

B | BROOKINGS-LSE Project on Internal Displacement

June 2015



RELOCATION AFTER DISASTER: ENGAGING WITH INSURED RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY OWNERS IN GREATER CHRISTCHURCH'S LAND-DAMAGED 'RESIDENTIAL RED ZONE'

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Support for this publication was generously provided by The John D. & Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The case study outlines the New Zealand government's response to earthquake-caused land damage in residential areas by way of a voluntary Crown offer to buy 'red zone' land from insured property owners, and demonstrates how effective community engagement enables people-centered implementation to occur.

The case study describes the establishment of the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority, a central government agency created in the aftermath of a damaging and fatal earthquake that struck Canterbury, New Zealand on February 22, 2011. The case study draws upon focused and life history interviews with CERA employees reflecting on the range of the different community engagement activities developed and implemented over time.

The focus of the case study is the community engagement activities developed and implemented in, and with, insured residential property owners and affected red zone communities, and places these activities within changing community and social contexts. The case study includes community engagement activities in the flat land residential red zones in Christchurch city and the Waimakariri district, and in the Port Hills red zone. It describes the range of associated supports and services underlying engagement, and which enabled affected residents to "move forward with their lives". The case study also identifies the skills and expertise necessary to effectively engage with communities in a post disaster recovery context, and the importance of trusted relationships across government, NGO, and community sectors for implementing effective engagement in times of great uncertainty.

INTRODUCTION

Between September 4, 2010 and December 23, 2011, Christchurch (New Zealand's second-largest city), the Waimakariri and Selwyn districts, and surrounds were struck by a series of large earthquakes causing extensive land and property damage; one of them, on February 2, 2011, resulted in 185 fatalities. In June 2011, the New Zealand Government announced land zoning decisions that identified a 'residential red zone,' an area of residential land deemed unsuitable for repair in the short to medium term. It also announced the Crown's intention to make a voluntary offer to owners of properties within the red zone to purchase their property in order to provide "certainty of outcome for home-owners as soon as practicable" and to "create confidence for people to be able to move forward with their lives." By April 2015, approximately 7,800 property owners (over 95 percent of the eligible population) had accepted the Crown's offer (agreed to sell), most had settled (sold) and nearly all had relocated.

This case study examines engagement activities "instigated, supervised and carried out by State authorities" preceding voluntary relocation from earthquake-damaged land. Central to this case study is the implementation of the Crown offer. It outlines the role of the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority (CERA), the New Zealand Government's recovery agency, and reports recollections from CERA employees who worked with affected individuals and communities to ensure they had the information they needed to consider the offer and "move forward with their lives."

1.1 New Zealand

New Zealand is a small island nation in the southwest Pacific Ocean. Its two main islands straddle the Pacific Mobile Belt, a tectonic plate boundary between the Pacific and Australian plates.¹ Ninety-five percent of New Zealanders live within 200 kilometres of the plate boundary.² Every year thousands of earthquakes occur in New Zealand, many which are too small to be felt. However, in the 15 years between 1992 and 2007, New Zealand experienced over 30 earthquakes of magnitude 6 or more, most in remote and lightly populated locations. More recently, the Canterbury earthquake sequence (the focus for this case study) generated 12,000 aftershocks, 42 earthquakes over magnitude 5 and more than 4,400 of a magnitude 3 or greater.³

New Zealand is a parliamentary democracy and constitutional monarchy. Democratically elected members of the House of Representatives appoint the Prime Minister, who chairs Cabinet and runs central government. Laws are passed by Parliament, with the consent of the Queen's representative, the Governor General. As a unitary state, central government is supreme, but delegates some powers to 11 regional councils and 67 territorial authorities.

¹ Plate movement causes earthquakes.

² Parish, *Connectedness and Canterbury*, 3.

³ Johnson and Mamula-Seadon, "Transforming Governance," 586.

While the state sector (a broad range of organizations) serves as an instrument of the Crown in respect of the Government of New Zealand, regional councils are primarily responsible for environmental management, regional transport and land management, and territorial authorities are responsible for “local-land use management, network utility services, local roads, libraries, parks and reserves, and aspects of community development”.⁴ Understanding New Zealand’s tiered system of government is important because, prior to the Canterbury earthquake sequence and especially before the fatal earthquake on February 22, 2011, it was broadly replicated in New Zealand’s tiered emergency governance system.

1.2 Greater Christchurch and the Canterbury earthquake sequence

Christchurch is the largest city in the South Island and the second-largest city in New Zealand. It is located on the east coast within the Canterbury region. Greater Christchurch includes three territorial authorities: Christchurch city, the Waimakariri district (to the north of Christchurch city) and the Selwyn district (to the south and west of the city) (see map 1). Christchurch is a large city with a population of 348,459 residents prior to the earthquakes; Waimakariri (42,834 residents) and Selwyn districts (33,642 residents) are largely rural areas. Two small townships (Rangiora and Kaiapoi) service the Waimakariri district.

Map 1: Greater Christchurch and territorial authority boundaries



Source: CERA

⁴ Ibid., 578.

The Canterbury earthquake sequence began on September 4, 2010, when a magnitude 7.1 earthquake struck at 4.35am local time. Many buildings were damaged, with moderate to severe damage to lifeline infrastructure (particularly underground pipe networks) and extensive liquefaction⁵ and lateral spreading close to rivers and streams. What was not anticipated was the ongoing and cumulative impact of the thousands of aftershocks that were to follow, and a 6.3 magnitude earthquake at 12.51pm on February 22, 2011.⁶ Although the February 2011 earthquake was of lesser magnitude than the first in the sequence five months earlier, it had a much greater impact. Its epicenter was 5km south-east of Christchurch city with a focal depth of 5km, and its maximum intensity measured MM 9.

The February 2011 earthquake caused far more damage than the first September quake. In the later earthquake, 185 people died and over 11,400 people were injured. The central business districts of Christchurch and Rangiora experienced extensive damage, the region's horizontal and built infrastructure was significantly impacted, and widespread damage occurred to dwellings across residential neighborhoods. Major concentrations of residential land and property were seriously damaged in Christchurch's eastern suburbs and in Kaiapoi (in Waimakariri district). This earthquake precipitated the first National State of Emergency in New Zealand's history.⁷ Serious damaging aftershocks on June 13, 2011, and again on December 23, 2011, caused further liquefaction, and compounded ground failure and buildings and infrastructure damage. As one commentator has observed:

*It is difficult to articulate the impact of the earthquakes and the scale of damage. In terms of buildings alone, more than 100,000 homes were damaged, many beyond repair, and more than half of the buildings in the [Christchurch] Central Business District have been severely damaged. It is estimated that there will be eight million tonnes of rubble and waste from earthquake-damaged buildings, along with many thousands of tonnes of liquefaction silt that has to be removed from the region.*⁸

The economic impact of the earthquakes in terms of capital costs has been estimated to be equivalent to almost 20 percent of New Zealand's gross domestic product, while

⁵ Liquefaction occurs during earthquake shaking and affects low-lying land with loose soil. During ground shaking, pressure builds up in the below-ground water until the silt and sand grains 'float' in the water, and the soil behaves more like a liquid than a solid. The pressurised water is forced to the surface and takes silt and sand with it, forming sand boils or sand volcanoes. The ground surface above the liquefied soil often tilts and sinks. Buildings, roads, pipes and tanks on or in liquefied soil are often damaged by the tilting or sinking of the ground. For more information, see <http://ecan.govt.nz/advice/emergencies-and-hazard/earthquakes/pages/liquefaction-information.aspx#what>

⁶ The first earthquake on February 22 was followed by a 5.8 magnitude aftershock at 1.04pm and another 5.9 magnitude aftershock at 2.50pm.

