



Media Release

Tuesday, 19 June, 2012

New Neighbourhood Support Coordinator starts

Selwyn District Council has appointed a new staff member to organise neighbourhood support groups and civil defence community response teams.

Sue Jenkins is working with existing neighbourhood support groups and looking at the potential for setting up new groups, which provide a useful contact point for newcomers to the district.

“These groups work together to create safer communities and to make their neighbourhoods nice places to live in,” Mrs Jenkins says.

Neighbourhood support groups used to be focused on crime prevention, but post-earthquakes they have morphed into providing a more general support for people. Selwyn District groups are now managed from Rolleston, rather than Christchurch.

“All our communities have realised how important it is to know your neighbours. And the Council’s responsibility is to ensure communities are supported and resourced to make that easier – that’s where I come in,” she says.

Another side to her role is to organise Community Response Teams so there’s one in each township or rural area.

“During an adverse event, the Selwyn District Council relays any relevant information to the Community Response Teams and they will filter it down to the community through neighbourhood support groups. And the groups will make sure they are in touch with the Community Response Teams to give information back to Council about where there are issues.

“We saw how very essential these groups were during the earthquakes. The lesson was that areas that had these systems managed better and got through as a community.”

Council support includes training, organisation of teams and helping in the set up of processes that will work.

Mrs Jenkins will identify who in each community should be and wants to be in the voluntary teams – people like community committee members, health professionals, business, church and school representatives. She will also organise meeting places for teams

Mrs Jenkins has lived in Selwyn for 25 years and previously managed Rossendale Restaurant for many years, following an early career in the police force.

If you would like to become involved with either a neighbourhood support group or Community Response Team, contact Sue Jenkins on 347 2977 or Darfield 318 8338, sue.jenkins@selwyn.govt.nz.

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For more information, contact Sue Jenkins on 347 2977. Photograph available on request.