



Code Advisory Panel – Highlights from 19 November 2020

The Code Advisory Panel (CAP) is made up of industry representatives and groups who work with MBIE to provide strategic and technical advice on the New Zealand Building Code. Here's a summary of what they talked about at their latest meeting.

Updates to Building Code were released on 5 November 2020. Read more about the updates [here](#).

Seismic risk work programme

The current hazard model used for earthquake engineering is nearly 20 years old. MBIE and EQC are funding GNS Science to revise the model, with results expected in late 2022. However, MBIE is already preparing for how this impacts the Building Code. The CAP provided advice to endorse the principles of the work that MBIE's undertaking to prioritise the updates to the Acceptable Solutions (AS) and Verification Methods (VM) that will likely be impacted by the updated model (B1 Structure).

The MBIE BSP branch has a new General Manager, John Sneyd, and new Minister for Building and Construction, Hon Poto Williams.

Some of the key priorities for the branch:

1. Building relationships with the sector
2. Legislative reform programme
3. Building Code update programme
4. Building for Climate Change
5. Reviewing the consenting model

Education and Training Strategy

MBIE is working on new and innovative ways to drive Building Code compliance through helpful information and user-friendly education, awareness and behaviour change campaigns. This is currently being tested on several projects. The CAP provided useful advice to help MBIE reinforce how it implements this new way of doing things. Expect to see more of this in the future.

H1 Energy Efficiency

New Zealand is lagging behind other countries on energy efficiency requirements. To address this gap, MBIE is working to increase thermal insulation values in homes and buildings, and introducing a VM for the energy efficiency of HVAC systems. HVAC systems are one of the biggest energy users in commercial buildings and present one of the biggest opportunities for energy savings. Currently, there is no AS or VM to demonstrate compliance for the energy efficiency of HVAC systems. The CAP endorsed the approach for the HVAC VM to establish a minimum level of performance for these systems and highlighted opportunities to involve industry in communicating the changes. MBIE will be consulting on the changes in 2021.

Tier Framework for Standards

The number of primary references in the AS and VMs has become untenable, with over 400 documents referenced. Despite being a performance-based code, the number of references has increased over recent years. To better maintain these standards and involve the industry, MBIE has proposed using a tiered framework to assign long term priority status of certain standards. The CAP advice reinforced the strategic direction for this framework, and also highlighted the importance of the content. If the standard is important, MBIE needs more control of the standard and the content.

The next CAP meeting will be in May 2021. Until then have a safe and happy holiday season!