⁷ Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority and Minister for Canterbury Earthquake Recovery, "Briefing for the Incoming Minister."

⁸ Parish, *Connectedness and Canterbury*.

globally the earthquakes were the third most expensive insurance event in history.⁹ Over 165,000 insurance claims for damage to property have been lodged.¹⁰ The last significant seismic event occurred on December 23, 2011. A map showing the pattern of seismic activity in greater Christchurch since September 2010 is presented in Appendix 1.

As a consequence of the earthquakes, there has been considerable population movement, with many Christchurch city residents moving to the Selwyn and Waimakariri districts.¹¹ Figures from the 2013 population census show Christchurch city's population has dropped by 2 percent (since the last census in 2006), while the population of the Selwyn district has risen by 32.6 percent (to 44,595) and the population of the Waimakariri district has risen by 16 percent (to 49,989).¹²

A characteristic of greater Christchurch is that it has high rates of home ownership. Prior to the earthquakes, both the Selwyn and Waimakariri districts had home ownership rates near 80 percent, while in Christchurch city the rate was approximately 68 percent.¹³ High rates of home ownership are a feature of New Zealand society and culture more generally. The national home ownership rate peaked at approximately 75 percent in the early 1990s; although the national rate is now around 65 percent, housing still accounts for 73 percent of New Zealander's total household assets.¹⁴ Owning a home remains a "long standing pre-occupation"¹⁵ and widely shared aspiration, and is seen as particularly important for New Zealanders' sense of order and continuity in life.

Prior to the February earthquake, 95 percent of Christchurch residents rated their quality of life as high.¹⁶ A different study conducted five weeks after February 22, 2011 found Christchurch residents to be the most stressed in the country, with 59 percent worrying about another natural disaster, 63 percent concerned about the rebuilding process and 53 percent with fears over insurance coverage.¹⁷ These figures point to how "trust in the reliability and consistency of the world existing in the way it was supposed to exist" was shattered as "the earthquakes and aftershocks suspended people's ontological security ... throwing them into new [unpredictable] formations of day-to-day existence."¹⁸

1.3 Focus for the Case Study

The context for this case study is community engagement that occurred after the Government made land zoning decisions and a Crown offer was subsequently made to

⁹ Ibid., 2.

¹⁰ Earthquake Commission, Scorecard.

¹¹ Statistics New Zealand, *Subnational Population Estimates: At June 30, 2013 (provisional)*.

¹² Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority, *Canterbury Wellbeing Index (Population)*.

¹³ Goodyear, *Housing in Greater Christchurch after the Earthquakes*.

¹⁴ Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, "Housing Key Facts."

¹⁵ Dupuis and Thorns, "Home, Home Ownership and the Search for Ontological Security," 24.

¹⁶ Quality of Life Survey.

¹⁷ Southern Cross healthcare, 2011 cited in Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority, "Community Wellbeing Trajectories," cf 11.

¹⁸ Adams-Hutcheson, "Stories of Relocation to the Waikato," 51–52.

insured residential property owners in the residential red zone. It describes the communication and community engagement strategies developed to assist insured red zone residential property owners¹⁹ to consider the Crown offer. In this case study, the red zone is differentiated further as ‘the flat land’ (marked by the top oval in map 2, to the east of central Christchurch city, and in Waimakariri district to north of Christchurch city) and ‘the Port Hills’ (to the south and south east of central Christchurch, marked by the lower oval in map 2; see also Appendix 2 for more detailed maps).

Map 2: Greater Christchurch residential red zone – the flat land (top oval) and Port Hills (lower oval) (as at December 4, 2013)



Source: CERA

Land damage in the flat land red zone was mainly the result of thin crust, liquefaction, and lateral spread. In the Port Hills, life risk²⁰ from rock roll and cliff collapse affected zoning decisions. (See illustrations 1–2 on the next page).

¹⁹ At the time of the Crown offer, some property owners living in the red zone were uninsured and some red zone residents were living in rented accommodation.

²⁰ A life risk approach “uses a numerical assessment of probabilities (how likely it is that some event will happen) allowing the regulators and the community to determine an acceptable, tolerable and intolerable level of risk. For a risk to be acceptable, the consequences and likelihood of it occurring are low. A tolerable risk has a slightly higher level of risk than acceptable risk, but the of living with the risk make the risk tolerable. An intolerable level of risk occurs when the level of risk becomes unacceptable”. See <http://www.ccc.govt.nz/homeliving/civildefence/chcheearthquake/porthillsgteotech/porthillsgnsreports.aspx#jumplink3>.

Illustration 1: Clearing liquefaction



Photo: CERA qA16602/20110225

Illustration 2 Cliff collapse, Port Hills



Photo: CERA qA2896/682607

THE POLICY CONTEXT

Prior to the earthquake sequence, New Zealand had a sophisticated framework for natural hazard risk management, which was structured to engage from 'bottom up'. Local governments have primary responsibility for land use and building policy to avoid and mitigate hazards. A Crown entity, the Earthquake Commission (EQC), provides insurance cover for damage to residential property caused by natural disasters. This cover is capped at \$100,000 (New Zealand dollars) and is automatically provided if a property owner holds private insurance for their home that includes fire insurance. Property owners also use private insurance to cover 'over cap' risk. This approach offers hazard protection to residential property owners through appropriate land use policy and planning to mitigate hazard risk; and a mix of state and private insurance to compensate for land and property damage as a consequence of hazard events.

However, due to the significant and widespread land damage caused by the Canterbury earthquake sequence and the difficulties this created for thousands of individual property owners progressing claims with private and state insurers, this approach was insufficient to enable property owners to recover. Based on extensive and thorough geotechnical assessments,²¹ land was categorised into zones according to the severity and extent of the land damage, and the cost-effectiveness and social impacts of land remediation.

2.1 Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority

Prior to the earthquakes, New Zealand had a tiered governance system for disaster and emergency management. Policy and direction were set at the national level, while local and regional bodies were responsible for implementation and coordination. However, the cumulative impacts of the earthquakes and the unprecedented scale of the damage to housing, infrastructure and businesses in greater Christchurch saw the establishment of the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority (CERA), a dedicated central government agency based in Christchurch, to lead and coordinate the recovery.

The Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Act 2011 provided the Chief Executive of CERA and the Minister for Canterbury Earthquake Recovery with specific powers to meet the purposes of the Act. Those purposes included to:

- provide appropriate measures that enable greater Christchurch and the councils and their communities to respond to, and recover from, the impacts of the Canterbury earthquakes
- enable a focused, timely, and expedited recovery
- facilitate, coordinate and direct the planning, rebuilding, and recovery of affected communities, including the repair and rebuilding of land, infrastructure, and other property.

