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Canterbury thanks New Zealand

Canterbury is marking the one-year anniversary of the September 4 earthquake by thanking New Zealand for its compassion, support and generosity during the last year.

The Mayors of Christchurch, Waimakariri, and Selwyn and Environment Canterbury Chair of Commissioners have joined to personally thank all those who have offered support to their residents in the last year to help rebuild their communities.

Christchurch Mayor Bob Parker said the earthquake on September 4 2010 destroyed homes, devastated communities and displaced many people, however, for Christchurch the worst was still to come.

"No-one could have imagined a year ago that Christchurch would be struck six months later by an aftershock which would result in the loss of 181 lives and cripple our Central City.

"There have been many dark days in the last year. As a community, Canterbury has been overwhelmed by the support from throughout New Zealand and the globe. This support came in many forms, from simple messages to practical and practical assistance on the ground to generous donations.

"For everyone who has helped, please consider this a personal thank you from Canterbury – we are indebted to your generosity and extremely humbled by your compassion for our region."

The anniversary is also being used to thank the emergency services, organisations such as Red Cross, church groups, the Farmy Army and Student Volunteer Army and the multitude of others who helped support and protect the community during the four events.

In the last year, Christchurch City has replaced more than 10km of major sewer pressure mains, 2km of sewer gravity pipes and 16km of water mains, repaired 9100 water mains, 53 water wells and 605 private landowners' sewer pipes and built 11km of stopbanks to prevent flooding.

Selwyn Mayor Kelvin Coe said the community's response to all these events had been inspiring. "It is something we can all be proud of as we remember the events of September 4 that started all this and we work together to complete this massive recovery project."

"Many houses in Selwyn have already been repaired and the first house rebuild was completed in Hororata recently with several more close to completion.

"To date, the Selwyn District Council has completed 135 consents worth \$13.5 million in building projects and 13 consents for new dwellings. There are still an estimated 3000 homes to repair in Selwyn and possibly around 100 to rebuild, so the recovery will take a year or two yet to complete.

"We've completed earthquake-related repairs to facilities, infrastructure, roading and supported the community to the total tune of \$4.4 million. A further \$2 million to \$2.5 million is expected to be incurred."

"We couldn't have done all this without the support of our residents and people from around the country, who have donated time, money and effort. Thanks from Selwyn!"

Dame Margaret Bazley, Environment Canterbury Chair of Commissioners, thanked everyone and all organisations which had reached out to help Canterbury.

"Civil Defence nationally and regionally had co-ordinated a huge amount of valued expertise and resources," she said. "Experienced emergency management people from local authorities, regional councils and other agencies were made immediately available by their employers for the Canterbury response.

"The knowledge and commitment they brought made a huge difference to the way the local emergency management staff were able to co-ordinate actions. Their whole-hearted participation continues to make a huge difference to the outcomes of quake-affected communities," she said.

Dame Margaret said that the ties between city and rural communities and between young and not-so-young had also been hugely strengthened through the actions of the Army and Student armies, locals and out-of-towners, working together to restore people's lives. "These numerous acts of kindness and selflessness will never be forgotten," she said.

Waimakariri Mayor David Ayers, whose district includes the badly damaged town of Kaiapoi and beach settlements of The Pines Beach and Kairaki, said that despite a difficult and, at times, frustrating year in Waimakariri, the community has held together very well.

"Changing seismic views have meant that well-laid plans to remediate the land have had to be abandoned. While many residents now face the challenge of leaving red zones and finding new places to live, they are showing amazing strength."

"We are also starting to see increasing interest in property development in Waimakariri including a total of up to 1930 lots that are upcoming or available now in Kaiapoi for new housing. These lots are creating opportunities for displaced red zone residents who want to stay in the district."

"The help and expressions of support that have poured into the Kaiapoi area, particularly after the September 4 earthquake, is testament to the generosity of our wider District, the rest of New Zealand and our friends overseas. This support has helped our worst affected families face these very difficult times and we owe you all a deep debt of gratitude."

For more information contact:

Jan McCarthy, Senior Communications Adviser

Mobile: 027 507 1027

Email: jan.mccarthy@ccc.govt.nz