

CHRISTCHURCH QUAKE

Campbell retrieves daughters from quake

by Keira Stephenson

Within 45 minutes of feeling the Christchurch earthquake in Westport, Peter Campbell was on the way to retrieve his three daughters and another local, Ashley Tipping.

The local accountant and Buller District councillor received a distressed call yesterday afternoon from his daughter, Beth, 22, who lives in the Christchurch suburb of Richmond.

A house in her street had collapsed, the street had liquefied, and it was a lot worse than last time, she told him.

Mr Campbell couldn't get in touch with his youngest daughter, Hannah, 18, although he heard she was alright. She had just started university on Monday.

The drive through Christchurch to the suburb of Richmond was devastating, said Mr Campbell.

The road outside the Palms shopping centre was "absolutely completely" destroyed.

Sewerage pipes had collapsed and sewage was oozing out.

The front of a truck had fallen into a hole, bridges were destroyed and roads bubbled and buckled.

Some streets were too flooded to drive.

Every single street in his daughters' neighbourhood had turned to liquefied sand, which came up to the bonnets of some parked cars.

His eldest daughter, Katie, had been at the gym next to the Canterbury TV building that collapsed. He

reached her Christchurch home before she did.

It took her four-and-a-half hours to travel from the central city to Richmond, Mr Campbell said. She had started in a car but abandoned it and continued on foot.

The 24-year-old nursing student was totally traumatised by the event and he didn't know how she would be able to go back to Christchurch.

While Katie and Beth's flat was structurally undamaged, drawers and shelves had toppled. Beth was working on the computer when the quake struck. It pitched off the desk and hit her on the leg.

Mr Campbell said the infrastructure of the city had been destroyed and would take years to repair.

"Christchurch is like a home town, but you look at it now and think how the hell are they going to rebuild anything and when are they going to have the next shake."

Ashley Tipping's father, local courier Lester Tipping said he spent an hour pressing redial on the phone to try and get through to his daughter.

She had been in Canterbury University library when books, computers, shelves and lights started flying.

She had been extremely upset, but finding other Westport students helped.

"In no time we found out that Peter was on his way and Ashley and Hannah were together as were Hamish Knudsen and Abby Thomas. They all pooled together and arrived home at 1am," said Mr Tipping.

Supermarkets supplies not badly affected

by Sonia Beal

Westport's main supermarket says it won't know how its grocery supplies will be affected until they receive damage reports from the Christchurch quake.

The main distribution centre supplying New World are located in Christchurch. Reports so far say damage is minimal compared to the first earthquake last year.

Westport New World manager Justin Vaudrey said a crisis meeting about the state of Christchurch Foodstuffs' warehouses was held this morning.

The distribution centres had had no significant damage, but orders would be delayed because of staff shortages and road problems.

"It's not bad - they've suffered no product loss,

which they did last time. So it's just a matter of getting staff in to help with those distribution centres," Mr Vaudrey said.

Staff numbers were down because many were dealing with personal problems.

He needed information about the quake's impact on Foodstuffs' small suppliers to know how the supermarket supplies would be affected.

Stock levels were still good at the moment. He understood the issue wasn't the damage, but was having enough staff to run the distribution centres.

"It's the people who will affect how we get back on our feet."

He encouraged customers to check for updates at the Foodstuffs website.

People still trapped at CTV

Auckland, Feb 23 NZPA

Hopes 15 people have been rescued from the Canterbury TV building in Christchurch this morning have been dashed, with police saying no one had been recovered alive from that site.

As the Government declared a national state of emergency, a Fire Service spokesman told Radio New Zealand 15 people had been pulled alive from a "pocket" in the collapsed building after using cameras to locate them. But police then told NZPA the report was incorrect, and the 15 had not been saved.

Seventy-five people have now been confirmed as dead with another 300 unaccounted for after the 6.3 magnitude quake struck the city yesterday afternoon.

Christchurch Mayor Bob Parker said 55 bodies had been identified and the remaining 20 were still

unidentified. Rescuers at the CTV building said they were continuing to use the camera to search for more people.

Another person was pulled out alive from the ruined Pyne Gould building.

Police Superintendent Dave Cliff said not all of the 300 people missing were necessarily dead or injured, as some may have left the area of their own accord and not contacted others to say where they were.

Mr Parker said about 200 defence personnel were on the ground helping with rescue efforts.

Christchurch City Council said damage from the earthquake meant there would not be enough water to meet demand in Christchurch in the coming days.

Water supply was not functioning on the eastern side of the city.

Mine fund won't accept donations after quake

Wellington, Feb 22

The trust set up to support victims of the Pike River mine tragedy will no longer accept donations in the wake of the Christchurch earthquake.

Pike River Disaster Relief Trust chairman and Greymouth mayor Tony Kokshoorn said he was "amazed that people just kept on giving", but urged people to consider donating to the quake's victims instead.

"The tragic events that have occurred in Canterbury today mean that our receiving of donations is officially closed and we would like anyone able to donate to consider the Red Cross appeal for Canterbury," Mr Kokshoorn said.

"The response and support of everyone standing beside the West Coast community has been out of this world. Now is the time to show that West Coast spirit and get behind our family in Canterbury."

He said earlier that the trust had received more than

20,000 individual donations totalling more than \$7 million.

Some of the donations to the trust had been tagged for a specific purpose -- memorial or payments to redundant workers -- but about \$6.5m had been given to provide financial help to the families of the mine incident's 29 victims.