²¹ Tonkin & Taylor Ltd, *Darfield Earthquake September 4, 2010 Geotechnical Land Damage Assessment and Reinstatement Report*.

2.2 The first land zoning announcement

On June 23, 2011, the Prime Minister and the Minister for Canterbury Earthquake Recovery announced four land damage zones for greater Christchurch.²²

The four land zones announced were as follows:

- Green: There are no significant land damage issues that prevent rebuilding in these areas in the short to medium term and rebuilding can begin subject to some conditions.
- Orange: Further work is required to determine if rebuilding is likely to be possible in the short to medium term. (At the time of the first zoning announcement, there were 9,770 properties in this category.)
- White: Land requires further mapping and assessment to determine appropriate permanent zoning²³.
- Red: Rebuilding is not likely to occur in the short to medium term due to the obstacles posed by the significant land and infrastructure damage and the high risk of further damage to land and buildings from low levels of shaking (eg, aftershock), flooding, and spring tides.²⁴ (At the time of the first zoning announcement, there were 5,176 properties in this category.)

Immediately following this announcement, the Prime Minister announced the Crown's intention to make a voluntary offer to buy property within the red zone within an eight-week timeframe. Details of the offer were at this stage unknown.

2.3 The Crown offer

A memorandum for Cabinet from the Office of the Minister for Canterbury Earthquake Recovery, dated July 18, 2011, describes the background to the land zoning decisions and the details the Crown offer in full.²⁵

In progressing the policy decisions about the design of the Crown offer to insured property owners in the red zone, the Government identified that its objectives were:

- Certainty of outcome for home-owners as soon as practicable;
- Create confidence for people to be able to move forward with their lives;
- Creating confidence in decision-making processes (for home-owners, business owners, insurers, and investors);
- Using the best available information to inform decisions;
- Having a simple process in order to provide clarity and support for land-owners, residents, and businesses in [red zone] areas.²⁶

²² Land damage in the Selwyn district (south and west of Christchurch city) was not included in the zoning announcement as the land in this district was not badly affected by aftershocks. Land damage in the Selwyn district from the September 4 earthquake was assessed on a case-by-case basis.

²³ Where further work or mapping and assessment was required, flat land was zoned orange, while Port Hills land was zoned white.

²⁴ Office of the Minister for Earthquake Recovery, "Crown Offer to Residential Insured Property Owners – Paper 1," 2.

²⁵ Office of the Minister for Earthquake Recovery, "Crown Offer to Residential Insured Property Owners – Paper 1."

²⁶ Office of the Minister for Earthquake Recovery, "Crown Offer to Residential Insured Property Owners – Paper 2," 3.

The memorandum also describes the offer as voluntary, and as comprising of two options:

Under Option 1 the Crown offered to purchase the entire property (land and buildings) at the 2007 Capital Value rating valuation²⁷ (less any land and dwelling insurance payments already made). The Crown would also take an assignment of all earthquake-related insurance claims. Included in Option 1 was a process through which property owners could seek a review of the purchase price on certain grounds (for example, consented building works that increased the floor area but were not reflected in the 2007 rating valuation).

Under Option 2 the Crown offered to purchase the entire property for the 2007 valuation of the land only. The Crown would also take an assignment of the EQC land claim, and the land owners would be free to pursue their private insurance company for other insurance claims they had.

Owners who chose to accept the Crown offer were able to sell their homes, move out of the badly affected areas and obtain a prompt payment, so that they need not wait for their claims to be processed by EQC and their insurer in the usual way. Alternatively they could choose to retain the benefits of insurance claims in respect of improvements, if they saw that as an advantage to them.

It is important to stress that the Crown offer was voluntary and was made to insured residential property owners in the red zone. Property owners needed to decide whether to accept the offer and, if so, which option best suited their circumstances. If they accepted the offer, they entered into a contract for sale and purchase with the Crown. At settlement, what had been private property became Crown land, while paid-out property owners would have “certainty of outcome” and be able to “move on with their lives”.

The Crown offer was made by the Chief Executive of CERA under section 53 of the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Act 2011, which allowed the Chief Executive to acquire land in the name of the Crown. Some red zone property owners were not happy with the Crown offer and felt that they had no choice but to accept it. A group of red zone property owners initiated a judicial review of the decision to implement the red zone and the subsequent offer to vacant, commercial and uninsured property owners. The focus of this paper is on insured residential property owners, and the communication and engagement with those owners after the Government had decided to provide them with an offer.²⁸

²⁷ A rating value (RV) is the same as the Capital Valuation (CV) and is an indicative market value. RVs are established using a mass appraisal process every three years and are used by territorial authorities to apportion rates. Every property in New Zealand has an RV.

²⁸ However, it is relevant to note that in the context of the judicial review, the majority in the Supreme Court held that the implementation of the red zone should have occurred under a Recovery Plan under the Act, rather than as a policy decision outside the Act, because the former process would have allowed for community input into a decision that was a significant earthquake recovery measure.

3. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: HELPING PEOPLE MOVE FORWARD WITH THEIR LIVES

... a lot of people just assumed they'd get up and go to work every day for the rest of their lives I guess, and then suddenly ...

... [after the first earthquake] sometimes people would say ... "We've just got to get out of here, they've got help us get out" and "How are we meant to live here?". And then there'd be no aftershocks for a while, and then people would go, "Oh well it might be all right, maybe we can repair this and maybe they can fix the land" ... then there'd be another big jolt and people would be like, "Right, get us out, I can't live here with my children like this". And I think that was my misconception too, after the September quake ... I didn't understand that it would keep going for this long and that we would have so many thousands of aftershocks and, I mean, some of them were so big, they were terrifying ...

Using extracts from focused and oral history interviews with CERA employees,²⁹ this case study discusses the engagement activities undertaken by CERA as the voluntary Crown offer was implemented in the greater Christchurch residential red zone. This involved an engagement process requiring CERA employees to 'front up' and inform; to seek feedback from people and communities about the information and support they needed; and to provide services and support to enable people to understand the categorisation of their land as red zoned and the Crown offer. At times, this was an evolving process that responded to emerging needs, and many of these activities were not undertaken by CERA employees alone. Many people (in private and organizational capacities) and agencies (including voluntary, private, non-governmental, and government agencies) worked hard to support red zone residents and property owners to understand what had happened to them, and many worked closely with CERA across numerous community information and engagement activities.

3.1 The Crown offer in historical and organizational context

Before outlining the many engagement activities undertaken over time, it is important to place the Crown offer in historical and organizational context. Between the first earthquake (September 4, 2010) and the announcement of the Crown offer (June 23, 2011), three important decisions occurred. These were that:

- CERA was established, and the locally and regionally led recovery model moved to a nationally led recovery approach
- the Government recognised that in some cases the normal insurance process would be protracted for property owners, identified the worst-affected areas as

²⁹ Extracts from CERA employees express the views of individuals and do not necessarily reflect the views of CERA. Interviews necessarily generate partial and situated accounts. However, they also provide insight into events from the perspective of those who were there. The interviews referred to in this case study were undertaken as a preliminary investigation for an ongoing, in-depth legacy and lessons project about CERA's role in Christchurch's social recovery. As such, both the analysis presented and the lessons identified remain, at this stage, provisional.

residential red zone and extended an offer to purchase insured properties in these areas

- organizational leadership for implementing the Crown offer was located within CERA's Social Recovery portfolio.

