

Rescued after 25 hours

Wellington, NZPA

The father of a woman pulled from the earthquake-ravaged Pyne Gould Corporation building in central Christchurch yesterday says the family spent a "very sleepless night" before her rescue yesterday afternoon.

Wrapped in blankets, Ann Bodkin was lifted down to an ambulance - after spending 25 hours trapped in the building - to the applause of onlookers who had been waiting on her rescue.

Her family first learnt she was trapped when a workmate called and said they were unable to contact her, Bill Bodkin told Radio New Zealand.

"Then we started to panic a bit."

The family's concerns grew until husband Graham Richardson called at 11am and said police had been in contact with her.

"Police had called him and said that Ann was alive and they'd been in touch with her and actually touched her hand," Mr Bodkin said.

Police said it was going to be a very tricky rescue and it took more than two hours from the time they started to try to reach her until "she actually came out".

The family took it as a sign she was all right when they heard she had "giggled" upon hearing her husband's voice.

The rescue of his daughter was wonderful and a

cause for celebration, Mr Bodkin said.

Mr Richardson told the New Zealand Herald he could not describe the feeling of being told his wife was still alive.

"I was told to get myself down here because she was asking for me. I didn't break any speed limits but I got here pretty quickly," he said.

Ms Bodkin could not turn to look at him as she came out because she was in a neck brace but she did give a giggle.

She had taken cover under a desk or chair when the quake struck and was a bit sore as she had been trapped in a confined space for so long. Other than that, she was fine.

Mr Richardson paid tribute to his wife's rescuers.

"I can't believe the job they've done. Getting her out is just stupendous. I'm a very happy man. I obviously feel for all the other people waiting to hear," he told the newspaper.

Christchurch mayor Bob Parker saw the rescue and said Mr Richardson was very emotional when his wife came out.

"That moment of connection and relief was just palpable," he told the newspaper.

"Ann is one of the miracles of the day. When you feel something like that, it's a moment of hope and optimism."



Rescue workers carry a woman survivor, Ann Bodkin, after she was rescued from the ruins of a collapsed building in central Christchurch. (Photo - REUTERS/Simon Baker)

Earthquake could cost \$16b, trigger interest rate fall

Wellington, NZPA

Christchurch's devastating earthquake may cost \$NZ16 billion and trigger a fall in the cost of money by half a percent as authorities make sure the earthquake does not crush the national economy.

Prime Minister John Key and Finance Minister Bill English said the Government can absorb the cost of the earthquake, and credit rating agency Moody's Investors Service said there was no need to reconsider the country's Aaa credit rating.

Westpac came out with a bold prediction that the Reserve Bank of New Zealand (RBNZ) would slash the official cash rate by 50 basis points to 2.5 percent at its monetary policy statement on March 10, and would not raise the rate again until 2012.

JP Morgan estimated the earthquake would cost \$US12b, Reuters reported. This was much higher than the \$US6b cost of the Christchurch September 4 earthquake and second only to the \$US20.3b cost of the Northridge earthquake in the United States in 1994. "The full economic toll of the earthquake is unknown at this stage," Westpac said.

"But it is immediately clear that the disruption to activity will be greater, and longer lasting, than following the September earthquake. On top of this, the impact on confidence is likely to be much greater and will be felt at a national level."

The RBNZ may cut interest rates when it had been expected to raise them later this year.

The Government will have to borrow more money to cover the costs of the earthquake, but it did not expect the country's credit rating to be downgraded, Mr English said.

"It is a setback but we can handle it. These are bigger costs, but we are in a sound enough position to handle it," he said. "Our economy is fundamentally sound. This is another knock, but we can take it."

The Government would not give details on how much the damage from yesterday's 6.3 magnitude earthquake could cost, but Mr Key would not rule out estimates as high as \$NZ16b.

No one was in a position to assess the cost, Mr Key warned.

He said the Earthquake Commission (EQC) would

treat Tuesday's quake as a separate event to the September 4 one, and he expected the commission to receive another 100,000 claims.

EQC would pay out the first \$1.5b to cover the cost of claims for damage to residential properties. The next \$2.5b would be covered by "reinsurance" overseas and the outstanding balance would be covered by private insurance companies or the Government. "Obviously that is a significant dent in both the resources of EQC, and a significant impact on the reinsurers to the tune of \$5b," Mr Key said.

