



## **Heritage Taranaki Incorporated Submission on the Building (Earthquake-prone Buildings) Amendment Bill**

### **Submitter Details**

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### **Introduction**

1. Heritage Taranaki Incorporated (Heritage Taranaki) thanks the Transport and Infrastructure Committee for the opportunity to make a submission on the Building (Earthquake-prone Buildings) Amendment Bill (the Bill).
2. Heritage Taranaki was established in 2013 following the dissolution of the former Taranaki regional branch of the Historic Places Trust and exists to preserve, celebrate and share the rich cultural and historic heritage of the Taranaki region. Heritage Taranaki is now recognised as an authoritative advocate for the conservation of built heritage; historic places; and archaeological sites and landscapes throughout Taranaki.
3. Buildings with strong heritage value provide significant public benefits including positive social and economic outcomes. In Taranaki, heritage buildings are an integral part of a historic landscape that contributes positively to the use and enjoyment of Taranaki by residents and visitors alike. Research highlights that the wider Aotearoa New Zealand heritage sector contributes nearly \$5.1 billion or 1.2% of Aotearoa's GDP annually, with there being great potential for Taranaki to contribute significantly more to this figure (MCH, Heritage sector economic profile 2024 Infometrics report summary, 2025).
4. Given our specific heritage focused remit and interests, our submission will centre on those aspects of the Bill that have particular implications for heritage and related matters.

## **Heritage Taranaki's Stance**

5. Heritage Taranaki supports the intent of the Bill to establish a more proportionate and risk-based regulatory system for managing earthquake-prone buildings.
6. Heritage Taranaki supports the submission on this Bill of Historic Places Aotearoa (HPA) and the points made therein.

## **Impact of Bill**

6. Taranaki is considered a Medium Seismic Zone under the Bill. Consequently, a large number of Taranaki buildings will likely be considered earthquake prone under the Bill, as they are under existing provisions related to earthquake-prone buildings.
7. Older buildings, many with strong heritage values (either recognised as historic heritage in plans or through HNZPT listings, or with no current formal recognition), are disproportionately impacted by earthquake-prone building regulations. This is largely due to the seismic limitations of construction technologies and methods contemporary to their construction, especially unreinforced masonry.

8. The remediation of buildings identified as earthquake-prone places additional financial burdens, often significant, on owners. Where these costs are unable to be borne by owners, this may result in buildings becoming unoccupied, often leading to demolition by neglect, or alternatively, being demolished outright. In the context of heritage buildings, these are undesirable outcomes and often result in the total loss of heritage values.

## **Incentives**

9. It is Heritage Taranaki's experience that incentives to assist earthquake-prone building owners with remediation works are of great benefit in protecting the heritage values of buildings, ensuring their retention, ongoing use, and ability to contribute to positive economic and social outcomes.

10. Incentives may include:

- Grants;
- Low-interest or suspensory loans;
- Rates relief;
- Bonus development rights;
- No-fees consents;
- Technical and project advisory support;
- Access to standard strengthening methodology; and
- Tax relief/incentives.

10. However, with the cessation of the Heritage EQUIP fund, and council incentive funds strained, sources of funding to undertake such works are limited for many earthquake-prone building owners.

## **National Heritage Incentive Framework**

11. Heritage Taranaki strongly advocates for the development of a statutorily enabled wrap-around national heritage incentives framework as part of the current reforms. This system would provide incentives for owners of historic heritage and HNZPT listed heritage whether they are earthquake-prone or not. It is anticipated that this framework would work with the proposed new resource management system.

This system would provide greater clarity and certainty to heritage owners, as well as relieve some of the financial burden of local authorities who are presently largely footing the bill for voluntary historic heritage incentives themselves. We anticipate such a system to have positive historic heritage, social, and economic outcomes. Key characteristics of the framework:

- Being enshrined in legislation, it may be appropriate to enable this through consistent provisions in the Building Act, proposed Planning Bill, and the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014 (HNZPTA) to ensure consistency and that all relevant heritage is captured;
- Be sufficiently funded. Funding should:
  - Come from a mix of central government and local authority sources;
  - Have statutorily mandated minimum annual funding levels tied to goal achievement;
  - It is anticipated that a large portion of funding will be from central government – this will be critical to the framework's success;
- The incentives framework should ensure a broad mix of incentives are available to owners of heritage. Whilst most incentive types should be administered by local authorities, some incentives, such as tax relief, should be administered by central government;
- The inclusion of tax relief is likely to be critical to the framework's success;
- That information about the incentives framework is readily available to the public, and that the framework itself is as simple and user friendly as possible;
- All information about the framework should be contained on a single user friendly website. This would include relevant links to local authority pages, as well as contain and link to relevant resources and useful organisations. Resources should be separated by region or district and highlight those available nationally; and
- The incentives framework should be compatible, as far as is reasonable, with other funding sources available to heritage owners such as the Lottery Environment and Heritage fund.

## **Concluding Remarks**

9. Heritage Taranaki thanks the Transport and Infrastructure Committee for the opportunity to submit on this Bill.

10. Heritage Taranaki does not wish to be heard in support of their submission.