In line with New Zealand's tiered emergency management governance structure, a planned multi-tiered response was in place following the September 2010 earthquake. The three affected territorial authorities (Christchurch City Council, Waimakariri District Council, and Selwyn District Council) each declared a state of local emergency and activated Emergency Operations Centers. On September 6, 2010 (two days after the first quake), the Prime Minister appointed local Member of Parliament, Hon. Gerry Brownlee,³⁰ as the Minister for Canterbury Earthquake Recovery, a new Cabinet position to lead a newly appointed, ad hoc Cabinet Committee on Canterbury Earthquake Recovery. At the same time, the Canterbury Civil Defence and Emergency Management Group (a pan-regional group) activated its recovery structure and, under the leadership of a Recovery Manager, began to implement a recovery plan that "broadly identified key issues and recovery needs ... addressing ground failure issues, infrastructure restoration, and social, economic and business structure recovery".³¹ However, following the February 22, 2011 earthquake, the sense that action from central (as opposed to local or regional) government was required had significant momentum. As one interviewee noted, the political shift to a nationally led recovery (and the subsequent land zoning and Crown offer) should be considered in this context:

... the environment at the time ... I don't know if pressure is the right word, but the pressure that Government was under to do something was pretty extreme ... [T]here's always that adrenaline ... within communities after a disaster ... [But] then the loss from the disaster starts to have an impact on people ... In areas like Kaiapoi, most of their damage was done in September. For Christchurch city [it was] the February earthquake ... then the June earthquakes really [were] almost that tipping point, a breaking point for communities. There were a lot of requests ... for help. "You can't leave us here like this"; "the Government needs to do something" ... that was the context – the environment – that officials [and] the Minister for [Canterbury] Earthquake Recovery [were] working under in that time.

Many CERA employees are themselves residents of greater Christchurch and have lived and worked through multiple response and recovery phases. Some were in professional roles which saw them active in the Emergency Operations Centers after the September 2010 earthquakes, and involved in early (pre-CERA) recovery activities at local and regional levels. They noted land damage was a major issue from the September 2010 earthquake onwards, and that after the first earthquake, widespread and comprehensive area-wide geotechnical assessments were needed to understand

³⁰ Member of Parliament for the Ilam, an electorate covering the west of Christchurch city. At the time of this appointment, the Honourable Gerry Brownlee was also the Minister for Economic Development.

³¹ Johnson and Mamula-Seadon, "Transforming Governance," 583.

the damage and its social and economic effects.³² For example, one interviewee recollected:

... following the September earthquake the largest gathering of geotechnical experts in any one place in New Zealand occurred, and there was a lot of work to understand what the geotechnical impacts of the earthquake were, what the potential options were and, I suppose the economic and technical feasibility of some of those options ... Property owners were [also] concerned about the length of time that it had taken, and was going to take for them to be able to have the damage repaired. So the question I suppose for the Government at the time was whether it allowed that process to play out, or whether it considered that another option should be provided ...

On April 19, 2011, the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Act 2011 came into force. When the National State of Emergency declared following the February 22 earthquake ended on April 30, 2011, CERA “effectively assumed primary responsibility for recovery in the Canterbury region”.³³

In the weeks between CERA’s establishment (March 29, 2011) and the first land zone announcement (June 23, 2011), geotechnical assessments continued, as did policy work developing the Government’s response to land damage. During this time, leadership within CERA for the work programme responsible for implementing the land zone announcements (including the voluntary Crown offer) was allocated to the Social Recovery portfolio.³⁴ The rationale for this early yet, in retrospect, critical operational decision was recalled by an interviewee:

... there was a decision made early on ... there was a discussion ... if Government was going to zone areas of land red, where would that work actually be led from? There was quite a discussion, and in the end the discussion landed on the fact that this change involves people, and so we need to have the ‘people people’ delivering the piece of work – they will need to work with policy and legal and all the rest ... but predominantly ... it’s about people and it’s about communities, and ... we’re going to need the NGO[non-governmental organization] sector and others to help ... get us through this work ...

With hindsight, the first zoning announcement bore the hallmarks of what would be ongoing challenges for CERA employees communicating and engaging with red zone residents – the timely communication of complex (and sometimes incomplete) information of utmost importance to the people affected. The first announcement contained both certainty (in the classification of red and green zones) and uncertainty (with the orange and white zones requiring further geotechnical assessment); and combined clarity (the Crown would make an offer to buy property in the red zone) with

³² Tonkin & Taylor Ltd, *Darfield Earthquake September 4, 2010 Geotechnical Land Damage Assessment and Reinstatement Report*.

³³ Johnson and Mamula-Seadon, “Transforming Governance,” 587.

³⁴ At the time of its establishment, CERA’s organizational structure comprised of seven business units, including the Community Wellbeing unit, later renamed the Social Recovery group.

the opaque (with detailed information about the offer forthcoming within eight weeks). The first zoning announcement was also a critical turning point in CERA's organizational history. That is:

... once the zoning decisions were made, that changed CERA's role ... we were leading and coordinating others in the recovery. All of a sudden, we became an agency that was also going to implement something ...

3.2 People-centered implementation

Implementing the Crown offer was a complex and challenging task. At April 2015, over 95 percent of insured residential property owners had accepted the Crown offer and, of this total, the majority had settled with the Crown and moved out of the red zone. A timeline of key community engagement activities implemented to inform, consult and involve insured residential property owners over time is appended (Appendix 3).

3.2.1 The flat land residential red zone

... the first and key aspect was we needed to really front the decision with the communities, and so we set up ... literally hundreds of community meetings. [Although] meetings had been happening with people around the [earlier] damage ... we went out as CERA, as the lead organization, and informed people of the [zoning] decision ...

... I think there were 30 [community meetings] within the first four or five days ... They had to be advertised quickly after the zoning announcements. We had a contact center ... for people to phone in and book in to those and receive information about them. We had to take care of the advertising in local papers and on the radio and whatever other avenues were available to us, knowing that in those community meetings we'd be delivering a message about damage and destruction and that [the message] would impact significantly on communities, but also the individual property owners, and that we would only be able to give them part of the information ... because we hadn't yet determined what the offer might look like.

