

23 June 2025

Transport and Infrastructure Committee  
Parliament Buildings  
Wellington

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**Vector Limited submission on the Building and Construction (Small Stand-alone Dwellings) Amendment Bill**

1. Vector Limited ("**Vector**") is New Zealand's largest distributor of electricity, supplying more than 629,000 electricity connections between Papakura and Wellsford.
2. We welcome the opportunity to submit on the Building and Construction (Small Stand-alone Dwellings) Amendment Bill ("**Bill**").
3. While we support the intent of the Bill to increase the supply of small houses for all New Zealanders, we emphasise the need for this building and construction to occur with appropriate safeguards, specifically minimum safe distances from overhead electricity lines.
4. Minimum safe distances from overhead lines are prescribed in the New Zealand Electrical Code of Practice for Electrical Safe Distances: 2001 ("**ECP 34**") and all building and construction in New Zealand must comply with ECP 34. The issue we are seeing on our network, and that is occurring across the country, is that there is little awareness and/or compliance with ECP 34. This is resulting in buildings being constructed dangerously close to overhead electricity networks across the country.
5. The Bill provides that a consent-exempt granny flat must meet the Building Code. Because minimum safe distances from overhead electrical networks are not contained within the Building Code, compliance with the Building Code as it stands does not ensure that granny flats are safe to inhabit. A building of any size could be compliant with the Building Code and still be too close to overhead electricity lines.
6. If the Bill proceeds without appropriate safeguards, we are concerned for public safety and the likelihood of serious injury or death from electrical hazards.
7. We ask that the Committee, in its report back to the House, recommends that the Building Code be amended to include a new clause to ensure these small dwellings, and indeed all buildings, are constructed at a safe distance from electrical assets. This change would facilitate construction of small dwellings as the Bill intends, while ensuring they are constructed safely and efficiently, aligning regulatory settings with legislative intent.
8. We suggest the creation of a dedicated Clause F10 "Safe distances from electrical hazards" to ensure that ECP 34 is afforded the visibility and certainty of scope that such an important issue warrants, avoiding further risk of injury and fatality.

Suggested drafting for new Clause F10 in the Building Code:

**Clause F10 – Safe distances from electrical hazards**

**Provisions**

***Objective***

**F10.1** The objective of this provision is to prevent injury or death involving electrical hazards.

***Functional requirement***

**F10.2** Buildings shall be constructed, and all construction and building work shall be performed, at a safe distance from overhead electrical lines and other structures associated with the conveyance of electricity.

***Performance***

F10.3 Buildings shall be constructed, and all construction and building work shall be performed, in strict accordance with all requirements of NZECP 34:2001 (New Zealand Electrical Code of Practice for Electrical Safe Distances) and maintain the minimum safe distances set out within it.

9. Vector wishes to be heard by the Committee.

Yours sincerely

**Aimee Gulliver**

GM Public Policy and Government Relations