**Online petition calling for comprehensive support for residential owners in earthquake prone buildings**

Following on from the public meeting on June 6 2019 of residential owners in earthquake prone buildings, Inner City Wellington (ICW) has launched an [online petition](https://www.parliament.nz/en/pb/petitions/document/PET_89478/petition-of-geraldine-murphy-for-inner-city-wellington) on Parliament’s website calling for the Government to provide comprehensive financial, technical and advisory support interventions for residential owners.

At the public [meeting](http://www.innercitywellington.nz/earthquake-seminar-and-meeting-documents), owners were presented with the results of a survey of 13 earthquake prone buildings. The results reinforced what many owners already know – the costs of compliance are substantially higher than MBIE’s costs in its policy work and the pressure on private home owners is significant. This compliance burden on residential home owners is to achieve public safety outcomes.

There is no support to help residential body corporates or other multi-owner structures progress through large, complex engineering and construction projects.

MBIE are progressing work to implement the Financial Assistance Package announced in Budget 2019, which is targeted to a small group of owners. We know that tax relief for seismic strengthening costs is in IRD’s work programme, with the outcome of the work expected later this year. More is needed. We encourage you to sign the petition.

Included in the package of interventions being called for is an authoritative assessment body to remove the variability of seismic ratings, a technical and advisory service to help owners progress, retrospective compensation for use of private funds and loss of value, loans and an insurance guarantee for strengthened buildings.

The need for this support is hitting Wellington owners now. But it will also impact residential home owners around New Zealand who own and live in buildings that fall within the criteria set out in the Building Act 2004.

If you own an apartment in a building that is two or more levels high and three or more households it could be identified as potentially earthquake prone. If this happens, you and the other owners in your building will need to obtain engineering assessments to confirm whether your building is or isn’t earthquake prone. If your building is earthquake-prone, you will be given a deadline by which time your building has to be strengthened or demolished, based on the [seismic risk zone](https://www.building.govt.nz/managing-buildings/managing-earthquake-prone-buildings/how-the-system-works/#jumpto-seismic-risk-areas-and-time-frames) you live in.

Launching this petition is one of the actions from the June meeting. This petition closes on 31 August 2019. A second petition, calling for a review of the earthquake prone provisions in the Building Act, to take account of the significantly higher costs, stretched sector capacity and to focus resources on public safety priorities, will be launched shortly. Both petitions are part of ongoing lobbying activity that ICW, as part of a collaborative lobby group, is undertaking.

**Geraldine Murphy, Seismic Spokesperson, Inner City Wellington**