



Press Release – 7 September 2021

Hunt on to find and fund large-scale mass timber buildings

Design funding is now available for qualifying, yet-to-be-constructed wooden buildings as part of a partnership between the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) and Red Stag. Funding of several hundred thousand dollars is potentially available for a select number of projects that qualify for the scheme, explains Red Stag group CEO Marty Verry.

“What we are trying to do with MPI is showcase different types of mid-rise wooden structures that push the boundaries in terms of scale or height. As part of that, we want to share the knowledge with New Zealand’s design professionals and construction sector.

“Typically, this will involve open sourcing of design reports, building site visits and case study write-ups.”

“We’re looking for demonstration projects such as five-plus level apartments or aged care, mid-rise office buildings, large format retail, industrial or warehouse projects, as well as educational and cultural projects that are going to be constructed in the next two years,” adds Verry.

The initiative is part of the ‘Mid-Rise Wood Construction’ programme, a partnership between Red Stag and MPI. The scheme will help support the Government’s initiatives to deliver a zero-carbon construction sector by phasing out carbon-intensive materials used in construction. Looking beyond the current building product shortage the programme also has the ability to accelerate green solutions for New Zealand’s accommodation crisis.

“Embodied carbon, as it is known, is estimated by the Green Building Council to account for 10 percent of New Zealand’s CO2 emissions, mainly in the form of steel and concrete usage,” says Verry. “With the development in recent decades of mass timber products such as Cross Laminated Timber (CLT), Glue Laminated Timber (Glulam) and Laminated Veneer Lumber (LVL) it is now possible to eliminate Embodied Carbon in New Zealand’s buildings.”

The demonstration building programme is already underway with its first project in Christchurch, a five-storey apartment development built with CLT, LVL and prefabricated timber walls. (Pictured) More than 120 developers, engineers and architects pored over the building under construction in May and heard the quantity surveyor’s findings that the wood solution was cost comparable with high emission materials such as steel and concrete, yet it was carbon negative. More open days are planned for late October.

“The objective is to educate and prepare the New Zealand design community for the changes government will be making with its ‘Building for Climate Change’ programme next year.

“Those designing for government departments will also benefit, as they need to comply with the recently-announced procurement requirement to select the lowest carbon design option available.

“We would welcome anyone with potential demonstration projects in the pipeline to get in touch,” says Verry.

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