BNZ head of research Stephen Toplis said trying to estimate the economic impact of quake at this stage was foolish.

"The biggest disservice you can do anybody at the moment is make a stupid estimate of the dollar value of this."

"We're no better placed than anybody else to try and quantify the magnitude," he told NZPA.

However, the economic toll would be far bigger than the impact of September's magnitude 7.1 quake.

"How many businesses in Christchurch, that were

just about to get back on their feet again, have now suffered an impact that, in some cases, could be fatal?"

This time, there was also a more severe psychological impact, due to the rising death and injury toll, on top of the more tangible economic implications.

Mr Toplis said the region's full recovery would take years if not decades.

Christchurch represented about 15 percent of the nation's economy.

"So, we do know from a numerical sense that 15 percent of the New Zealand economy has now stopped," he said.

Due to New Zealand's small size, the whole country would be affected.

ASB chief economist Nick Tuffley told NZPA tourism would also take a big hit, as Christchurch was the gateway to the South Island, with the second biggest international airport in the country.

The Rugby World Cup would have given the region's economy a much-needed boost but whether games would still be held in the city was up in the air.

ON THE SIDE

Missing quake victim's home burgled

Wellington, NZPA

The home of a Christchurch woman missing in the quake-devastated Canterbury TV building has been burgled overnight.

Television producer Donna Manning is thought to be trapped in the building following Tuesday's massive 6.3 magnitude quake.

Her two children were keeping a vigil outside CTV when their house was robbed, increasing the family's suffering, her brother Maurice Gardiner told TVNZ.

"Bad things happen. We are all suffering bad things as a result of this earthquake that we can't help," he said.

"Just respect if you know what that means."

Mr Gardiner said the Manning family was praying for a miracle.

"We of course pray that she will be found alive. We are prepared for the worst."

Quake NZ's worst disaster - Carter

by Paloma Migone of NZPA

Wellington, NZPA - Christchurch's devastating earthquake is likely to be New Zealand's worst disaster, Civil Defence Minister John Carter says.

The death toll sits at 75 with hundreds more reported missing.

The Government declared a national state of emergency yesterday afternoon - the first in New Zealand's history - and Civil Defence director John Hamilton was heading to Christchurch to work with his local team.

"What we are not sure of is course the number of deaths; we are not sure of the amount of damage," Mr Carter said. "What we do know is by today's standards it's certainly the worst disaster we've experienced in recent times."

Mr Carter said the earthquake was a huge task for the local authority, which would need the support of civil defence headquarters.

"We will be bringing in people from around the country who have civil defence expertise to work in there and work alongside the people of Canterbury, just to make sure that everything is giving them the help they need."

He could not say how long the state of emergency would last. "It's really hard to know yet. We haven't

got sufficient information to actually know yet what's happened exactly. It's too early."

Civil Defence national controller David Coetzee said a national action plan would be developed, and was expected to be ready today.

"It will set the strategic direction. It will set the priorities for a specific operational period. Under that the council will develop their own plans."

"It just ensures that everything is sync and everybody responds from the same page."

Hundreds had been called on to help, including seven local response teams from across New Zealand. Building inspectors, engineers, sewage crews and staff to assist with operations were also making their way to Christchurch.

Defence Minister Wayne Mapp said there were about 1000 defence personnel on quake recovery, some from navy vessel HMNZS Canterbury.

"In fact the Canterbury is going to be providing 1000 hot meals tonight for the people of Lyttelton," he said.

There was also a disaster assistance and relief team of 55 people from Singapore arriving last night, and 198 people from the United States, Japan, and the United Kingdom arriving today.

Australia has given a \$5 million contribution, which would be going to the Red Cross.

Australian rescued from quake debris

Sydney, AAP

An Australian office worker trapped for more than a day under the rubble of Christchurch's devastating earthquake is recovering in hospital.

Anne Vos became trapped beneath her desk in the Pyne Gould Corporation building in the South Island city when the 6.3-magnitude quake hit at 12.51pm on Tuesday.

