

Redeveloping our research facilities to meet future needs

Modern, fit-for-purpose facilities are key to BRANZ delivering our world-class research and testing expertise. New laboratories and workspaces will allow us to better meet the present and future needs of urban development in Aotearoa New Zealand. This strategic investment in our Judgeford campus will create an innovative workplace that invites collaboration.

For over 50 years, BRANZ has built a reputation nationally and internationally. This comes from the expertise and passion of our scientists and engineers along with having the right research and testing facilities. To meet the needs of industry and Aotearoa New Zealand, we require up-to-date facilities that are fit for purpose.

BRANZ has been signalling for some time our intention to invest our cash reserves in the redevelopment of our campus. We have now completed the design of the new laboratories and workspaces and are set to begin construction in 2021/22. The total funding required for this project is approximately \$50 million.

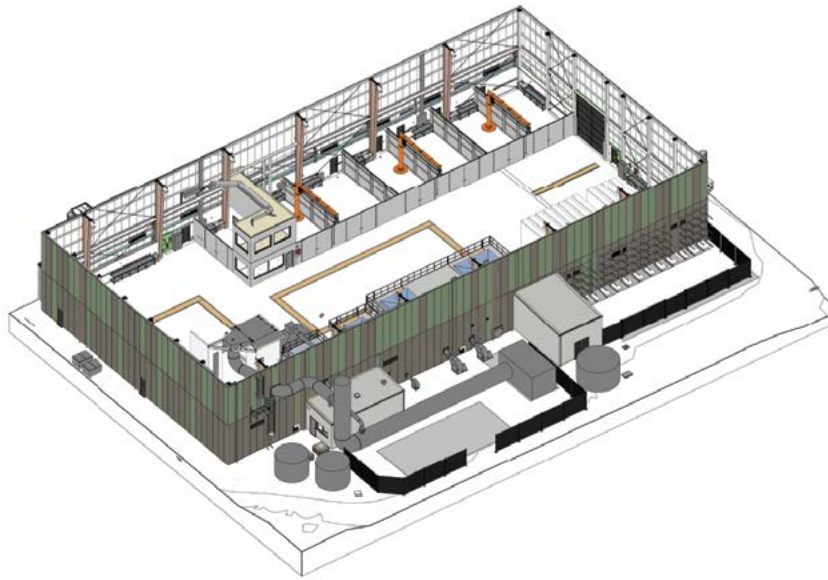
Facilities for the future

We need to adapt our research and testing capability to reflect the changes in building design and building methods as well as the evolving performance standards that form the Building Code.

Modern building designs introduce significantly more combustible content into the construction – not just the cladding but also substrates and linings. Driven by the desire to build energy-efficient, sustainable and low-carbon buildings, the use of timber for constructing tall buildings is growing in New Zealand and internationally. More research and testing is needed to provide confidence in predicting fire safety performance and structural integrity of the built environment.

The best way to maintain and build confidence in fire engineering design tools and new materials is to observe and test in as close to realistic, but controlled, conditions as possible. Our new fire laboratory and structures laboratory will allow us to undertake advanced research and testing at full scale. For example, full scale fire façade testing will be conducted within the new fire laboratory, which simulates a 3 to 4-storey building.





When designing the new facilities, we had the needs of the people who use them front of mind. The design incorporates workflow and safety-in-design principles and provides collaboration spaces. Dedicated, secure specimen preparation areas and viewing spaces will allow us to provide a better client experience as well as showcase our work to visitor groups.

We have also made conscious decisions for our design to be environmentally sustainable and to lessen our overall environmental impact. This includes having an integrated fire laboratory extraction system, which significantly improves the quality of the air we release into the environment. We will use environmentally certified building materials and have initiatives to effectively manage stormwater and minimise power and water usage.

Modern procurement practice

BRANZ has benefited from adopting an early contractor involvement procurement approach. Having contractor involvement in the design stages provided advice on staging, material use and overall buildability. It also deepened our understanding of the project risks and mitigations, particularly with respect to some of the more complex aspects of this technical project together with keeping BRANZ operational during construction.

The principles of the Construction Sector Accord and Government Construction Procurement Guidelines are being applied as we contract the construction phase to ensure risk sits where it can best be managed.

These are exciting times for BRANZ. The redevelopment is the second significant improvement of our campus since the refurbishment of the main buildings on the east side of the campus completed in 2012.

