

Port Hills land damage: GNS Science Stage One Report

Meeting for residents living in Class I areas

Held in the Redcliff Mt Pleasant Bowling Club, 9 James Street, Redcliffs
13 November

Questions and answers:

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GEOTECHNICAL

Question	Answer
I have a property in a Class I area that I want to rent out, am I able to go ahead with my plans?	<p>The level of risk to people's lives has not been assessed to the extent needed for the Council to make any changes to where people can live. Two more GNS Science reports in coming months will provide more detail around the risk to people's lives and whether it is "tolerable" or "intolerable". These reports will be used to inform policy around the management of those risks.</p> <p>If a home has not been issued with a section 124 (s124) notice, it is up to the property owner to decide if they wish to live there or not. If you are unsure you could engage a building professional, such as a structural engineer to check your property.</p>
My property is in a Class I area; I need to move forward with repairs to my retaining wall. What is the Council position on this, and should we wait until April when the stage two and three reports are available before we do anything?	<p>There is currently nothing to stop people from engaging a geotechnical engineer to look at an engineering solution for construction work. However, in a practical sense, the reality for most people in Class I areas is that it will be April 2014 before we will know and understand the full picture of the risks associated with mass movement in these areas.</p>
GNS Science's technical data wasn't included in the report, when will it be publically available?	<p>The GNS Science Stage One Report, and subsequent reports in the series, will be available on the Council website at www.ccc.govt.nz/porthillsgeotech</p> <p>The Council holds detailed investigation data that requires a specialist to interpret it. If a consultant or specialist you are working with requires this data, we can make it available to them on request in line with Council policy.</p> <p>GNS Science geotechnical work for these reports includes investigations at individual sites; however, the data informs a much larger, area-wide story. This information is not a substitute for site-specific investigations that looks at a site in much more detail and may include a wider range of geotechnical methodologies and investigations.</p>

Question	Answer
<p>If properties remain in the intolerable risk category (following the future development of a life risk model for Class I areas), what will happen? Is it possible there will be pockets of Class I land that can't be built or lived on?</p>	<p>Following the completion of investigations, the Council, in conjunction with GNS Science, will produce risk maps – these will be used to make recommendations about where people can build and live.</p> <p>It is possible a small number of properties may reach the intolerable life risk threshold. The Stage One Report gives us a preliminary classification for Class I, II and III areas – it is simply too early to say what may or may not happen regarding future decisions.</p>
<p>I have accepted a settlement for my home, what will happen if my land is deemed an intolerable life risk and I can't rebuild on it?</p>	<p>The Stage One Report gives a preliminary hazard classification (Class I, II and III). It is simply too early to say what may or may not happen regarding future decisions.</p>
<p>How will Class I land be managed in the future?</p>	<p>Through the work we have done on the Stage One Report we are building up a picture of the extent and nature of mass movement areas in the Port Hills. Future reports – stages two and three – will add to the knowledge we already have. Once we have a clearer picture, we will be in a position to look at recommendations around mitigation measures.</p>
<p>The Council has been investigating slope stability in the Port Hills since late 2011, why weren't we told? The Government's investigations have been going on and now there is another thing for us to deal with.</p>	<p>From late 2011 the Council began investigating cracks and other damage that suggested there has been mass movement where rock and/or soil have moved down a slope. This work has been – and continues to be – very complicated and time consuming. We have now reached a point where we have a sound body of knowledge about the preliminary status of these areas of mass movement that we can share with affected residents.</p> <p>We had hoped to release this information at the same time as the Government's zoning review but unfortunately the announcement was delayed due to the recent court action. The Government's zoning review relates to rockfall/boulder roll and cliff collapse hazards. The Council's GNS Science Report is about slope stability.</p>
<p>Will we get answers about the status of our properties in April?</p>	<p>By April we expect to have received the stage two and three reports. These will need to be considered by the full Council who will then direct staff about their expectations around the development of policy for properties in Class I, II and III areas.</p>
<p>Are the stage two and three reports site-specific?</p>	<p>These reports are area-specific, as is the Stage One Report.</p>
<p>Will GNS Science continue drilling?</p>	<p>At this stage all the drilling for Class I areas is complete, however there is a very small chance that further drilling may be required in one or more of these areas. Drilling may be required in the Class II and Class III areas as part of the Stage 4 Report (a case study on two of the toe slump features). If further drilling is required, affected residents will be contacted and works advise notices will be distributed to let people know.</p>
<p>You mention areas may change in size, will this happen in April or before? Will properties outside the areas be drawn into a class?</p>	<p>It is possible some areas will change in size. We are taking a cautious approach at this early stage so, in some cases, the area a property sits within is more likely to move from a Class I area to a II and from a Class II to a III, rather than the other direction.</p> <p>We will work to keep affected residents informed of progress as we move toward the April date.</p>

INSURANCE

Question	Answer
What are the insurance companies and EQC's response to the information in this report?	<p>EQC is committed to settling Port Hills land claims by Christmas 2013, and are happy to continue to settle with affected Port Hills residents.</p> <p>IAG want a safe and sustainable solution for clients. We want to consider the information in the Stage One Report, and what further reports might mean for affected Port Hills residents. Please come and talk to us.</p>
Will the information in this report mean insurance premiums will increase?	<p>IAG need to consider the information in the Stage One Report and what this means for our customers. There are always factors that arise that need to be considered and each case will be considered on an individual basis. However, at this stage we don't anticipate any major changes in premiums as a result of these GNS Science Stage One Report findings.</p>
For new builds in Class I areas will insurance companies take on new policies?	<p>From IAG's perspective, this is unlikely until the completion of stage two and three reports.</p>

THE GOVERNMENT'S PORT HILLS ZONING REVIEW

Question	Answer
The CERA red zone offer expires in March 2014, and the GNS Science stage two and three reports are not expected to be finalised until April 2014. Will the red zone offer be extended to allow people to take the stage two and three report findings into account when making their decisions?	<p>The Government's zoning review relates to rockfall/boulder roll and cliff collapse hazards. The Council's GNS Science Stage One Report is about slope stability. CERA is working with property owners, and if there is a need to extend their offer period it will be considered in due course.</p>

EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Question

Will the work Fulton Hogan is doing on repairs to Main Road cause complications for the mass movement area around The Brae/St Andrews Hill? And, is work on Main Road now going to be held up?

