

JANUARY/FEBRUARY NEWSLETTER BY PLANS.CO.NZ

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to our first newsletter of 2011.



COUNCIL NEWS

In December Robbie Walker had his contract terminated with PNCC effective January 2011, however the Head of Building Services, Geoff Cockery, tendered his resignation to take up a senior position at the Christchurch City Council. Council has now asked Robbie to stay on until June pending a permanent appointment to Geoff's position. In other Council news, Warren Cummerfield sadly passed away on January 3 2011 after a short illness. Warren was a Senior Building Inspector at Palmerston North City Council, and had recently worked at Manawatu District Council.



ELEPHANT BOARD

BRANZ has suspended Appraisals for Elephant QuickBrace Systems and Elephant Plasterboard Bracing Systems effective 5 January. This is due to recent bracing testing of 10mm Elephant Standard Plasterboard systems indicate they do meet the bracing values named in the Appraisals. BRANZ believes this issue is limited to one batch of plasterboard but as this is not certain it has taken the precautionary step of suspending the Appraisals. BRANZ believes the Appraisals will be reinstated at a future date, however as long as the Appraisals are suspended councils will not be accepting these bracing systems.



SEWAGE SYSTEMS ADVICE – BY DAVE MILLER

A failing sewage system can really put a smell up your nose and what's the point of having a million dollar house if the smell puts the damper on your barbecue? Council tests show over 65 per cent of sewage systems perform no better than an altered septic tank and the cheaper systems are producing the worst results. These results are sent to the manufacturers of the systems involved and yet plumbers and system agents will still try to sell you 'their' system regardless of whether it is actually works properly, or is even suitable for your site.



Some systems cost over \$40 a month to run while others cost only \$3 a month.

A cost analysis shows that the cheaper systems can cost \$30,000 more to maintain (over 25 years) than other more advanced systems, something agents of the cheaper systems forget to tell you. Sewage treatment systems range between \$14,000 and \$20,000 to install so a thorough site assessment and system options report is essential to know the system you choose will stand the test of time and represent good value for money. With over 35 years experience in engineering design and wastewater systems Dave is the most qualified person to evaluate soil conditions (soil mechanics) and advise on what system is best for your property. Dave is also in demand to upgrade existing septic tank systems and his knowledge and none. He can meet you on site and investigate, and cost out, the full range of sewage systems options available for your site. Then he can prepare a full engineering design and specification to meet Council requirements for the option selected. By using Dave's independent design services you are guaranteed the best available system at the lowest possible cost. Dave can be contacted on 06 357 8426 or by e-mail

davemiller@xtra.co.nz

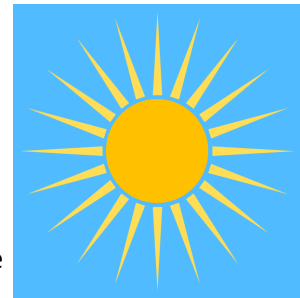
NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS

Two of the most popular New Year's Resolutions for 2011 are to save money and manage debt. While this doesn't sound like a positive thing for the building industry for 2011 experts are predicting a rise on home renovations, including alterations and additions. It is hoped that this increase will lead on to more new home building, however this is not expected until later in the year. The building industry has noticed a rise in activity over the summer months, with the website www.builderscrack.co.nz having its strongest ever start to a year, with a 50% increase on the same time period last year. Home renovations also seem to be long term improvements such as re-roofing, painting exteriors and installing new kitchens, rather than small touch-ups. This points towards homeowners being prepared to take more financial risks after the economic challenges of the last two years, which again is a positive for the building industry. Additionally, there is strong growth in the building industry in the Canterbury region where Earthquake Commission jobs have begun to filter through. The building industry is expected to profit greatly from the rebuilding underway in Canterbury, however it is still too early to predict if this will have a positive spin off over the whole country.



SUN SENSE

Skin cancer is by far the most common cancer affecting New Zealanders, according to NZ Cancer Society statistics New Zealand has the highest melanoma rate in the world. During summer, even on cloudy days, UVR (ultra-violet rays) are strongest between 11am-4pm, however it is often impractical to not be outdoors during these hours, so the focus should be on protection from the sun, particularly if you have a job that requires a lot of time spent outdoors. Workplaces are being encouraged to provide necessary personal sun protection for workers including making hats, protective clothing and sunscreen available.



Sunscreen should not be used as the sole means of sun protection, it is not designed to completely protect skin from sun damage. It should only be used on areas of the body that cannot be otherwise protected by clothing. It needs to be reapplied regularly and be used in generous amounts – a common error is not applying enough sunscreen to get proper protection. Sunscreen should be applied at least 15 minutes before exposure to the sun and at the very least be Broad Spectrum 30+ and water resistant. Hats should shade the face, head, neck and ears and have a flap of fabric attached to the back to protect the neck when bending over. Clothing should provide as much coverage as possible and darker colours are better to wear as they absorb more UVR than lighter coloured fabrics. Sunglasses are another important piece of protection from the sun and should be wraparound or close fitting for optimum shielding of the sun.

Employers need to be aware of the need for sun protection, and provide appropriate measures for their employees, and staff should cooperate with employers by wearing/using sunscreen, hats and protective clothing provided. These sun safety guidelines should be a part of Health & Safety Policies for all businesses. For more information www.sitesafe.org.nz is a valuable resource.

HAVE YOUR SAY

At Plans.co.nz we are committed to producing quality plans at affordable prices, and we would really appreciate any feedback we can have from you concerning anything that would improve the way you understand or read our plans. Please e-mail Rebecca on admin@plans.co.nz so we can bring any suggestions up at our regular staff meetings and improve our service to you.

Tell us your thoughts – contact us to share your ideas, opinions etc for our newsletter so we can provide you with relevant content in the future.

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