



Briefing Note: Mātauranga House – Seismic Assessment

To:	Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister of Education		
Date:	24 May 2022	Priority:	Medium
Security Level:	In Confidence	METIS No:	1288299
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Messaging seen by Communications team:	Yes / No	Round Robin:	No

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this paper is to brief you on the recently completed Targeted Seismic Assessment report on Mātauranga House prepared by the Ministry's Engineers, Aurecon New Zealand Limited, and inform you of recent decisions and next steps.

Summary

- The Ministry received a **targeted seismic assessment** report on Mātauranga House dated 13 April 2022 that identified issues regarding the seismic performance of the 2014 stairs and the concrete floors. The targeted assessment against the Yellow Chapter rates the building below 34% New Building standard (NBS). The Yellow Chapter is the updated Engineering Assessment Guidelines November 2018 (yellow chapter), which incorporates recent learnings from the Christchurch and Kaikoura earthquakes. Mātauranga House is the Ministry's main National office accommodation with capacity to accommodate over 1000 members of staff.
- The Ministry requested engineering company, Aurecon, to complete a **detailed seismic assessment** considering all aspects of building performance. The provisional findings of this detailed seismic assessment, which were received on 13 April 2022, are that based on both the new (Yellow Chapter) and older method (Red Book) of rating buildings, Mātauranga House will still be below 34% NBS. The finalised detailed seismic assessment is expected to be finalised soon and provided to the Ministry.
- Structural strengthening was undertaken in 2014/15 prior to occupation of Mātauranga House by the Ministry in 2016 where engineers confirmed the building earthquake rating as 90-100% NBS (as NBS were then defined).
- With the information available at this time, the Ministry's Leadership Team have made the decision to cease work at Mātauranga House and will make an announcement to staff to this effect on Wednesday, 25 May 2022. Staff who would usually work at

Mātauranga House will need to work from home initially, starting from close of business Monday, 30 May 2022, whilst alternative options are assessed.

- This decision has been made with an abundance of caution and based on the low ratings, the Ministry's health and safety, Person Conducting Business or Undertaking (PCBU) obligations, and a health and safety assessment.
- Decisions of other government owned or occupied buildings with low ratings have also been considered to support consistent outcomes and approach, but are based on the specific issues and nature of the risks identified for each building which is why some schools remain open despite a low rating. An example is Inland Revenue, they made a decision to vacate Asteron House when they received an assessment under 34%NBS.
- A copy of the report has been given to our landlord. The landlord has asked for further clarification and disputes some of the findings. It is likely that the report will be peer reviewed by the landlord's engineers over the ensuing months.
- The Public Service Commission and the Government Property Group, Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment have been briefed.
- Public Service Chief Executives will be advised of the Ministry of Education decision to leave the building on 25 May 2022.

Recommendations

The Ministry of Education recommends you:

- a. **note** that the Ministry of Education has received a **targeted seismic assessment** report on Mātauranga House dated 13 April 2022 that identified issues regarding the seismic performance of the 2014 stairs and the concrete floors. The targeted assessment against the Yellow Chapter rates the building below 34% NBS. The Yellow Chapter is the updated Engineering Assessment Guidelines November 2018, which incorporates recent learnings from the Christchurch and Kaikoura earthquakes.

Noted

- b. **note** that the Ministry of Education Leadership Team have made the decision to cease work at Mātauranga House and will make an announcement to staff to this effect on, 25 May 2022. Staff who would usually work at Mātauranga House will need to work from home initially, starting from close of business Monday, 30 May 2022, whilst alternative options are assessed.

Noted

- c. **agree** that the Ministry of Education release this briefing once it has been considered by you, and after the date in which staff and key stakeholders are informed, with information relating to the engineers or landlords that would identify them as a company be withheld under sections 9(2)(g)(i) the free and frank expression of opinions and 9(2)(b)(ii) of the Act to protect their commercial position.

Agree / Disagree.

Zoe Griffiths
Te Puna Rangatōpū | Corporate

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Hon Chris Hipkins
Minister of Education

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Background

1. The Ministry engaged Aurecon to complete an initial high level seismic review of all Ministry offices in accordance with the updated Engineering Assessment Guidelines November 2018 (yellow chapter), which incorporates recent learnings from the Christchurch and Kaikoura earthquakes. Their initial assessment for Mātauranga House identified some potential structural issues outlined in a letter to the Ministry on 3 August 2021.
2. Aurecon's letter stated that the buildings rating of 90-100% NBS achieved in 2015 is likely to be downrated due to a number of factors including the pre-cast hollow core flooring system and the 2014 interconnected stairs. The stairs were funded by the Ministry and designed by Warren and Mahoney, the Ministry's architect, in conjunction with the Landlords structural engineer. Aurecon recommended a more detailed Targeted Seismic Assessment (TSA) in accordance with the yellow chapter to confirm their high-level review findings.