Answer

The GNS Science information will be used by the Port Hills Lifelines and Key Routes Project* team to work out strategies for ensuring vital transport connection to the eastern suburbs and the Port of Lyttelton is maintained.

SCIRT has not been advised of anything that would delay/influence the Main Road three laning project which Fulton Hogan is now working on. Work has started on the seawall; wastewater repair and road reconstruction are both scheduled to begin in 2014. Road reconstruction and total project will be completed in mid-2015.

The anticipated traffic impacts on Main Road consist of lane shifts and reduced width. Later in the project in 2014 it may be necessary to have some small lane closures at the entrance/exit from The Brae, Te Awakura Terrace and St Andrews Hills Road. The traffic management plans for these intersections will be planned and approved in accordance with other SCIRT projects/works in the area and the community will be advised well in advance.

*The 'Port Hills Lifelines and Key Routes' study reviewed a number of key routes around the Port Hills. Main Road was considered to be a lifeline route as it provides a vital transport connection to the eastern suburbs and the port of Lyttelton for overweight and over-dimension loads. It also carries vital water, sewer, power, phone and other services. The purpose of this project is to make sure that route is secure and remains usable in the event of a future significant earthquake or other event.

BUILDING CONSENT

Question

My property is in a Class I area. I have a building consent and construction is about to get underway. What does the information about Class I areas mean for my building project?

I am a couple of weeks away from submitting my designs for a building consent and my property is in a Class I area. Will the Council now hold up my building consent – do I need to wait until after April 2014?

Answer

The Building Act 2004 has been put in place to protect people; and buildings must demonstrate compliance with the construction requirements in the Act.

The reality for most people in Class I areas is that it will be April 2014, when we have the stage two and three reports, before we will know and understand the full picture of the risks associated with mass movement in these Class I areas.

People in Class I areas are entitled to pursue a building consent, but are required to demonstrate compliance with the Building Code before they can be issued with a consent. Until these reports are available it will be difficult to demonstrate compliance with the Building Code. Any application for building or resource consent will be treated on a case-by-case basis.

As with all properties in the Port Hills, Class I, II and III areas will need a site-specific geotechnical report for a rebuild or foundation repair, if the development requires a building and/or resource consent. A geotechnical consultant could use information from the Council's GNS Science Stage One Report, along with site-specific geotechnical information, to make decisions on rebuild or repair options.

For customers who have already progressed through the design and consenting phase and are now in a Class I area, the Council strongly recommends your engineer reviews the findings in the Stage One Report and considers how this information impacts on the foundation design for your building.

Question	Answer
<p>Why isn't the Council advising people in Class I areas not to apply for a building consent?</p>	<p>Under the Building Act 2004, the Council is not able to stop people from submitting a design for a building or resource consent. However, the reality for most people in Class I areas is that it will be April 2014, when we have the stage two and three reports, before we will know and understand the full picture of the risks associated with mass movement in these Class I areas.</p> <p>We will work with an applicant's design team to give the best advice we can based on the level of information we have from this GNS Science Stage One Report.</p> <p>We are looking at the status of consents that have been issued for Class I areas and will be contacting owners.</p>
<p>What is the Council doing about water run-off problems on earthquake-damaged hillside land?</p>	<p>Following the 22 February 2011 earthquake, many mains were broken – releasing water for more than 12 hours and creating damage to the land and infrastructure. The Stronger Christchurch Infrastructure Rebuild Team (SCIRT) is working through a repair horizontal infrastructure programme.</p> <p>Please contact the Council on 914 8999 or 0800 800 169 to report leaks or other water run-off problems.</p> <p>The Council has a policy on wastewater management, including water run-off from earthworks and driveways. To view the policy visit www.ccc.govt.nz/homeliving/wastewater/policyandreports.aspx</p>
<p>What about loess run-off on a private driveway, who is responsible for managing this?</p>	<p>Managing issues such as water run-off on private property is the responsibility of the property owner. However, if run-off is causing a nuisance and you think it is coming from another property, we suggest you firstly discuss this with the property owner concerned.</p> <p>If you continue to experience run-off issues, please contact the Council's enforcement team on 914 8999 or 0800 800 169.</p>
<p>For people whose property may end up in a possible, future intolerable life risk Class I area, what are the things that need to be addressed, such as building consent?</p>	<p>The GNS Science Stage One Report gives us a preliminary understanding of mass movement areas in the Port Hills. We need to complete further reports – stages two and three – and consider their findings in order to make any recommendations. At this stage, building consents for Class I areas will be looked at on a case-by-case basis. If a customer's design team can demonstrate how the project/design will comply with the Building Code with the current information available, a consent will be issued.</p> <p>The reality for most people in Class I areas is that it will be April 2014 before we will know and understand the full picture of the risks associated with mass movement in these areas.</p>

For more information, including the full copy of the GNS Science Report, and other frequently asked questions, visit www.ccc.govt.nz/porthillsgeotech, phone 941 8999 or 0800 800 169, or email porthillsgeotech@ccc.govt.nz