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MEDIA RELEASE

Construction Industry Aims to Strengthen Home Owners Protection

Affordability, consumer choice and innovation were key elements that must be achieved in the establishment of a regulatory framework for the home building sector the Construction Industry Council (CIC) told Parliamentarians today.

Appearing before the Building Bill Select Committee, a representative of the Council, Mr Chris Preston, said the council was supportive of the purpose and general approach of the legislation.

“Solidly constructed and affordable new homes are far more commonplace around New Zealand than houses which provide their owners with ongoing problems such as weather tightness. Our aim is to keep it that way. Our support for this legislation stems from the additional consumer confidence that it will bring to the market.

“We want to ensure that the impact of additional consumer protection measures does not unduly raise construction costs. We don’t want to see these measures used to reduce or make difficult the ability to have alternative solutions approved in a timely and cost effective manner.

“An example of where possible increases in costs could arise lies in the accreditation process for territorial and building consent authorities. This process needs to be carefully monitored.”

Mr Preston said the CIC favoured a performance-based building code as a stated objective because this, in its view, would foster both good design and good practice.

“We also support the licensing of building practitioners to self certify that the work they have done or supervised meets the building code. Further, we believe that provision for industry-based trade associations to licence builders who satisfy the criteria, would help reduce the approvals process for registration by about two years”

He said the CIC believed that the introduction of “producer statements” into the bill as a valid verification of building systems and product performance would help strengthen the ability of the industry to innovate without compromising standards.

Recognition of the key role design plays in making a home “fit for purpose” should also be recognised by making it a factor to be taken into account in assessments of good practice. It would also be helpful if a portion of the Building Levy was set aside for the development of industry and public good standards and codes.”

Other specific matters that the Council raised with the select committee included:

- A review of building controls in other statutes and their incorporation into the Building Bill – such as fencing of swimming pools legislation.
- That the statute set up of an industry Advisory Board for regular contact with the Chief Executive, and that the Board have the ability to prepare an Annual Report to the Minister on its activities.
- That a portion of the Building Levy should be targeted for use in the development of building Standards by Standards New Zealand

Ends

For further information:

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