



CHRISTCHURCH

Quake

What lies ahead for suburbs?

■ ON THE SIDE

CTV owner talked about moving day before quake

Wellington, NZPA

Murray Wood, managing director of Canterbury TV, talked about shifting the business just a day before he died in the building's collapse in Tuesday's devastating earthquake.

His business partner in CTV, Nick Smith, said he had been talking about a shift with Mr Wood, just 24 hours before the building collapse.

"We were sitting in the office there, ironically talking about the future of CTV and where we should be housed, because the building really in our current model, we should have been thinking of looking somewhere else. And I'm afraid, we were a bit too late, weren't we?" Mr Smith, who is the company chairman, told TV3.

Fifteen CTV staff are believed to be among an estimated to 122 people missing in the building rubble in Madras Street. That figure includes more than 80 students and staff from language school King's Education Ltd.

China Television reported 21 students from China were listed as missing, at least eight had been confirmed as buried in the CTV building. They said a total of 32 Chinese were registered at the school.

Police have termed the collapse scene unsurvivable.

Mr Wood, a father of six, was described by long time friend Robert Bijl as an energetic and enthusiastic music lover with a big heart.

"He's extremely kind, extremely generous, enormously talented, very dedicated to his family and he adored his wife, Nicki," Mr Bijl told the New Zealand Herald.

Damage 10 times worse - contractor

Auckland, NZPA

A Christchurch roofing contractor says damage to the city from Tuesday's deadly aftershock is much greater than that caused by the 7.1 magnitude quake which caused billions of dollars in damage in September.

Tuesday's earthquake at 6.3 on the Richter scale was not as severe as the September 4 quake, but was shallower and closer to the centre of the city, so its impact was far greater.

Tony Stuart, who had been working long hours repairing roofs and chimneys damaged in the September quake, said he had seen far more damage this time round: "It is 10 times worse".

"Last time I could go out and fix up chimneys and roofs and make people safe, but this time I don't know where to start."

The cost of the September 4 earthquake was likely to be about \$6 billion, but Prime Minister John Key said Tuesday's earthquake could end up costing up to \$16b.

While at least 76 people died in the latest quake - that number was expected to rise - no one died in the September 4 earthquake.

Damage caused on Tuesday was far more widespread and individual house damage far more severe than it had been in September, Mr Stuart said.

Apart from massive damage to some commercial and historic buildings, residential houses had moved and twisted on their foundations.

Many roads were impassable and would need to be completely rebuilt.

His house in the Cashmere Hills was uninhabitable with severe damage to the outside walls, the foundations, most of the contents and it has no water or power.

He had been waiting for damage from the September 4 earthquake to be assessed when the latest earthquake struck.

Mr Stuart said he had no idea where he and his family would now live but he had "work coming out of my ears now".

"It has taken away our heritage, but it has not taken our spirit."

Six months of aftershocks after the September earthquake, another earthquake and damage to his house had all led to a huge emotional stress.

"The emotions just keep rising to the surface. That is one of the hardest parts...controlling your emotions. I don't think you can control them, you just have to let go at times."

Be first with the News

by Matthew Backhouse of NZPA, Christchurch

People in Christchurch's badly quake-hit eastern suburbs are struggling to rebuild broken neighbourhoods they fear may never be liveable again.

Streets are awash with liquefaction that has engulfed cars and threatened the foundations of homes. Potholes litter the roads, bridges have been damaged, and the Avon River is swollen, threatening to flood already damaged houses. Power, water and sewage are yet to be restored.

Rob Bowkett, who lives in a rented two-storey house on Kingsford St in Burwood, said he hoped his house could be rebuilt after it was flooded with slurry and split into three by the quake.

"We're hoping, but where do you move to? Where do you go? We've got five kids, we can't live in a three-bedroom house," he told NZPA.

Mr Bowkett said the whole street had been badly affected by liquefaction after the September 4 quake. He points out more than half a dozen houses that neighbours abandoned at the time.

Now, after a second round of liquefaction, Mr Bowkett said he did not know if there was anything that could be done about the street.

