

Earthquake Strengthening Subcommittee

2025 Annual Report

2024 was a very active year for the Earthquake Strengthening Subcommittee to further consider options for the retention and strengthening of the Cathedral.

This has centred around seeking changes to the Napier City Council District Plan to allow modification or demolition in certain circumstances. Martin and Dale have done an amazing job in convincing the Council that changes were required, and it appears these will be accepted in the Final Plan provisions. Before these changes, there was no consenting pathway for repurposing or demolition.

In addition, independent property development advice has been sought to provide future use options for the Cathedral. This resulted in a new concept to separate the seating area from the more sacred worship space. This would allow the Cathedral's religious dimension to be retained while allowing the large, seated area to be developed into 4 stories of office or commercial space.

This concept has been shared with parishioners, Napier City Council, the community and Heritage specialists. It has been well received.

Progress continues to be made on optionality for repurposing the large seating area of the Cathedral. Several options have been under consideration during the past year including commercial office space, the NCC library and medical facilities.

The current state of the economy means there is little demand for commercial office space and there is currently a lot of vacant office space in Napier. Additionally, COVID-19 and changes to government policy have resulted in the closure of several international education facilities. For these reasons, it is considered unlikely that the surplus Cathedral space will find a commercial repurpose in the short to medium term.

At the last Earthquake Strengthening Committee I recommended a different option to allow for current market conditions.

- Commence design work and costings for the separation of the chapel and the main area to be repurposed.
- Obtain design and costings for the strengthening of the Chapel and the mini chapel including removal or strengthening of the bell tower.
- Undertake a review to realign the current titles to better reflect the repurposed and retained parts of the campus.
- Request the Diocese to fund or joint fund the 50-100k for this work.
- The strengthening work, separation and refurbishment work could be circa \$5m and this appears more manageable to fund.

- This option would allow the Parish to remain in the Cathedral until building separation. After the separation of the building parishioners could return to use the separated repurposed part while the retained chapel is being strengthened.
- This concept appears to have support from the Diocesan Board.

Subsequently, I have been advised the WBDT has decided that the Earthquake Strengthening Committee will report directly to it rather than being a committee of Vestry. I have been asked my opinion on this, and I support this move.

The future development of the Cathedral and Campus is primarily the role of the building owner which is the Diocese. I do not believe the burden of developing and financing this sits with Vestry.

The Government has recently amended the earthquake Strengthening regulations which has resulted in a further 5-year extension to the deadline for strengthening. While this is welcome Dave Brunson has confirmed that this does not change the occupancy risk profile and 2028 remains the period when the building should be closed from a risk perspective.

In an ideal world, the retained portion of the Cathedral should be strengthened and refurbished by this date allowing the parishioners to remain in the Cathedral during the transition.

I am happy to be involved in furthering this work and thank all the members of the committee for their input, meeting attendance and commitment to solving this challenging problem and opportunity.



Lawrence Yule
Chair

2 March 2025