

## Waiapu Cathedral Seismic Information Q&A

*Updated 1 November 2023*

This Q&A was prepared following parish meetings and feedback in October 2023. It will be periodically updated as new questions are raised and information is received.

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### **Q1: What is the current status of the Cathedral building in Napier?**

The Cathedral building is a strong, reinforced concrete construction and safe in a low to moderate earthquake. However it is at 20% of the current building code and needs to be at 33% minimum - the official notice from Napier City Council was issued in mid-October. This means that in a strong earthquake - likely sourced nearby from the Kermadec Trench or Hikurangi subduction zone - the building would not withstand the shaking without damage, the weak points being the lack of bracing of columns above the nave, and the bell tower connection.

### **Q2: What's the timeline for strengthening the building?**

The Cathedral parish has 15 years to get the building up to the current code but the risk assessment gave us 5-7 years of safe use from April 2023.

### **Q3: What are the choices being considered by the Cathedral parish and the Waiapu Board?**

There are four choices at present which are being considered:

- try to raise \$20m for strengthening work, being aware this will not add to/improve the functionality of the building
- ask Napier City Council if they would be interested in a joint venture
- sell the building
- demolish the building, and either repurpose the land (sell it) or rebuild on the site with a better outreach function. Note that: demolition costs (including window retrieval) are estimated at \$3m; the rateable value of land is \$7m and the bare site value is around \$4.5m. With a net gain of \$1.5m the benefit of this option is dubious.

**Q4: What are the estimated costs for strengthening the building?**

Estimated costs of \$20m are based on strengthening work done elsewhere, eg HB Opera House in Hastings, Wellington, Nelson and Taranaki cathedrals.

**Q5: What is the heritage status of the building?**

Napier City Council notified its proposed district plan on 17 September which has designated the Cathedral as a Heritage 1 building. There will be an opportunity for the community to make submissions on the plan and the proposed heritage listing by **15 December 2023**.

**Q6 : What difference does the proposed heritage status make?**

The primary advantage is for the community, to preserve buildings such as the cathedral, but there are no advantages to the Cathedral congregation. If the parish was to seek a Historic Places designation, then some funding might become available, however, this would be in the region of a few hundred thousand, and would not make an significant difference to the \$20 million it is estimated that is needed. The heritage status could limit what we can do to improve facilities by adding external spaces (e.g., toilets, a commercial kitchen); we would need to apply for resource consents, which the Council would have the right to refuse because of the heritage status.

**Q7: Should the church find the \$200k needed to get a more exact figure for strengthening?**

There is very little support for this suggestion, given that \$20m is likely to be lowest possible figure, and at the moment, even that appears to be unattainable.

**Q8: How might NCC support the strengthening of the building in view of the historical importance of 1931 earthquake? And how might the Diocese provide support in regard to the central focus the Cathedral provides?**

There will be discussions with NCC concerning assistance if the historical designation means the building is important to the city. The wider diocese as well as Pihopatanga (the Māori tikanga, strand of the Anglican church) will be involved in discussions about the future.

**Q9: How long until a decision has to be made about what action to take?**

The Cathedral seismic committee intends to make a submission to NCC by 15 December regarding the heritage status and the options facing the parish and the

council. We also will open a discussion with the public early in 2024. There was general parish support for a wider public discussion because many people in community have ties to the Cathedral. Also traditionally cathedrals have been built/owned/used by the community and/or government authorities.

**Q10: Can the parish afford to maintain the building even after \$20M of strengthening money has been spent on it?**

There is a concern that the small and ageing congregation will not be able to sustain the costs of future maintenance of the Cathedral. There have been discussions that the building could continue to be used for concerts and public events. However the Cathedral was built 60+ years ago and there are other issues of concern due to changes in building regulations – e.g., toilets not up to code and insufficient for large services/concerts, accessibility below code with no ramps for emergency exits, limited flexibility for different types of events/functions, and no space for church outreach or parish activities.

Even without changes to the building, the parish has ongoing costs to consider - rates and power increases, heating, maintenance, services - with a small parish base to fund these. ( Insurance has increased 40% in the last month.)

We could rebuild and create a building that provides for and respects the sacred spaces, but which is aimed at the next 50-100 years of serving our community, and in a way that is affordable and manageable.

**Q11: Who owns and/or funds the Cathedral?**

The Waiapu Board of Diocesan Trustees owns the land and building. However the parishioners donate money and give regularly to cover regular costs. Many of our parishioners provide practical support with tasks around the building and parish at no cost. Visitors' donations also contribute to the costs, as does hiring the Cathedral for concerts and events. It costs approx \$1200 a week to keep the Cathedral open to the public. The Cathedral receives no government or council funding.

**Q12 : Why are we here?**

We are to be partners in God's mission to all people – serving them, demonstrating God's love, and providing a place of hope. We need to think and plan how best we can

do that, and whether a restored and improved version of our current building is the best answer, or whether a new one would be more fit for purpose.

***For more information go to [napiercathedral.org.nz](http://napiercathedral.org.nz) and look for the seismic info link.***