"I don't know whether it's worth keeping. It's terrible," he said.

"You wouldn't want to live down here anyway. There's nothing. It's going to take years."

The damage was "heartbreaking", and was especially hard on his children, three of whom were under three years old.

"They really struggle. It's hard to keep them going."

Bob Bamber, who also lives in the area, said his house was unliveable.

"The roof's slumped, a concrete tile roof. I'll give it a week or so and if it hasn't caved in I'll probably move back, you know. Because what else do you do?"

A new race car he had just bought was also badly damaged. "I had my first race in it last weekend. It looks like it'll probably never have another one, but it was good fun."

Mr Bamber said he was worried about opportunistic criminals striking in the area. A number of houses had been burgled after the last quake, "some of them more than once", which had put a damper on efforts to rebuild.

"If people start coming and taking your posses-

sions off you, you lose interest pretty quick," he said.

In nearby New Brighton, Colin Bolton was hard at work shovelling the slurry away from his car, which had been buried up to the bonnet.

Mr Bolton said he had lived on Wattle Drive for 32 years, but now his home would likely be demolished.

"The house will be bowled over. They can't repair it, when the land underneath goes."

The house had suffered several cracks in its brickwork and liquefaction had flooded the back garden to more than knee-high.

Mr Bolton's wife, Anne, said the neighbourhood had been fine after the September quake.

"We didn't have any of this. No, nothing. Only, you know, how the paper cracks inside, but that's all.

"But you can see the house is breaking its back, it's all through the foundations. And when you're inside, you're walking downhill.

"It's all gone."

Grandmother Denise Hopkins said it was difficult caring for her grandchildren when there was no running water.

"The grandkids, they don't understand that you've got to restrict water or food."

Ms Hopkins was filling soft drink bottles from a tank stationed at Shirley High School, because she did not have any larger container.

"We tried to buy containers but none of the shops are open, so we just come up and down. We came twice yesterday and now again today."

In Merivale, Susie Maclean was unpacking groceries from her car after most of the food in her kitchen was destroyed in the quake.

She said the supermarket had been low on essentials, despite her turning up early in the day.

"They'd sold out of critical things, things that we really need like Janola wipes for cleaning bench tops.

"There were no baby wipes at all, there were no hand sanitisers, those sorts of things - and those at the moment are pretty precious to us because you need to keep yourself well and clean."

Her husband Douglas said the quake would forever change the character of the suburbs.

"There was a little cluster of shops here that's gone ... That's something it takes out of the community that's going to be really hard to get back."



Colin Bolton lives on Wattle Drive in North New Brighton, digging the silt to try to get to the car and the garden shed. (Photo - NZPA / Pam Johnson)

Quake refugees swap tales of survival

by Chris Foley, Christchurch, AFP

Earthquake refugees swapped tales of survival and loss at a packed shelter for those left homeless and destitute by the deadly tremor in New Zealand's second-biggest city.

The spartan accommodation at a school gymnasium, strewn with sleeping bags and blankets, provided little comfort to those who escaped with little more than their lives.

Up to 300 people found shelter at the hastily arranged welfare centre in Burnside High School, where neighbours did their best to provide food and clothing to those whose lives have been shattered.

Among them was Christchurch resident Sene, for whom a romantic seaside birthday celebration with his girlfriend turned into an apocalyptic nightmare when a deadly earthquake hit the city on Tuesday.

As his car shook uncontrollably during the 6.3 magnitude tremor, the 23-year-old thought the world was going to end and learned your life really does flash before your eyes when staring death in the face.

Sene, who declined to give his surname, had taken the day off work to be with his girlfriend and they were parked in an idyllic bay at Lyttelton, on the city's outskirts, when the quake struck, killing at least 98 people.

"It felt like the end of the world. I thought my car was going to break into pieces, and my life really flashed before my eyes," he told AFP.

"And the noise. It seemed like the hills were going to fall over. It was a nerve-wracking sound."

As he made his way to his home in the central city, Sene said he saw horrifying scenes of dazed and bleeding people fleeing in the other direction from the carnage in the inner city.