Following the first land zoning announcement on June 23, 2011, CERA immediately began a series of community meetings to inform affected communities. Several employees recalled these as extraordinary professional experiences. The 'people people' from CERA's Social Recovery group had previous experience working with people who were managing difficult circumstances in their lives, but the scale, complexity and individual *and* community impact of the earthquakes were unique. They attended meetings in devastated communities in which there *"was a mixture of happiness from people that really wanted [to be red zoned], and bitter anger and disappointment from those people who didn't."* Their professional expertise and social and public sector experience were critical for understanding the emotional impact on people and communities, and for implementing a responsive and people-centered community engagement strategy in what were still very uncertain times. The early community meetings required a mix of expert communication skills, community

engagement expertise, extensive community networks characterised by high levels of trust, and personal qualities such as empathy, understanding and a degree of personal resilience. CERA employees needed to engage authentically with communities about their experiences of ongoing earthquakes, while also communicating complex geotechnical information, policy decisions and their potential effect on people's lives. While policy decisions *had* been made, 'fronting up' was an important demonstration of CERA's commitment to people-centered implementation.

Community meeting about zoning



Source: CERA

Community meetings about the first zoning decisions were the public face of CERA at this time. But implementing the offer also required extensive engagement to lead and coordinate other stakeholders. Through mid 2011, decisions taken by Cabinet and delegated Ministers required operationalisation. Alongside residential property owners, details of the Crown's offer also needed to be communicated to private insurers, EQC, lawyers who would be advising clients on the Crown offer, and other parties with an interest in property conveyance (for example, banks). Thus, at this stage, informing was occurring in many ways, and with many audiences.

... the primary focus at that stage was more of a mass communication approach ... because of the size and scale of it, and the timeframe and the need

to communicate as quickly as possible in a number of different channels - media, mailbox drop and as many community meetings as we could squeeze in to daylight hours. Once we got through those first days, there were follow-up meetings as well about the communication of the first lot of 5,176 [offers]. A lot of focus then turned to the development of the offer, the supporting information, the mechanics of it. And so we worked at pace to develop an information book, questions and answers ... [W]e had briefs [for] solicitors to ensure that they understood the offer process; the [offer acceptance] tool itself required the interaction of insurers, EQC, CERA and the property owner's solicitor...

CERA employees also quickly established information hubs within affected communities. For example, on Friday, August 19, 2011, the day the first letters of offer were mailed to property owners,³⁵ an Earthquake Assistance Center opened in Avondale (one of the worst-affected suburbs in Christchurch city).³⁶ The center was an information and advice facility for people considering the Crown offer. It was staffed by CERA and the territorial authorities, insurance companies, EQC, the Community Law Center, Canterbury Earthquake Temporary Accommodation Service and Earthquake Support Coordination Service. One interviewee recalled the work behind the scenes necessary to open the center before people received their offers:

[CERA] established an Earthquake Assistance Center within the eight weeks with ... commitment from EQC, insurers, community law; the Earthquake Support Coordination Service; and the Temporary Accommodation Service ... that opened when the offer was available. So we had online information, hard copy information, a place where people could go and talk to people. We had a contact center with an 0800 [free calling] number and we worked closely with some of the support services like Red Cross who were providing outreach and the earthquake support coordination services who [were] already engaging with some of the properties in the worst-affected areas ... to ensure that they were able to help inform, clarify and support property owners through the process.

Box 1: Services and supports

CERA has coordinated a layered system of wellbeing support across multiple government and non-government agencies based on the Pyramid of Psychosocial Support.³⁷

The services listed below have had a particular focus on residential red zone households. Several have actively participated in community engagement activities to

³⁵ A selection of services and supports, including some named in the following quote, is described in Box 1.

³⁶ The evening before, CERA had arranged for the 9,000 outbound phone calls to affected property owners to tell them an offer was to be posted the following day.

³⁷ Many services are focused on early intervention to ensure that people receive help and support that will prevent them from developing more severe mental health conditions, and are available to all earthquake-impacted residents.

ensure residents were supported with all of their needs, and therefore better able to make informed decisions about their homes.

CERA's contact center has acted as the first point of contact for red zone residents seeking information specifically relating to the residential red zone policies. The contact center has taken a proactive role, undertaking multiple outbound calling campaigns and establishing case management roles to support red zone residents with greater support needs.

The **0800 Canterbury Support** phone line acts as a first point of contact for residential red zone residents seeking access to the psychosocial support services listed below.

Note: Both phone lines redirected and introduce callers to the other where needed.

Counselling services have been provided at no cost to affected residents, and counselling professionals were involved in the planning and delivery of community engagement with residential red zone residents. Counsellors attended engagement meetings and formed rapid response teams to support red zone residents with their mental health and wellbeing.

The **Earthquake Support Coordination Service** provided practical information and support to people displaced from their homes or with ongoing issues relating to the earthquakes. In response to the red zone resident population, staff from this service also attended engagement meetings, assisted with door knocking, and provided support in multiple fora.

The **Canterbury Earthquake Temporary Accommodation Service (CETAS)** was established to support earthquake-affected people's accommodation needs and to administer the Government's **Temporary Accommodation Assistance (TAA)** policy. TAA was a weekly accommodation payment for displaced home owners who had exhausted their insurance entitlements for temporary accommodation before their home was repaired or rebuilt. TAA assisted with rent, board, or motel stays so that displaced home owners did not need to cover two sets of accommodation costs.

Two **Earthquake Assistance Centers** were established in red zone locations to provide information and assistance primarily for red zone home owners. Co-located in these centers were CERA staff, insurance industry representatives, local authority representatives, Earthquake Support Coordinators and CETAS staff able to process TAA applications.

The **Residential Advisory Service** was established to help address rebuild-related stressors for property owners with insurance and other repair or rebuilding challenges. The service provides independent assistance to residential property owners to help them understand and progress the repair and rebuild process.

The **Commission for Financial Literacy and Retirement Income** provided targeted, free and impartial financial information and guidance to help red zone households and others affected by the earthquakes make informed financial decisions.

Right from the start, CERA employees were working closely with community leaders to understand community needs, to anticipate the services and supports communities might need, to identify the best location for these services and supports, and to test the appropriateness of key messages. Engaging with community leaders and consulting with them about their communities built upon and strengthened CERA employees' existing community networks (a practice that continues today). These relationships were highly valued and critical for the development of people-centered engagement, and have stood the test of time and changing community needs.

Within weeks of the first land zoning announcement, some people in the red zone may have been awaiting the details of the offer in order to relocate, but others needed *more* information to consider their options. A key part of CERA's role was to ensure people had "the best available information to inform decisions," which included providing information in different formats and fora:

... the land zoning came out in tranches so there were a number of different land announcements over a number of months where property owners were advised that they had been zoned red and what that meant. There was a lot of ... information pulled together for property owners explaining what the zoning meant and how the voluntary Crown offer worked... CERA's role in that wasn't to advise people which option to take or whether to even take an option at all, we wanted to broker information about the Crown offer process and the fact that it was voluntary ...

Information brokerage was one aspect of people-centered implementation. Providing accurate and full information was essential for people considering the offer. Making sure information provided meet the needs of affected communities involved working closely with community leaders to understand what people needed to know, and how that might be best communicated. Much of the information provided during this time was coproduced with community groups and agencies, and their understanding of their communities informed all of CERAs engagement activities, from information packs³⁸ and resources, through to community workshops.

