

8 January 2026

Committee Secretariat
Transport and Infrastructure Committee
Parliament Buildings
Wellington

Lodged via: [Building and Construction Sector \(Self-certification by Plumbers and Drainlayers\) Amendment Bill Submission - New Zealand Parliament](#)

Dear members of the Transport and Infrastructure Committee

Submission from the Manawātū District Council on the Building and Construction Sector (Self-certification by Plumbers and Drainlayers) Amendment Bill

The Manawātū District Council (MDC) thanks the members of the Transport and Infrastructure Committee for the opportunity to submit on the Building and Construction Sector (Self-certification by Plumbers and Drainlayers) Amendment Bill (the “draft Bill”).

General feedback

MDC supports in principle the proposal to introduce to the Building Act a new opt-in self-certification scheme for plumbers and drainlayers.

In particular, MDC supports the following aspects of the scheme:

1. Limiting the scheme to those plumbers and drainlayers that have been endorsed by the Plumbers, Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board (“the Board”) as meeting the necessary criteria in terms of qualification and competency, that will be set out in regulations made under the Plumbers, Gasfitters and Drainlayers Act 2006 (new sections 51A to 51H).
2. The proposal that certificates of compliance for self-certified plumbing and drainlaying work be held on a register by the Plumbers, Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board (new section 51D(3)).
3. Restricting the work that a plumber or drainlayer is able to self-certify (specified in regulations).
4. New monitoring and enforcement functions for the Board, including conducting audits of compliance issued under Part 2AA.
5. The amendments to section 392 (clause 12) which mean that a building consent authority (BCA) is not liable for self-certified work.

MDC agrees that the keeping of a register of certificates of compliance for self-certified work by the Board is necessary to ensure accountability for self-certifiers and to support the Board’s monitoring of the scheme (point 1. above).

MDC's support in relation to restricting the work that a plumber or drainlayer is able to self-certify (point 4. Above) is based on our expectation that the regulations will limit such works to those that are low risk. MDC agrees that it is still appropriate for a building consent authority to inspect more complicated and high risk plumbing and drainlaying work. These regulations should be developed in consultation with BCAs to ensure there is agreement on which types of works should be exempt from the scheme.

Decisions sought:

- That the Committee recommend the retention of new sections 51A to 51H as drafted.
- That the Committee approve the proposed amendments to section 172 and 172C (clause 44) that permit the Governor General, by Order in Council, to make regulations that define self-certifiable drainlaying and self-certifiable plumbing, and to limit such work to work that is “routine, not complex, and low risk.”
- That the Committee support the new monitoring, enforcement and auditing functions for the Board.
- That the Committee approve the proposed amendments to section 392 in relation to civil proceedings (clause 12).

Concerns with the Bill

MDC has some concerns that the Bill may not achieve Government's desired cost and time savings. This is because the proposal has the effect of shifting the burden to those plumbers and drainlayers that opt-in to the scheme. These professionals will likely need to increase their insurance liability cover, and prepare additional compliance documentation to minimise risk. MDC shares concerns raised previously by the Palmerston North City Council that the reduction in inspections provides limited protection for homeowners, should issues arise after Code Compliance Certificate approval.

Section 89A – obligations on the owner

MDC does not support the proposal in section 89A to place an obligation on the owner to notify the BCA if a new or replacement approved self-certifying plumber or drainlayer who was not listed in the building consent application commences work on the building project or if the listed approved self-certifying plumber or drainlayer ceases to work on the project.

MDC thinks it is unrealistic for the owner of the building to be monitoring who is carrying out works on the project. Oftentimes the project management of a building project is not the owner but a building company or contractor. MDC considers it more appropriate for the onus to be placed on the self-certified plumber or drainlayer to notify the BCA of changes in who is undertaking the work. This will ensure that those who are certified under the scheme remain accountable. This change may also require consequential amendments to new Part 6 of Schedule 1AA (transitional provisions).

Decisions sought:

- That the Committee amend section 89A (clause 7) to shift the responsibility from the owner to the self-certified plumber or drainlayer to notify the BCA of any changes in who is undertaking work on the building project.
- That the committee make any consequential changes necessary to Part 6 of Schedule 1AA for consistency with the amendments to section 89A.

Other Matters

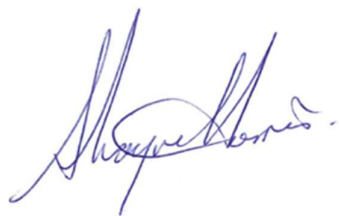
Another potential issue with the self-certification scheme is that some inspections require measurements that must be taken with tested, calibrated equipment, such as moisture metres and thermometers. This equipment is usually carried by Council's inspectors. MDC does not currently rely on equipment owned by tradespeople as this cannot be verified as being appropriately calibrated. MDC also does not lend out calibrated equipment to tradespeople given the risk of damage or loss (at the ratepayers' or home owners' expense), and the additional cost and time to tradespeople to pick up and drop back equipment to Council.

MDC suggests that the regulations for the registration of certified plumbers and drainlayers include an obligation to ensure that any equipment used for inspections remains calibrated.

Decision sought:

- That the Committee note that when the regulations are developed under the Plumbers, Gasfitters and Drainlayers Act 2006 for the certification of plumbers and drainlayers under the scheme, they include a requirement that any equipment used by a certified plumber or drainlayer remain calibrated.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Shayne Harris'.

Shayne Harris
Chief Executive