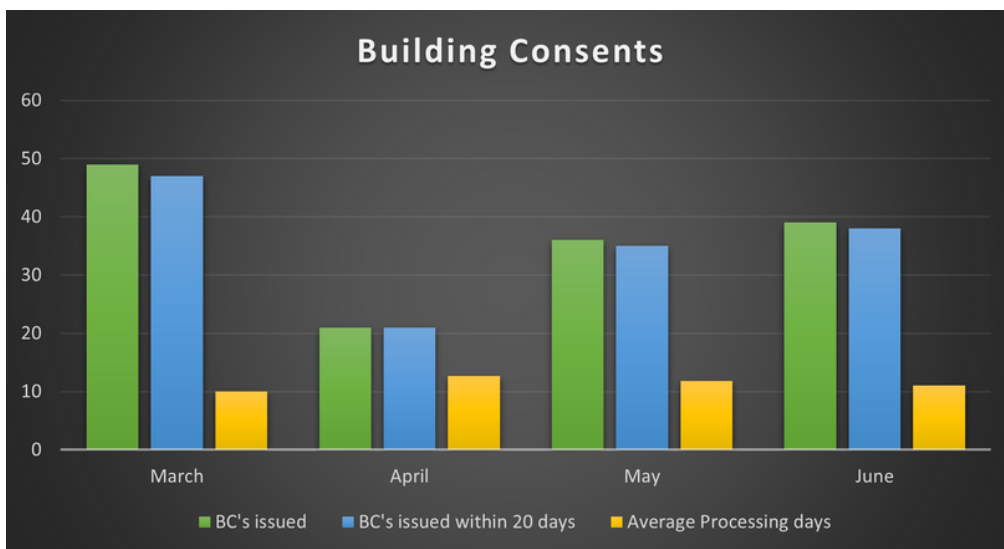
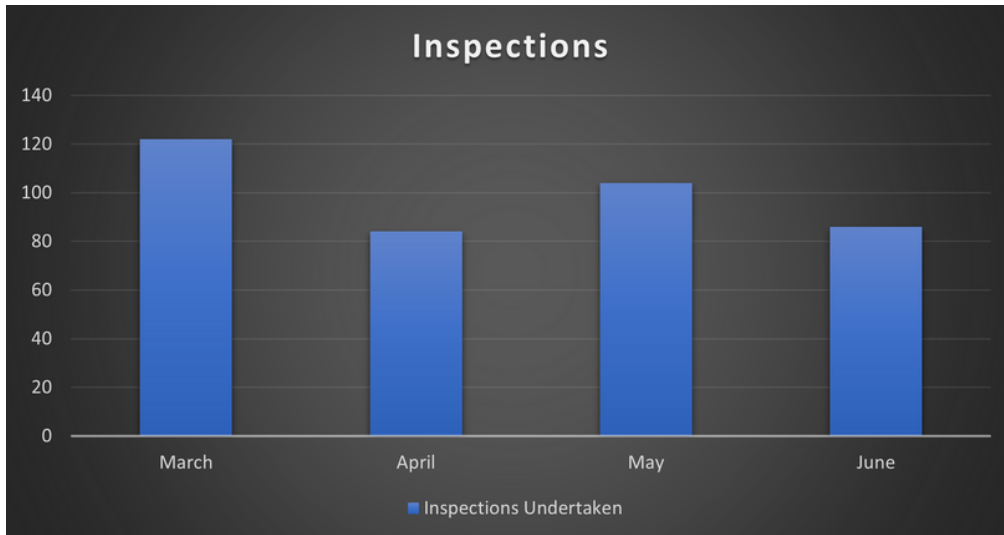
When booking an inspection, you may be asked if this is an option for you, so give it a go, you might be surprised how easy it is and it will help us keep the cost of building inspections down in the long term as other costs continue to rise.

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# Inspection Bookings

Please remember to allow at least 48hrs when booking inspections wherever possible. We strive to maintain this service for your convenience as best we can. When you book well in advance it helps us to schedule our inspectors. Keep in mind that what may seem to be a “5 minute inspection” actually takes our inspectors longer by the time they complete an inspection checklist, create an inspection report and travel to and from the site where required.

