SUMMARY

This chronology outlines the actions taken by the Government and Parliament in response to the earthquake in the Canterbury region on Saturday 4 September 2010.

Saturday 4 September 2010

At 4.36am a magnitude 7.1 earthquake hits the Canterbury region. The epicentre of the earthquake is near Darfield, 40km west of Christchurch City.

The Ministry of Civil Defence and Emergency Management activates the National Crisis Management Centre, located in the basement of the Beehive. The Minister for Civil Defence the Hon John Carter co-ordinates the national response to the earthquake from the Centre.

A local state of emergency is declared by the Mayors of Christchurch City, Selwyn District and Waimakariri District.

The Red Cross Canterbury Earthquake Commission Fund (this would later include money designated by the New Zealand Government to the Christchurch Mayoral Relief Fund) is established to accept donations from various individuals and organisations. Mayoral Relief Funds in Waimakariri and Selwyn Districts are used to accept donations for disaster relief in those areas.

Monday 6 September 2010

Prime Minister the Rt. Hon John Key announces the Hon Gerry Brownlee as the Minister responsible for Canterbury Earthquake Recovery. The Prime Minister also announces the formation of a Cabinet Committee, called the Cabinet Committee on Canterbury Reconstruction.

Cabinet contributes $5 million to the Christchurch Mayoral Relief Fund (later clarified by the Christchurch City Council as the Red Cross Canterbury Earthquake Commission Fund). The Prime Minister announces that there is money available for repairing road infrastructure from a $94 million emergency works fund. This is the emergency works allocation also known as emergency reinstatement ($283 million for 2009-2012) under the National Land Transport Programme.

Parliamentary Service sends a support team of five people to Christchurch to assist MPs and out-of-parliament staff in the areas hit by the earthquake.

Tuesday 7 September 2010

The Government announces a wage support subsidy for small businesses in Canterbury with fewer than 20 employees who cannot operate and are unable to pay staff wages. $15 million is set aside to fund the subsidy.

Wednesday 8 September 2010

Question Time is suspended in the House as parties agree not to lodge questions. The Prime Minister makes a ministerial statement regarding the earthquake in Canterbury. Other party leaders follow with their own statements.

Members of Parliament who have electorate offices in Canterbury are granted leave by Parliament so that they can help their constituents.

The Minister of Social Development Hon Paula Bennett pledges $2.5 million for counselling support for Canterbury earthquake victims. An additional 34 counsellors are made available in the area from various social service providers around the country.


Thursday 9 September 2010

The Government appoints Allan Baird as Rural Emergency Coordinator for the Canterbury area to supervise recovery on rural farm properties damaged by the earthquake. The role of the Coordinator is to work with the Regional Rural Recovery Group (established with the Coordinator in response to the earthquake) led by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. The group is made up of representatives from Fonterra, Dairy NZ, Beef & Lamb NZ, Federated Farmers, Irrigation New Zealand, the Insurance Council, banks and other rural sector organisations.

The Government waives the $10 a tonne waste levy for earthquake waste on Canterbury landfills.
The Minister for Social Development, Hon Paula Bennett announces a withdrawal of $7.5 million from the Community Response Fund Contingency in order provide grants to community-based social services dealing with the effects of the Canterbury Earthquake.

Monday 13 September 2010

The Labour Party appoints the Hon Clayton Cosgrove as the Labour Party spokesperson for Canterbury Earthquake Recovery.

The Government through the Tax Administration (Emergency Event-Canterbury Earthquake) Order 2010 gives Inland Revenue the ability to waive interest on late tax payments for Canterbury earthquake victims.

The Social Security (Income and Cash Assets Exemptions—Canterbury Earthquake) Regulations 2010 comes into force. Payments made to the Red Cross Canterbury Earthquake Commission Fund are not treated as income or cash assets.

The ministerial list includes Canterbury Earthquake Recovery as an official portfolio.

Tuesday 14 September 2010

The Canterbury Earthquake Response and Recovery Act 2010 passes into law. The “purpose of the bill is to ensure that the Government has adequate statutory power to assist with the response to the Canterbury earthquake”. Canterbury Earthquake Orders are made under the Act.

The Canterbury Earthquake Response and Recovery Act also requires the establishment of a Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Commission to advise ministers on the assignment of funding and resources allocated for the recovery effort. This includes the Red Cross Canterbury Earthquake Commission Fund. The Commission will also act as a contact between central and local government in managing the recovery.

3. St Mary and St Athanasios Church on Edgeware Road. Photographer: Ross Becker, Canterbury Earthquake (September 2010).

Wednesday 15 September 2010

The Hon Gerry Brownlee (Minister of Energy and Resources) announces a voluntary programme for Canterbury earthquake victims who have suffered chimney damage as a result of the quake. Those with damaged chimneys can make a claim and replace their fireplaces or log burners with new heaters and have the cost covered by the Earthquake Commission. New heating options include: 4-Star AGA-rated flued gas space heaters, approved solid fuel wood burners, approved wood pellet burners, and Energy Star® qualified heat pumps.

Thursday 16 September 2010

The Mayor lifts the state of local emergency in Christchurch.

The following orders and regulations come into force:
Canterbury Earthquake (Resource Management Act) Order 2010
Canterbury Earthquake (Transport Legislation) Order 2010
Canterbury Earthquake (Local Government Act 2002) Order 2010
Canterbury Earthquake (Civil Defence Emergency Management Act) Order 2010
Canterbury Earthquake (Building Act) Order 2010
Social Security (Long-term Residential Care) Amendment Regulations (No 3) 2010
Social Security (Temporary Additional Support) Amendment Regulations (No 3) 2010

Friday 17 September 2010
The Minister for Culture and Heritage, Hon Christopher Finlayson announces funding of up to $10 million to assist the restoration and repair of heritage and character buildings in Canterbury affected by the earthquake.

Monday 20 September 2010
Cabinet approves the delay until 1 March 2011 of three Future Focus welfare reforms. These are:

- The work obligations for Domestic Purposes Benefit – Sole Parent
- The 52 week reapplication for those on the Unemployment Benefit
- The budgeting activities requirement


Thursday 23 September 2010

Friday 24 September 2010
The Hon Gerry Brownlee announces the members of the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Commission. The members are the mayors of three affected districts, Christchurch, Selwyn and Waimakariri, elected after the October local elections; Dame Margaret Bazley, representing Environment Canterbury; Director General of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Murray Sherwin, who will chair the committee; and engineer David Hopkins.

27 September 2010
The Canterbury Earthquake (Social Security Act) Order 2010 comes into force.

Friday 1 October 2010
The Minister of Canterbury Earthquake Recovery, Hon Gerry Brownlee announces Arihia Bennett MNZM as the final commissioner appointed to the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Commission.

Monday 4 October 2010
GNS Science’s project GeoNet (geological hazard monitoring system in New Zealand) records over 1400 aftershocks over the past month in the Canterbury region.

The Minister for Social Development and Employment, Hon Paula Bennett announces the extension of the wage support subsidy for small businesses for a further four weeks.

The Canterbury Earthquake (Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act) Order 2010 comes into force.

The Earthquake Commission Amendment Regulations 2010 comes into force.

It has been one month since the first earthquake hit the region.
Sources

Images

Legislation

Orders

Press Releases


Regulations


Websites


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