Alongside information the provision of information in community meetings and community-based hubs, CERA bolstered the role of the contact center with an emphasis on supporting people to navigate the offer process. CERA deliberately recruited contact center staff with the skills and experience necessary to connect with callers and address the different levels of caller need. Many red zone residents would

³⁸ For example, the document 'Purchase offer supporting information for the Residential Red Zone' was a "plain English" document describing the Crown offer. This document was discussed with community leaders, and their feedback integrated into the document, to ensure it met community needs. The document is appended. See Appendix Four.

have direct experience of CERA's contact center as they worked through the offer process in subsequent months (and, for some, years). The contact center would play a critical role in subsequent zoning announcements, including the flat land and Port Hills zoning reviews³⁹ (announced in August 2012 and December 2013 respectively), and was often a key point of contact for affected property owners over time. The systems they put in place (including people-focused customer service approaches designed to be sensitive to individual circumstances) and the skills of the contact center team were important for building public trust and confidence in CERA in its role of implementing the Crown offer.

Box two: Lessons learned from the early red zone engagements***People-centered community engagement leadership***

- Leadership of community engagement requires an appreciation of the importance of genuine engagement, along with proven expertise in developing, implementing and delivering engagement approaches and processes. Expertise should be drawn from those with experience in client-facing or community-facing roles as opposed to those with the technical knowledge of the hazard.
- Co-design your engagement strategy, messaging, resources, processes, and meetings with leaders of the affected community.
- Lead from the top. Ensure your highest-level officials deliver key messages in person.
- Value the expertise and knowledge of those within the organization who understand the local context and/or who have experienced the impacts of the disaster themselves. Sensitivity and empathy through shared understanding will increase levels of trust between participants and those delivering the engagement.

Embarking on a people-centered community engagement process

- Determine the best approach for each engagement opportunity.
- Carefully consider the timing and location of each engagement opportunity to best align with the needs of that community. Where possible, hold face-to-face meetings in meeting spaces known to and located within the community.

Delivery of a people-centered community engagement approach

- Focus early messaging on the rationale for the decision, emphasising the science in particular. Affected communities will engage more actively and trust will grow when there is a shared understanding of the impact of the hazard.
- Mobilise support partners across government and non-government agencies to assist with the engagement to ensure that no one is left behind.
- Where possible, co-locate these services so that they align their responses around the needs of affected households and provide the household with a 'one stop shop' from which to seek information.

³⁹ Zoning reviews were conducted to recheck zoning assessments. In the flat land red zone, the review checked zoning boundaries were appropriately drawn. In the Port Hills red zone, it checked that the risk and geotechnical assessments and the application of zoning criteria were accurate. These reviews did not revisit original zoning criteria in either instance. The impact of the reviews on affected populations is discussed later in this section.

Hold services and supports to account. Timely and effective service delivery is crucial to building trust and confidence.

While the early days following the first land zone announcement required CERA to inform affected populations about the Crown offer, as time moved on, new and more specific needs amongst affected property owners became apparent. In the flat land red zone, insured residential property owners had one thing in common: area-wide land damage. However, their personal situations varied enormously. Some of these differences were of a practical nature. For example, each property owner individually contracts with private insurance companies; some had more extensive forms of private insurance cover than others; and those with private insurance also had EQC cover. Some owned their properties freehold, while others had bank mortgages. Some property owners held strong biographical ties to their homes, their communities and the area. To meet the breadth of circumstances and range of needs required a tailored community engagement activity:

[After] the informing stage, a lot of people took up the offer ... but it was quite clear to us through what was coming through our contact center, in emails, and when we were talking to residents groups' leaders ... [that] people still were struggling. So we set about to run a series of workshops in communities on the residential red zone process ... [I]t was easy for the organization to default to [big meetings] but I didn't want to do that. I wanted to break it down to be more personal and specific for home owners, and so we weren't talking, we were listening.

It wasn't that I turned up [at the first workshop] thinking, "This is going to go extremely well", I was as apprehensive as the next person, but we had very good feedback. So from that day on, that's basically how we ran all the workshops. It became a model ... inform people of the decision, and then offer workshops ... [allow time] for people to understand the process of sale and purchase ...

Rather than providing advice as to whether or not a person should accept or decline the offer, CERA's role was to make sure all affected property owners understood the offer and were connected to the range of support available so they had the best information available to make that decision themselves.⁴⁰ In this regard, leadership played an important role. Social Recovery leaders consulted with international disaster recovery experts and had integrated their advice into their work.^{41 42} They understood people needed the opportunity to seek advice, to discuss matters important to them, or worrying them, and time as well as information in order to make decisions. In addition, they understood the importance of locale, and that community-based gatherings enabled people's community connections to translate into and build confidence and trust as they made decisions about their futures. The Social Recovery leaders also had

⁴⁰ For example, CERA encouraged owners to seek independent legal and financial advice when considering whether to accept the offer.

⁴¹ Gluckman, "The Psychosocial Consequences of the Canterbury Earthquakes."

⁴² Also influential is Dr Rob Gordon's work on the disaster social process theory. Dr Gordon has visited Christchurch on several occasions during the recovery.

experience with community engagement practice based on the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) framework, understood the value of planned community engagement for community-led recovery more generally, and developed a CERA community engagement strategy and community engagement framework reflecting this approach (see Appendix 5).

Community-based workshops were an engagement activity designed to consult with and involve affected communities to ensure their concerns and aspirations were understood. They provided the opportunity for people to discuss their circumstances and their priorities with a wide range of experts and professionals. The workshops were carefully planned, and were a response to feedback coming from community leaders as well as through the CERAs contact center. That is, that people considering the Offer had many and various concerns, questions, and needs. CERA recovery leaders recognised that bringing people together in their communities, and listening to them, was a necessary and crucial community engagement activity.

Each workshop began with an introduction, whereby a lead facilitator would explain the format. Attendees, along with one or two experts,⁴³ a note taker and a facilitator, were seated at tables 'café style' in groups of ten to twelve people. Facilitators at each table would begin the table conversations by asking participants 'what is it that you need to know about [this theme] to make your decisions about the future,' while note takers would record the questions asked. The themes discussed had also earlier been identified through CERAs feedback loops (for example, 'insurance' was a common theme), and every fifteen minutes a new theme was introduced. Importantly, the role of the experts was to listen and not to answer questions. As this first stage of the workshops drew to a close, participants would be given three sticker-dots, and asked to use them identify the most important questions raised. Only then would experts answer the top priority questions. Their answers, as well as answers to other questions raised would later be posted to participants, distributed to community and residents groups, and uploaded to the CERA website. As one CERA employee recalled:

... we would have seen thousands of property owners at those workshops ... [and] we had great support at those [workshops] from EQC, private insurers, banking industry ... [P]eople had lots of questions about their mortgages, and their equity, and those sorts of things. All the questions asked at those workshops would be answered ... there, or emailed and posted [and] and all were put on our website so that all the property owners who'd attended that workshop could get all the follow-up information that they needed ... [I]t was a great way of people ... being able to really talk to the experts from all the different agencies involved ...

