



Media release
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Jenny provides a helping hand through rebuild

After almost four years of waiting, the Brand family from Prebbleton are pleased to have moved into a new home after having been living in a shed because their home suffered earthquake damage.

Supporting them along the way has been Jenny Harkerss, Selwyn District Council's Community Recovery Support Officer.

Jenny has been helping Melissa and Ken Brand, as well as many other families, with their earthquake related problems since the September 2010 quakes.

"Jenny has been with us right from the word go almost, so it was great to have her here with us on our move in day," says Mrs Brand. "She really does go the extra mile and it's nice to have someone make the whole experience of dealing with insurance and builders a little easier."

Ken and Melissa have been living in 'The Flat' for the past seven months while the rebuild was underway.

"The house needed to be demolished and rebuilt from the ground up and the cracked driveway had to be replaced. While this was being done, we were essentially living in a run-down shed which was terribly cold and damp," says Melissa Brand.

"We try not to complain but it hasn't been a pleasant experience and we are extremely happy to be moving into our newly built home," she says. "It's been a long time coming!"

Mrs Harkerss says there are a number of people in the same position here in Selwyn. Since the quakes, Jenny has been in contact with more than 400 families. She is currently supporting 32 families – most of whom are waiting for repairs to be completed.

Jenny has been helping people to resolve their earthquake claims over the past four years so she has a good understanding of the processes and systems organisations use such as EQC and insurance companies and is able to provide advice on how people can progress their claims.

"My days are usually varied as I provide support for a number of different people with all sorts of earthquake-related issues. Generally these people need a hand to understand the repairing and rebuilding process and advice on the companies they deal with," says Mrs Harkerss.

"More often than not, people just need someone to talk to that they can trust," she adds.

Mrs Harkerss says it's all about treating people with respect, as families may often feel like they are being unfairly treated or not fully informed in the process. "I hope that by being a

support person who can offer advice to these people, I can walk alongside them on the road to recovery.”

Jenny is available to help anyone who may need help with their earthquake related issues and can be contacted on 0274 352 594 or at jenny.harkerss@selwyn.govt.nz.

The Selwyn Earthquake Relief Fund was recently transferred into the Mayoral Relief Fund and is still available to help people who were living in Selwyn during the earthquakes and are experiencing hardship as a result of them.

For more information about the fund, contact Jenny, or Bernadette Ryan on 03 347 2830.

Ends

Photo attached:

Move in day: (left to right) Melissa and Ken Brand, holding their new set of house keys, with Selwyn District Council's Community Recovery Support Officer Jenny Harkerss.

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