Aftershocks dislodged loosened masonry, which rained down on terrified residents who had run onto the street from packed shops and offices.

"There were rocks everywhere, people were crying and bleeding. Then when I got home I found my place was pretty much destroyed."

Some at the centre gathered and swapped stories, while others sat silent and dazed as they stared into the distance. A group of children took shots at a basketball hoop in the school grounds.

Many had been still struggling to get back on their feet after suffering considerable loss and trauma in the 7.0 earthquake which hit Christchurch six months ago, damaging 100,000 buildings.

"I'm in an awfully distressed state," said Peter Kine, 70, who was forced to vacate his apartment.

"I didn't like the other one either, it was damn frightening."

"I was afraid for my life. I thought I was going to die."

Holly Phelan, 21, clutching her three-week-old baby told how she staggered home from a shopping mall to find her house a mess and without electricity.

A neighbour heated up water on his barbecue so she could warm the baby's milk.

Holly was with her mother Diane Burke, who battled through cracked and congested roads to reach her daughter and granddaughter when her own home was destroyed.

"Everything was on the floor at my place, the TVs were smashed and the place is structurally damaged. My whole life was in ruins and then when I saw Holly's place we came here."

They have now been forced to find alternative accommodation far north of Christchurch as the welfare centre, in a city still hit by power cuts, lacks the facilities for them to safely feed and care for the baby.

Like many people at the centre, Pat Lightowler and Nancy Lee moved into the refuge because they were too scared to stay in their homes alone.

"I feel traumatised," said Lee.

"I had just got out of my friend's car and was walking into my music lesson when it happened. Then the front of the building fell down. If I'd been any earlier I would have been caught in the building."

"I just thought I was going to die," said Lightowler.



Letitia da Via, left is moving to Wellington to be with family and Elizabeth Jesperse, they are some of the residents at the Kate Sheppard Resthome. (Photo - NZPA / Pam Johnson)

Quake takes toll on elderly

by Matt Backhouse of NZPA, Christchurch

Life without basic amenities in quake-stricken Christchurch is taking its toll on elderly residents, who are eager to move to new accommodation.

Up to 200 elderly residents were being moved from Christchurch yesterday.

Health Minister Tony Ryall told NZPA many rest home residents needed new accommodation as centres were uninhabitable. "Many are being taken home by family members, and others are being moved by the air force to facilities around the South Island."

About 50 independent elderly residents had been referred to welfare centres.

Violet Jones, an 86-year-old resident of the Kate Sheppard Retirement Village in badly-hit New Brighton, said she had been moved from her damaged unit to a second-storey part of the facility.

"They moved us up from down below because of all the floor, all that muck," she told NZPA.

However, she said sanitation remained an issue because they were without working toilets.

"The only thing I'm worried about is the hygiene." Staff had been helpful and were doing their best, Mrs Jones said. "They're working very hard, the office staff. Some people complain, but what can you do? There's so many people."

Mrs Jones said she was going to be moved elsewhere, but she did not yet know to where. Others

at the retirement village were moving to the North Island.

It was particularly hard being without relatives, Mrs Jones said. "I have no relatives here. They're all in England," she said. "I broke down yesterday ... and I said, 'I don't want to come back here.'"

CDHB chief executive David Meates said there were a number of aged residential care centres without water, sewerage and power facilities. Many resthome residents had been taken home with family and friends.

"One of our biggest issues at the moment is our aged residential care sector," he said. The elderly would be sent to the South Island, though some could be sent to the North Island, he said.

Patients from Christchurch Hospitals have also been moved out of the region to other areas, to free up beds for quake victims.

Social Development Minister Paula Bennett said Work and Income staff calling elderly people living alone in Christchurch have only been able to get hold of about a third of them.

So far 10,234 calls have been made and 3311 people have answered those calls.

About 50 elderly people have been referred to welfare centres.

Welfare centres are operating in Burnside High School, Cowles Stadium, Pioneer Stadium and Rangiora Baptist Church.