⁴³ For example, representatives from insurance companies, banks, CERA, and the property and real estate sector

Community workshop for flat land red zone residents



Photo: CERA

In total, 14 workshops⁴⁴ were organised for flat land red zone residents to discuss the Crown offer process, and were tailored so that residents were involved and identified their specific information needs. All were held in venues in or near affected communities – an organizational challenge exacerbated by damage to suitable meeting facilities – another strategy designed to maximise community consultation and involvement. Looking back, the Q & As recorded during the workshops are illustrative of the wide range of concerns that affected residents had at the time. For example, the written list of questions and answers from a workshop held on March 29, 2012 in Avonside included:

- “If you choose to take neither option, where do you stand?”;
- “How can we stay in house until our next house is ready?”;
- “Is there a penalty rate for using settlement to pay off your mortgage early?”;
- “How do banks look at people with few/no working years when they assess for new land (if tens of thousands short)?”

CERA employees’ recollections of these workshops also capture the range of community and wellbeing organizations that were working with CERA during that time. For example, the Salvation Army, visible because its volunteers “*would do the tea and coffee,*” played a significant role. Its volunteers would welcome people as they entered venues. Their presence provided reassurance, and they were also able to provide understanding and support to individuals when necessary. Moreover, while the purpose of the workshops was to give affected residents access to the information and support

⁴⁴ Eight were held between November 10-20, 2011, and six between February and July 2012.

they required, they had another effect as an opportunity for people to share their stories and listen to those of others. As one CERA employee noted, this sense of being in something *together* was a further source of support and, for people participating in the workshop process, was a way of helping each other towards recovery:

The good thing about [the community workshops] though [was] people would come in ... they would sit on tables and all of that stuff, and as different people felt the need to tell their story, they would kind of chat to each other, and start to make connections, and so there was a sense ... that the people that were participating felt as if they were in it together, so that was an odd sense of community building at the workshops ...

The workshops were themselves a valuable feedback loop CERA used to tailor future engagements. For example, as more people chose to accept the Crown offer and then settled with the Crown, it became apparent that some people's circumstances allowed them to make decisions with more certainty and earlier than others, and that for other people making decisions could be unexpectedly difficult.

As with all standard agreements for sale and purchase, property owners had to provide vacant possession on the date they settled with the Crown. However, as the final settlement dates approached, CERA employees were becoming aware that some people were experiencing barriers that made vacant settlement unlikely in the timeframe that had been set. In late 2012, CERA contacted property owners who had not settled but whose settlement dates were imminent to discuss their circumstances. This process identified a number of barriers preventing people from vacating, the most common of which concerned the build timeframes for their new homes.⁴⁵ This information echoed feedback CERA was receiving via its contact center, and via community networks.

As a consequence, CERA organised a series of pre-settlement workshops to gain a better understanding of the issues people were facing as settlement approached. On the basis of this evidence, papers for the Minister were prepared. The first sought approval in principle for an extension to the final settlement date followed later by case-by-case extensions.⁴⁶ A subsequent paper detailed an approach for implementing case-by-case extensions based on three criteria:

- vulnerability;
- barriers to settlement beyond the control of the property owner;
- the property owner having exhausted all other reasonable options.⁴⁷

As one interviewee noted, seeking case-by-case extensions was very much “*an operational thing*” that flowed from previous people-centered engagement activities:

... what we found anecdotally was that people who had settled quickly with their insurer and quickly with CERA and got underway got out fine. Then there was

⁴⁵ Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority, “Final Settlement Date for Flat Land Residential Red Zone Property Owners,” 6.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority, “RRZ Case-by-Case Extensions: Proposed Approach.”

this big bubble of people who had maybe had a dispute with their insurer ... or maybe just had taken a lot longer to make a decision, and they all seemed to hit the market at the same time. So there were a lot of delays ... with having their new house built or finding somewhere that was appropriate ... there was a bit of feedback there saying, “We need a bit more time”. So there was a case-by-case extension process put in place.

In the event, fewer than 400 case-by-case extensions were necessary in the flat land red zone. But the work involved in identifying individual needs and securing case-by-case extensions illustrates how people-centered implementation requires engagement that is sensitive to individual needs. Case-by-case extensions also meant that in some cases people who could not vacate as originally planned avoided a ‘double move’. Moving twice would have been very stressful for these residents. It would have also increased demand for temporary accommodation in the tightening housing and temporary accommodation market. Case-by-case extensions supported and reassured this group, connected them with the support and services which matched their needs and circumstances, and enabled them to move as the specific barriers preventing them from doing so were individually addressed.

Box three: Lessons learned from the community workshops***People-centered community engagement leadership***

- Establish multi-disciplinary teams to ensure that the engagement encompasses and aligns messages from experts on communication, engagement, policy, science, and psychosocial support services.
- Engage psychosocial experts early to help develop and review engagement strategies, processes, and messaging.

Embarking on a people-centered community engagement process

- Recognise that all engagement approaches have validity if those participating understand the parameters of the process. For example, ‘informing’ communities about decisions that have already been made requires skilled engagement – as does ‘empowering’ communities to co-design decisions.
- Build on existing community networks and facilitate new ones to flourish. Communities will support each other through this process more effectively than government can.

Delivery of a people-centered community engagement approach

- When people are facing complex situations and are experiencing stress and anxiety, it is important that technical messaging is framed simply, repeated frequently and delivered using multiple formats across multiple channels. Make use of meetings, workshops, formal websites, social media, and print channels.
- Constantly review and adjust your settings to reflect emergent knowledge around the obstacles to decision-making experienced by the affected community.
- Deliberately capture information and evidence from partners and participants in the engagement and use this feedback to develop and refine processes, messaging, services, and supports.

- Recognise that affected households may require additional support to inform their decision to relocate or not. Relevant services may include navigation (a support worker who can walk alongside the affected household and help its members to make sense of the process and connect them to other services), counselling, financial and legal advice, or additional technical advice (engineering, surveyor).
 - Anticipate that population-wide messaging may be sufficient for the majority of the affected community, but that individualised support will be required for those with greater vulnerabilities or individually complex circumstances. This individualised support is likely to develop over time as needs become more apparent. While both approaches are likely to be required simultaneously, those with greater needs will require more individually tailored support for longer.
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3.2.2 The Port Hills red zone

One of the biggest differences [compared to the flat lands] is life risk ... the criteria is different so the geotechnical aspects were a hell of a lot more technical, or harder to understand, so therefore the way you had to communicate that was different. It wasn't area wide like on the flat lands: [in the Port Hills] you could have one neighbour red zoned and the other one not ... or "There is [no damage] to my house – why am I red zoned?" It was just a hell of a lot more technical ...

In the context of relocation, engagement with affected populations can effectively influence how people come to understand their situation and options, and support them as they find ways “to move forward with their lives.” In this section of the case study, the focus turns to another red zone population group: insured residential property owners in the Port Hills.

The Port Hills are geologically very different to the flat lands: risk associated with cliff collapse, rock roll and landslip was exacerbated by the earthquakes. Zoning in the Port Hills was conducted in relation to life risk, or “the annual fatality risk applied to occupation of [Port Hills] houses.”⁴⁸ The zoning rationale was complex and technical and, while existing damage was obvious,⁴⁹ the potential for future damage (and loss of life) was a new engagement challenge for CERA employees as they worked to implement the Crown offer with the affected population.