Mr Kokshoorn added that since an initial distribution just before Christmas the trust had focused on developing the best way to distribute the remaining money to the families.

He expected a decision next week and then the trust would distribute funds into individual family trusts.

The families would have discretion on beneficiaries but the trust would insist on family trust deeds protecting the interests of dependents of the mine victims where relevant. NZPA

Christchurch 'a war zone'

by Kip Brook

This is a war zone; but no sign of the enemy. People crushed to death; people trapped; people missing. Friends are missing. People's lives shattered forever.

Christchurch's latest earthquake just before 1pm yesterday is New Zealand's worst natural disaster.

The mood and atmosphere around the streets and suburbs of Christchurch is one of anxiety, fear and shock.

The first I knew about what was to come was an ascending and violent rumbling noise. A 1.8 metre-high wall-to-wall bookcase behind my desk tumbled down on me. Books flew right across the room like paper darts. I was trapped for a time but in between the jolts managed to squeeze under a desk before being thrown to the other side of the room.

Big heavy bookcase down, but I was lucky; so many were not so lucky. I feared for my family and rushed to my ex-wife's work she is an executive officer at a disabled school.

The roads were leaking sand and liquefaction. Some cars had fallen into holes as the ground had opened up. The power was down, traffic lights out and mayhem at intersections. A big dog, spooked, was hit by two

cars but didn't survive the third hit.

At her school, Chrissy was out in the field with the students and their biggest issue was how to ferry disabled ones home - no buses, taxis under pressure, no phone or text contact with parents. No way of contacting parents. They had no idea of the catastrophe around them - especially in the city.

As I drive to our house another aftershock and the ground, the power poles, walls and earth wobbles around violently liked fiercely shaken jelly. At home our contents and so many of our treasures and worldly possessions shattered in front of my eyes.

It's no different to any other home in Christchurch - windows, mirrors, glasses, crockery. All broken. But we are alive and will rebuild.

The streets are gridlocked as those that can leave the central business district (CBD). People abandon cars and start running or walk away from danger, desperate to get home to check on family.

For hours the phones are out and texting or calls are out.

I have a half-hour's walk to my office but I come across an 87-year-old pensioner Irene Grenfel. The busses are out. And she is walking 8-9km to her home. She is frail and cold, pushing a supermarket trolley with

two bags.

I help her on her way home. We can't push the trolley through the liquefaction as it's like soft wet sand.

I lift and carry and help her over intersections where water from the liquefaction is flooding the roads. St Andrews College playing fields are awash. Hundreds of students stranded, not knowing how to get home or exactly what to do.

Irene despairs as she looks at some of Christchurch's grandest old homes gaping, collapsed, totally 'bombed out' looking.

I have not heard if my children are safe and Irene edges closer to home. I flag down a police car and tell her of Irene's plight and they go to her rescue.

Power still out, no phones working, and no water. I feel the bruising coming out in my back from the bookcase and feel a little dazed and disorientated. Everything is closed, more buildings collapse in front of my eyes.

By nightfall, texting is restored. All my family are fine but we have not heard from one of my daughter's friends in the CBD. We prepare for a long night.

People are trying to be positive; so many help each other. This is a special and strong community. But a lot of tears to be shed yet.

I am still shaking and in shock.

Search and rescue teams work around the clock

Wellington, NZPA

Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) teams are working around the clock to relieve the "chronic pain" of quake-ravaged Christchurch.

Fifty-five people have been confirmed dead following yesterday's devastating 6.3 magnitude quake, but the toll is expected to rise as more bodies are found.

Rescuers today said their main priority was finding those still trapped in the rubble.

New Zealand Fire Service special operations national manager Jim Stuart-Black described Christchurch as "a city in chronic pain".

"We have a number of significantly compromised buildings of different building materials, height, shapes, sizes, parapets, smashed glass, damaged roads, liquefaction - it's really a scene of a city in trauma," he said.

His team of search and rescue specialists were using a variety of techniques and tools to locate and rescue those in collapsed buildings.

"First of all we interview people near the buildings

at the time, they may know about the occupancy, then we go through a process of different search techniques ranging from the use of canine search and technical search."

About a dozen search and rescue dogs were assisting rescuers with imagery, thermal imagery and sound equipment.

Mr Stuart-Black said USAR members underwent years of specialist training to ascertain and reduce risk, both to themselves and those they rescue.

"In terms of our own people, it is fundamentally risky work but what we do is apply risk control measures to ensure everything that we do is a calculated risk rather than an accidental risk," he said.

Some of those measures included the stabilisation of sites and turning off utilities such as water, gas and electricity.

He said those trapped were often injured but the situation became increasingly dangerous when the temperature dropped and they ran out of food and water.

"Also some people are physically trapped with loads on their body, that creates another series of challenges for them in terms of what it does to them and how we release them."

Police today said a number of people had to have limbs amputated to get them out.

About 190 USAR members are currently in Christchurch but the number of rescuers could swell to about 500 with the addition of extra police, local LandSAR and international USAR teams, Mr Stuart-Black said.

All rescuers worked to a set of international standards as coordinated by the local authorities.

Mr Stuart-Black said the rescuers were highly experienced and "not immune" to the suffering around them.

"Our immediate thoughts are to those who have been directly impacted (but) it's about using the skills and training that we use on a daily basis," he said.

"You get on and do the job that you're here to do."

HAGAR THE HORRIBLE



By Chris Browne

