

## Building consent boom for Invercargill

The Invercargill City Council has seen a 50 per cent increase in building consent values compared to the same time last year.

**BUILDING** Services Manager Brendan Monaghan said between July 1 and October 31, Council received 584 applications valued at \$46,056,403, up from 486 applications valued at \$29,948,165 during the same period in 2017.

Mr Monaghan said the value of the applications for residential building consents was in line with previous years, but the total value of the consent applications was increased by major commercial developments.

The value of residential building consents applied for was about \$19 million, while the value of commercial building consents was \$22m, which was unusual, he said.

“Usually we see the total value of commercial building consents is about half the value of residential consents applied for.”

There was also an increase in applications for building consents in relation to solid fuel heaters, as people install heating which complies with the Regional Air Plan, Mr Monaghan said.

Meanwhile, Council has commissioned an external review of Building Services, as councils throughout the country experience a shortage in building control officers.

Council Chief Executive Clare Hadley said it was acknowledged industry-wide there was an issue for councils to attract and retain skilled building control staff in the present labour market.

“Across the country, building inspectors are leaving council employment and becoming contractors – seeing the opportunity to earn higher incomes for a period,” Mrs Hadley said.

This meant Invercargill City Council was considering investing in technology to assist in processing consent applications, and looking at different software to enable electronic lodgement of building consents.

Mrs Hadley said the external review should identify options for improvements to Council’s approach to processing and inspections, and that it will provide guidance on how to use various strategies to increase resources available to Building Services.

It is expected the external review will be completed by the end of November.

Mrs Hadley said Council was committed to a strong customer focus, and to investing in training and technology for staff to ensure the best experience possible for those customers.

## Deductions available through payroll

Council’s payroll team can now deduct charity donations, known as ‘payroll giving’, and rates payments from your pay before it hits your bank account.

Employees who make regular payroll donations from their pay are eligible to receive an instant tax credit benefit (rather than claiming tax back for donation at the end of each financial year).

Employees who make donations this way receive a tax credit based on the amount they donate in each pay.

To donate to your favourite charity through payroll, you need to fill out a Payroll Giving – Deductions form, which is available on the intranet under Policies and Forms.

Any charity you choose to donate to this way must be a registered charity, like World Vision, the Cancer Society, or St John’s. You can check if your chosen charity is registered by visiting: [register.charities.govt.nz/CharitiesRegister/Search](http://register.charities.govt.nz/CharitiesRegister/Search)

Staff and elected members can now also pay their rates via payroll.

To register for this, you must fill out the deduction section of the Payroll Giving – Deductions form.

Forms must be received by the Payroll team on the Friday preceding pay day for it to take effect in that pay cycle.

If you are having trouble filling out the form, or need help, contact the Payroll team.