

Proposed amendment to Council's rates remission policy

Incentives to address earthquake-prone buildings

Introduction

1. Council recognises the value of addressing earthquake-prone buildings, either by strengthening them or by rebuilding following demolition. While there will be varying views over the respective value of preserving heritage compared with creating a new structure, Council's concern is that such sites remain viable business entities.
2. This policy applies to
 - a. all buildings originally constructed prior to 1945 in the commercial zones of the District where the businesses operating within them (currently or projected) depend on the presence of a significant number of public customers or employees to be viable; and
 - b. any other commercial or industrial building where the businesses operating within it (currently or projected) depends on the presence of a significant number of public customers or employees to be viable, for which the owner provides evidence of a professional assessment that the building is earthquake prone (i.e. below the 33% threshold of the New Building Standard).
3. This policy does not apply to any earthquake-prone building for which the Council has provided grants and/or waiver of fees equivalent to (or exceeding) financial assistance available within this policy. Where that assistance is less, the policy will be applied on a pro rata basis.
4. This policy does not apply to any demolition, strengthening or rebuilding for which building consents were issued prior to this policy being adopted.

Remission during building work

5. A full remission of rates will be granted for up to six months during the period when
 - a. the building is strengthened; or
 - b. the building is demolished, and a new building is erected on the site; *or*
 - c. the building is demolished, the site is cleared and (in consultation with the Council) set out for passive public use, and a new building is erected on another site within the commercial area of that town

6. The site must be unoccupied other than by contractors undertaking the building work.
7. Application for this remission must be made no later than three months before the intended strengthening and demolition. The application must include documentation which gives evidence of
 - a. *either* the proposed strengthening work and the time envisaged for that work to be done,
 - b. *or* the proposed demolition and rebuilding and the time envisaged for that work to be done.
8. Approval of this remission will be associated with a waiver of all District Council consent costs up to a maximum of \$5,000 (plus GST). This excludes any government levies and charges, which will remain the responsibility of the property owner.
9. If the proposed strengthening or demolition/rebuilding is not achieved within the time noted in the application, or as otherwise mutually agreed, Council will reverse the remission and may recover part or all of the waived fees.

Remission following completion of building work

10. A full remission of rates will be granted for a maximum of three years for a property containing one or more earthquake-prone buildings once a Code Compliance Certificate has been issued for *either* the strengthening of such earthquake-prone buildings *or* the erection of a new building on a site previously occupied by one or more earthquake-prone buildings *or* the erection of a new building on another site in the commercial zone of that town provided that the use of the former site is consistent with the provisions of the District Plan, irrespective of whether the owner retains the site, transfers it to another entity or (at no cost) vests that site in Council.
11. Application for this remission must be made no later than three months after the issue of the Code Compliance Certificate.
12. This remission is available only to the owner of the site when the strengthening or new building work was undertaken.