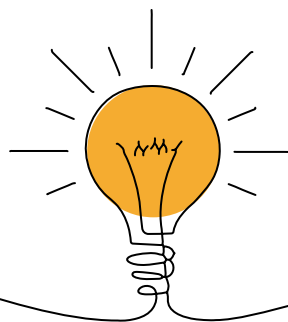




Streamlining the consenting process

Bottlenecks in consenting processes are a well-recognised issue in the sector. To help increase efficiency and speed, BRANZ is supporting research to standardise consenting requirements, streamline the consenting process and explore the potential for new technologies.



Exploring whether AI can help the consenting process

A new project is looking at bottlenecks in the consenting process and whether the use of artificial intelligence could be beneficial for consenting officers. **Can AI be helpful in the consenting process? (new)** is a collaboration between BRANZ, Auckland Council and the Fraunhofer Institute for Building Physics in Germany.

This project aims to understand the consenting process and investigate whether there are avenues to help consenting officers understand outputs from computer simulations of a building's performance. It aims to break down barriers to simulation tool use by industry and building control authorities.

For instance, computer simulations are already used to assess energy and moisture risk in buildings. However, BRANZ fields a lot of queries from councils to help clarify the reports they receive during consenting processes. This project will investigate the possibility of using an AI tool to help interpret results – ultimately speeding up the consenting process and reducing risk.

This research will contribute to a framework to give assurance that the right conditions and information have been used to run the computer simulations. This helps councils and consenting bodies to be confident in the quality of the modelling. It aims to lower the risk of construction errors and boost confidence in using new materials.

The research team will involve key sector stakeholders including universities, councils, MBIE, Kāinga Ora and New Zealand Green Building Council.

Standardising consenting processes

In Aotearoa New Zealand, there are 1,260 building officers working across 66 building consent authorities. Each authority has its own management system to assess Building Code compliance for consents received from approximately 5,000 different entities. This complexity has led to uncertainty and misunderstandings on both sides of the consenting process, increasing reliance on additional requests for information.

ModelDocs: Transforming building consenting behaviour (ongoing) aims to enable faster, more robust consenting processes. It seeks to streamline consenting by identifying behaviours that can lead to a set of model documents.

This project will provide insights on what information the industry needs to submit for more consistent communication and decision making from consent authorities. They will include documentation guidance and a directory of good practice.

The project is led by University of Auckland in consultation and collaboration with stakeholders, including Auckland Council, Tauranga City Council, MBIE, Building Officials Institute of New Zealand, New Zealand Institute of Architects, Licensed Building Practitioners, Engineering New Zealand, Simpli, Objective Build, EBOSS, builders, manufacturers and suppliers.