



23 June 2022

Ref 2122-2230

Jack Hulls

fyi-request-19472-f841f494@requests.fyi.org.nz

Tēnā koe Jack

Thank you for your request of 25 May 2022 to the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE), for the following information under the Official Information Act 1982 (the OIA):

Can you please provide information about the earthquake assessment of head office on Stout st. Of interest is when was it last assessed and what was the result. Any information about when another assessment will be done.

The Earthquake-prone Building (EPB) System under the Building Act 2004 uses %NBS (New Building Standard) ratings and seismic assessments to determine whether buildings are deemed earthquake-prone. A New Building Standard (NBS) score evaluates the likely performance of specific building elements over a range of earthquakes, in terms of protecting life. A %NBS attempts to provide a rating for the whole building, and represents how that building is likely to perform compared to an equivalent new building on the same site. Under the Earthquake-prone Building System, a %NBS rating of less than 34% means that the building is earthquake-prone. There are legislative obligations for building owners of earthquake-prone buildings to remediate their building within a specific timeframe.

The %NBS was specifically developed to support the implementation of earthquake-prone building legislation, however it is used more widely in the market for a range of other purposes. The aim of the %NBS metric is to provide a relative assessment of seismic risk and is not a predictor of building failure in any particular earthquake. While a low %NBS rating does convey a heightened life safety risk in the event that an earthquake occurs, it does not mean that the building is unsafe. The purpose of seismic assessments is to inform building owners and users about their building vulnerabilities, encourage strengthening of vulnerable buildings and lead to the improvement of New Zealand's building stock over a reasonable time period.

I can advise that a Detailed Seismic Assessment of 15 Stout Street was completed by Aurecon New Zealand Ltd in February 2012. The assessment found that 15 Stout Street had a maximum credible capacity of approximately 180% of New Building Standard.

In your request, you note changes to the %NBS rating for Mātauranga House, the Ministry of Education's head office in Wellington. While assessments under the Earthquake-prone Building System under the Building Act requires engineers carrying out assessments to use the Engineering Assessment Guidelines, engineers undertaking seismic assessments for other purposes may voluntarily choose to use a revised version of section C5 of the guidelines (known as "The Yellow Chapter") when assessing concrete buildings. I understand the change in %NBS rating for Mātauranga House was due to a new assessment using the Yellow Chapter guidelines.

MBIE's head office at 15 Stout Street was not constructed in the same way as Mātauranga House and does not have precast floors; the building has reinforced concrete floors that were cast onsite. Because of this, we don't have any current intention to undertake a new seismic assessment.

If you are interested in finding more about the changes to the Guidelines, you can find more at <https://www.building.govt.nz/section-c5-concrete-buildings-proposed-revision>.

Thank you again for your request. Under section 28(3) of the OIA, you have the right to refer my response to an Ombudsman for review. You can find more about this by emailing info@ombudsman.govt.nz, or by calling 0800 802 602.

Nāku noa, nā



Adrian Regnault
General Manager, Workplace
Ngā Pou o te Taumarau