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**The Clerk Local Government and Environment Select Committee**

**Parliament Buildings**

**Wellington 6140**

## **Rural Women New Zealand Submission to the Building (earthquake-prone buildings) Amendment Bill**

### **Introduction**

1. Rural Women New Zealand is a charitable member based organisation that reaches into all rural communities and advocates on issues that impact on those communities. It welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Building (earthquake-prone buildings) Amendment Bill
2. This submission is in support of New Zealand Federated Farmers submission on the Building (earthquake-prone buildings) Amendment Bill to the Local Government and Environmental Select Committee.
3. Rural Women New Zealand's vision is Growing Dynamic Communities. The amendment as it stands would be counter-productive to its mission. Submission
4. Rural Women New Zealand recommends that a Rural Impact Assessment is applied to any inquiry, legislation, regulations, statements and policy. This will require close analysis of the issues that will specifically impact on rural communities should this proposed amendment go forward in its present format.
5. An RIA will mean ensuring that the needs and interests of rural people are properly considered before this amendment passes into law.
6. The current amendment as it stands provides for one size fits all approach to earthquake prone buildings when all buildings in all locations are not the same. One size does not fit all.
7. The preservation of human life is paramount in any adverse event but there are other mitigating factors that should be considered before a blanket bill is passed. Rural Women New Zealand Submission Building (earthquake-prone buildings) Amendment Bill 14/04/14 1
8. While the Bill provides for regulations for councils to provide exceptions for certain low risk buildings such as churches, community halls and farm buildings. For owners of small commercial buildings getting these up to a seismic code may not be viable.

9. The social impacts on small rural communities would be significant with the potential for some areas to become “ghost towns” which would be ironic because if owners have walked away who would be responsible for buildings left to become derelict and thus a danger to people.

10. The burden on individuals, communities and local authorities could outweigh any presumed benefits.

11. Rural Women New Zealand recommends further consultation with a specific view to developing a more diverse and improved amendment that will allow rural communities to work with local bodies and property owners to achieve the best possible outcome for the safety of people, the viability of buildings, and ensuring strong vibrant communities that continue to attract business and families to rural areas.

Noeline Holt - Executive Officer

Wendy McGowan - President

Rural Women New Zealand

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