Ms Vos telephoned reporters on Tuesday night to say she was trapped under tonnes of concrete, glass and steel after the multistorey building collapsed.

Recovering in hospital with broken ribs and cuts yesterday, Ms Vos told of how she didn't think she was going to make it out alive after being buried under four floors of debris.

"I had a concrete block on my shoulder," she told Network Seven.

There was also rubble pressing against her ribs.

"I was having trouble breathing," she added.

Rescuers pulled her free after 26 hours trapped in the dark and bleeding.

During her ordeal, Ms Vos took regular calls from her son in Australia and spoke with other family members.

She said the calls were a great morale booster.

When told there were dozens of rescuers working to access the collapsed building as she lay in the dark, Ms Vos replied: "I'm hoping they are going to get me out soon because I have been here for so long and it's dark and horrible."

"I know I'm bleeding and I can feel the ground is quite wet ... My hand, I don't know if I've cut it."

"At first it was squashed and it was swelling. I don't know what I've done. I can't see it."

She eventually saw daylight at 2.19pm yesterday, when she was laid on a stretcher on a fire engine ladder.

After the rescue crew retracted the ladder with her on it, she collapsed into the arms of her waiting husband Graham.

Ms Vos said she had had plenty of time trapped under four storeys to reassess her priorities in life - if she made it out alive.

"Like not worrying about stupid things like: 'Oh my god, where's my bag?'," she said.

"What does that matter? They are things you can replace later. You can't replace people."

Ms Vos says she believes her desk saved her.

Her son was so happy that it had.

"She's a very good mum," he said.

Students form volunteer army for Chch

Wellington, NZPA

A 10,000-strong student volunteer army has been gathered via social networking site Facebook to help those suffering in the wake of Tuesday's devastating earthquake in Christchurch.

"We are working closely with Civil Defence in this operation. At this very early stage we are focusing on helping everyday people in their homes in low risk areas with non-life threatening situations," student organiser Sam Johnson said.

The volunteers planned to meet at the University of Canterbury Students Association tomorrow morn-

ing before shipping out to dozens of sites across the city "to roll up their sleeves and help out".

Former Westport man Louis Brown, from Te Waipounamu Foundation, which has joined forces with the volunteer army, said Christchurch had been brought to its knees.

"It is our job to support Civil Defence the best we can and provide suitable opportunities for those who want to help. It could be lifting shelves off beds for elderly or clearing garages of silt and muck, whatever we can do to help."

15 CTV staff believed to have died

by Sharon Lundy of NZPA

Wellington, NZPA

Fifteen Canterbury TV (CTV) staff are believed to have died when their central Christchurch building collapsed after Tuesday's magnitude 6.3 quake, CTV chairman Nick Smith says.

Police were "100 percent sure" there were no survivors in the earthquake-damaged CTV building, yesterday calling off the search for bodies there, shifting their efforts to sites where it was believed people were trapped alive.

More than 80 people were believed to be in still in the building, which housed the regional television station, a nursing school and a language school.

CTV chairman Nick Smith told NZPA the television channel had 24-25 fulltime staff.

"We're working on the assumption that everyone we haven't managed to contact was in the building, and that would number probably 15," he said.

"We haven't had anything confirmed, we haven't been given any names, we're just going off our own tally."

Mr Smith, business manager and director of Allied Press of Dunedin, which owns the Otago Daily Times, said he had travelled to Christchurch today to support staff.

"We're just having a staff get-together with those who have survived. That's the most important thing at the moment," he said.

"(They've) lost a lot of friends, a lot of colleagues, a lot of talent and a lot of life-long relationships..."

"They're not happy. It's very sorrowful."

Many of the staff there were in the building when the quake struck and broke down when they told him what had happened. What staff had described to him was "like out of a horror movie", Mr Smith said.

"It's just too horrific to think that they got out and... people who were a few yards behind didn't. They didn't know which way to run."

Mr Smith's brother, Allied Press of Dunedin chairman and managing director Julian Smith, said the building had withstood the first quake well.

"So it seems strange that this whole building should fall down like that," he told NZPA.

"Our sympathy goes out to all staff - everybody in Christchurch, for that matter but particularly for the staff of CTV and their families."