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Media Statement

Seismic update Waiapu Cathedral

Diocese can now begin process to decide way forward for Cathedral earthquake strengthening

Yesterday, the Waiapu Board of Diocesan Trustees, owner of Napier's Waiapu Cathedral, shared the latest independent seismic report with the cathedral community and Napier City Council.

Since 2013 it has been known that the Waiapu Cathedral bell tower is earthquake prone. A fresh risk assessment of the cathedral has been completed to understand how the building measures up against the latest building standards.

The Rt Reverend Andrew Hedge, Bishop of Waiapu says: "The latest seismic report shows the building's overall rating is 20% of new build standard, reflecting the low rating of the bell tower and the nave (each 20%).

"The remaining parts of the cathedral have been assessed at between 25% and 40% of new build standard; compared 34% required by the Building Act."

According to MBIE's guidelines on seismic assessments, while a low %NBS rating indicates a heightened life safety risk in the event of an earthquake, it does not mean the building is imminently dangerous.

Since the first assessment in 2013, the parish has taken a number of precautionary health and safety measures to limit capacity in the nave (main body of the cathedral) and restrict access to the bell tower.

"In light of the most recent report, staff will be moved from the bell tower to other parts of the building and for the time being, we will be closing the bell tower," says Bishop Hedge.

"We are now awaiting Napier City Council to advise us of their requirements under the regulations.

"We are also now able to start the process to investigate the risks to remaining open and to begin costing the remediation work required. Once we have this detail, we will be able to turn our attention to the matter of funding for the necessary seismic works to bring our beloved Cathedral to the required standard."

The WSP report is available on the Diocese website www.waiapu.com

ENDS

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