3. 9(2)(g)(i)

4. 9(2)(g)(i)

On this basis the Ministry commissioned Aurecon to complete the targeted seismic assessment in December 2021 and a final report was received on 13 April 2022.

Ministry decision making in response to report

5. Following receipt of the **targeted seismic assessment**, Hautū with responsibilities for the Ministry's property portfolios and Te Tumu Whakarae mō te Mātauranga | Secretary for Education were advised.
6. A workshop was held on 27 April 2022 to work through a decision-making framework to support occupancy decisions. The workshop was attended by senior engineers including the Ministry's Engineering Strategy Group, senior staff from Te Puna Rangatōpū | Corporate, Te Puna Hanganga, Matahiko | Digital, Infrastructure and Aurecon. The workshop concluded there was no immediate risk, and the building can continue to be occupied while a remediation strategy is developed, a Health and Safety assessment completed and a response from the landlord received which was required under the provisions of the lease.
7. Aurecon provided the Ministry with a letter dated 28 April confirming that it would have no objection to continue occupation of the building while the remediation strategy is developed and implemented. Work started on developing a remediation strategy and conducting a Health and Safety assessment. 9(2)(f)(iv)

9(2)(a) [REDACTED] no further information was able to be gathered to assist with the decision to occupy. Te Ohu Poutoko, The Ministry's leadership team were informed of the issues on 13 May 2022

8. Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015, the Ministry as an occupier and the Landlord as the building owner are considered to be PCBUs and both hold obligations to identify, assess and manage the risks of harm from earthquake-prone buildings (amongst other risks) so far as is reasonably practical. The Ministry also has a primary duty of care for its staff and other workers who are influenced or directed by the business, such as customers and the general public.
9. Decisions of other government owned or occupied buildings with low ratings have also been considered to support consistent outcomes and approach but are based on the specific issues and nature of the risks identified for each building which is why some schools remain open despite a low rating. An example is Inland Revenue, in which a decision to vacate Asteron House was made based on an assessment under 34%NBS.
10. The Ministry's Leadership Team have decided that in an abundance of caution and on balance, the potential risk to health and safety and our proven capability to provide business continuity through remote working, justify the temporary closure of Mātauranga House.
11. This decision will be communicated to staff on Wednesday 25 May 2022, with Mātauranga House staff required to work from home from the end of day Monday, 30 May 2022 while alternative options are assessed. A communications plan is being finalised to make sure key stakeholders are updated. A brief statement will be provided for media and shared with your office.
12. The Public Service Commission and the Government Property Group, Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment have been briefed and the Public Service Chief Executives will be advised of the Ministry of Education decision to leave the building on 25 May 2022.

Ongoing engagement with landlord

13. 9(2)(f)(iv) [REDACTED]
14. The Building (earthquake-prone Buildings) Amendment Act 2016 requires the building owner (the Landlord) to remedy the building within 15 years if it is deemed an earthquake-prone building by Wellington City Council (WCC). This determination is made using the Red book. It should be noted that the provision of a seismic assessment to WCC is generally managed by the building owner who may want to undertake their own assessment, or at a minimum have the Aurecon assessment peer reviewed.
15. 9(2)(f)(iv) [REDACTED]

9(2)(f)(iv)

16. 9(2)(f)(iv)

17. 9(2)(f)(iv)

18. 9(2)(f)(iv)

19. 9(2)(f)(iv)

20. 9(2)(f)(iv)

21. 9(2)(f)(iv)

Assessments for other Ministry Offices

22. As noted at para 1, the assessment for Mātauranga House is part of the Ministry's engagement of Aurecon to assess all of the Ministry's offices. The Ministry's Dunedin Office was assessed to have a similar NBS rating, though staff remained in occupation as the Landlord agreed and has now completed immediate seismic works and has a plan to prioritise further strengthening. An engineering review of the Ministry's Masterton Office is also planned for this week.

Next Steps

23. Ministry Engineers, Aurecon, are working on finalising the full Detailed Seismic Assessment of Mātauranga House in order to confirm the building rating under the Red book standard is less than 80% (34% expected).
24. The Ministry is scheduled to communicate with all staff and other stakeholders on Wednesday 25 May 2022. This will inform staff that Mātauranga house will be vacated

no later than the end of day Monday 30 May 2022 and advise on the other steps underway to obtain office space.

25. 9(2)(f)(iv)

26. Key messages for Ministry staff will be made available when finalised.

Proactively Released