## Building Statistics for the last quarter



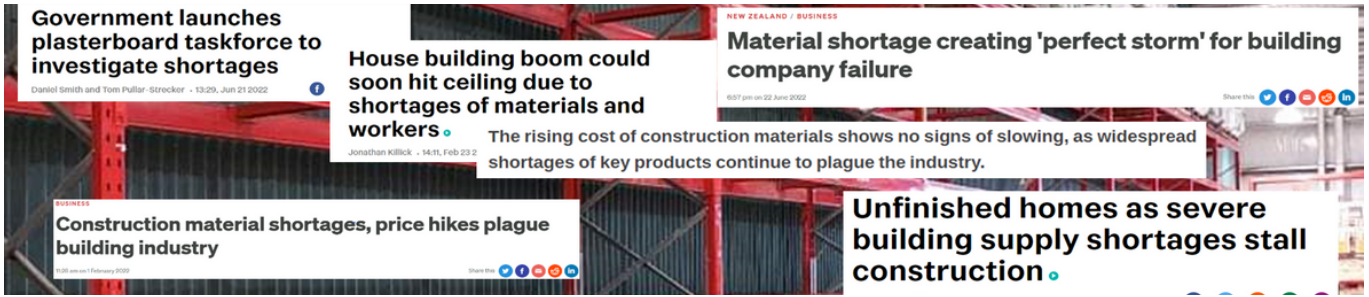
## Quiz Questions

- Question One
  - If building work is exempt from the need to obtain a building consent does it have to comply with the building code?
- Question Two
  - What are the three durability periods stipulated for various building elements under the building code clause B2?
- Question Three
  - Where do you find the responsibilities of owners, BCA's, designers and builders in relation to building consents?

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# Product Substitutions



The need for product substitutions have become common with supply shortages in the construction industry. Most people are familiar with the issues related to plasterboard lining products and there are plenty of other examples of product shortages creating challenges for the construction sector. At Grey District Council we understand how this impacts businesses, project planning, completion of projects on time and within budgets. Product shortages are impacting profitability for local businesses and on a wider scale the productivity of our local construction sector. We're here to help when you have questions about product substitutions and have made some suggestions to consider as you're making substitutions on your project.

Notify the BCA as early as possible, even if you're not sure whether we need to know. ✓

Don't wait until the next time our building inspector visits the site, give us a call or email us. When it comes time to obtain a code compliance certificate the role of the BCA is to issue the certificate when satisfied that work was completed in accordance with the building consent. When changes have taken place that aren't included in the building consent it's likely to cause delays when the BCA receives an application for a Code Compliance Certificate and can be hard for applicants dealing with changes in retrospect.

Changes need to be approved by the building owner. ✓

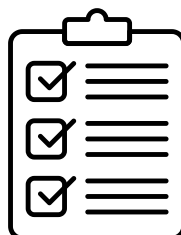
Under the Building Act the property owner is the building consent holder and building professionals often represent the owner as an agent acting on their behalf. When you apply for an amendment or minor variation don't forget to provide confirmation that the request is from the owner. In some cases this may affect your contractual agreements with owners so remember to check those.

Allow time for the BCA to consider changes. ✓

We understand the need to keep a job moving but remember the BCA needs some time to consider changes and determine whether compliance with the building code has been achieved. Changes need to be approved before the work takes place on site and we'll work with you to understand your programme and do our very best to keep you moving. Applying in blocks for multiple changes may help rather than multiple individual changes.

Consider all aspects of construction that a change may affect. ✓

Making changes to one element may have building code compliance implications for other things that are easily overlooked. Remember to include information that shows how the changes comply with the building code.



Provision for two types of amendment exist in the building act, these are a full amendment and minor variation. The act requires that a full amendment is made as if it were an application for building consent. These are typically more substantial changes that affect multiple building code clauses and take some time for the BCA as it considers compliance. Some minor changes, where compliance is quite obvious, can be made without the need for a formal amendment as a minor variation. Each situation needs to be considered on a case-by-case basis, however as a guide, changes to most structural, weather-tight envelope, fire safety and water-proofing aspects usually need to be assessed in a formal amendment. MBIE's plasterboard substitution guidance suggests that plasterboard changes should be considered by the BCA as minor variations provided sufficient documentation is supplied. Where plasterboard is relied upon for bracing, fire rating or airborne and impact sound performance remember to show how the substitution continues to comply. Often bracing schedules and bracing plans are affected so those need to be updated to reflect the changes.

Please let us know what product substitution issues you are having so we can help by providing more information on our website and in future newsletters. You can also find more information on MBIE's website about product substitution here:

[MBIE Product Substitution Guidance](#)  
[MBIE Plasterboard Substitution Guidance](#)

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It's great to have you here!

Let's keep in touch

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## Quiz Answers

- Answer One

- Yes, under section 17 of the building act, all building work must comply with the building code to the extent required by the act and that includes exempt building work. There are some areas of the building act which don't require full compliance with the building code eg, where work is approved as being near as is reasonably practicable under section 112 or 115 of the building act for building alterations and change of use.

- Answer Two

- 5, 15 and 50 years.

- Answer Three

- Ans: 2004 building act Sub Part 4 of the. Outline of Responsibilities Under This Act:  
• [Follow link here](#)

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