The Port Hills red zones were identified later than the flat lands, largely because of the technical complexity in assessing risk. By the time the Port Hills red zones were announced, CERA employees had considerable experience to draw upon to develop and deliver a range of appropriate engagement activities:

We had used public meetings, large public meetings a lot as the method. They're very useful for getting to a lot of people a lot of general information ... but obviously people's circumstances were very different, so within a few minutes

⁴⁸ Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority, “Public Release of Port Hills Zoning Information,” 2.

⁴⁹ Some properties were very badly damaged and immediately uninhabitable. Some were ‘red stickered’ by the local authority because they were too dangerous to enter.

either you've still got some people who are in that situation and other people are in a different situation, so [the information] no longer becomes relevant for them. There was a lot of effort made to try to talk about different situations ... [P]eople were split into groups ... [T]here was an opportunity for people to talk about their individual situation ... [E]ssentially you might be living next door to someone and have an entirely different situation and insurer. So the Port Hills were quite different in that way to the flatlands where people were likely to be in a similar situation to people in more immediate vicinity.

In addition, community engagement specialists had joined CERA's Social Recovery team. They brought with them specialist skills and were able to build on the expertise within CERA to organise tailored meetings to match community needs. Because the affected population was smaller, these meetings could be carefully targeted:

We had a drop-in session at the [local] school one afternoon ... so we were getting mums with kids coming after school and [then] people who were coming after work ... [T]hat was also a really nice opportunity for people to come in and sit with people in an environment where they could ... talk to people for a few minutes. The insurers were there, and others were there. But that also gave [people in the community] the opportunity to talk to other people they knew ... giving people flexibility about time and the more you can help people feel like they can choose how they receive information, the better. It was kind of weird; it was almost like a community event ...

As with the flat land red zone, once the complex process of geotechnical assessment was completed and decisions made by Government, the zoning decisions were subject to review. The zoning reviews were intended to give affected populations certainty in assessment methods used. In the flat lands, the review was completed within months of the last announcements. In total, three properties were re-zoned from red to green, and 101 properties were re-zoned from green to red. However, the zoning review for the Port Hills followed a very different path. The review was technically complex. But perhaps more challenging for the affected population was the delay in the announcement of its outcome. At this time, a legal challenge to CERA's zoning approach was working its way through the courts. This required a delay in the further zoning announcements as the Government waited for the legal issues to be clarified.

Results of the Port Hills zoning review were announced by the Minister for Canterbury Earthquake Recovery on December 5, 2013. Following the damaging aftershock on June 13, 2011, the Port Hills had been zoned white, indicating further assessment was necessary. Subsequent land zoning assessments of nearly 20,000 white zone properties saw approximately 19,400 zoned green, while 511 were zoned red on the basis that they faced unacceptable life risk associated with cliff collapse, rock roll and/or land slippage.⁵⁰ The zoning review reassessed all of these decisions. As a

⁵⁰ Cabinet Paper. "Findings of the Port Hills Zoning Review Advisory Group on the Port Hills Zoning Decisions," 3

consequence, zoning changes were made affecting 270 properties: 237 properties were re-zoned from green to red and 33 properties from red to green.

CERA knew the results of the zoning review would be a surprise for some property owners. Some had thought the review would cover only those properties where the owner had requested a review. However, as in the flat land review, *all* properties zoned in the initial assessment were included. As a consequence, some property owners had no expectation that the zone of their property could change. CERA employees knew they had to communicate the outcome of the review to people who would be both surprised and distressed by its results. In addition, the reasons for the zone change were technically complex and property-specific, and communicating this complexity would be challenging but necessary.

Drawing on community engagement expertise within CERA, expert knowledge from disaster and wellbeing researchers, and inter-personal communication expertise from Relationships Aotearoa,⁵¹ an engagement approach was devised. The approach had two phases: to inform affected property owners of the outcome of the review; and to tailor support for affected property owners to help them come to terms with what had happened to them.

To inform property owners, a decision was made to contact those with re-zoned properties in a personal telephone call the evening before the outcome of the review was publicly announced. However, these were likely to be very difficult phone calls. One interviewee recalled:

... the zoning review was very stressful ... [P]eople were waiting and waiting, then they'd get told, "We're going to have an announcement now" and it never happened, and then ... the timeframes came and went ... Then at the time of the announcement ... CERA called the people individually and told them the outcome of the zoning review. Some of those people had not requested a zoning review [and even though] right throughout the zoning review, all the announcements and media releases talked about the whole of the Port Hills, ... when we rang and told them they'd been re-zoned as a result of the zoning review, and they hadn't requested it, they were absolutely gobsmacked ... Think, you're trucking along on red, maybe thinking "Oh that's fine ...", and now, oh no you're going to be green. The life risk's changed ...

Planning for communicating the outcomes of the Port Hills zoning review included consulting with experts to develop understanding of the possible effects for property owners as they received unexpected news. There was concern for the wellbeing of property owners, and for providing good support to CERA employees who were to make the calls:

... we had a lot of input from people like Dr. Rob Gordon, Dr. Sarb Johal and Sharon des Landes about their experiences with the Australian bushfires and

⁵¹ A not-for-profit professional counselling and relationship information service, the largest of its kind in New Zealand. See <http://relationships.org.nz>

other disasters. So there was a kind of intellectual power in terms of [knowing] what would happen for people that were affected by disasters. We took a lot of guidance from them and we had training with Sharon and others ... about what people would be experiencing ...

On the evening of December 4, 2013, CERA's staff, including many of its most senior officials, telephoned Port Hills property owners whose land zone had changed as a result of the review. Also present were counsellors from Relationships Aotearoa. They had assisted in planning for the pre-announcement phone calls, and their specialist skills were identified as necessary to safely support those making what would inevitably be some very difficult and challenging phone calls:

Everybody had that strong desire to make it as good an experience as possible for people when they phoned ... [We] did do quite a bit of work with Relationships Aotearoa and others around providing support for people that were making calls and also support for people receiving the calls. There was some training and things for people on what responses would likely happen ... so people could try to be as helpful to the people that were affected as possible.

This communication approach combined experience with expertise and drew on extensive cross-sector networks CERA had developed over time. Many interviewees referred to the Port Hills zoning review as an example of effective engagement practice. Despite the terrible news they communicated, the actual engagement was considered a 'success' in that people were provided with the information they needed. One interviewee reflected that community engagement expertise combined with CERA leaders 'fronting up' were important elements:

We had the right approach ... it's got to be a mix of skill set and seniority ...

Knowing that some of the affected residents would require further technical information to understand the decision, individual meetings with a geotechnical engineer were offered to all affected property owners. With "smaller numbers" it was possible to "adapt the [engagement] approach." Also present at these meetings would be a CERA Relationship Manager and, if relevant, a representative from Christchurch City Council:

After the announcement we offered all affected property owners the opportunity to meet one on one with the geotechnical engineer and actually go through the reasons for their zoning ... [W]e'd never been able to do that before. [Previously] because of the numbers you ... had to talk more generally but this was actually sitting mostly in a [meeting room] and going, "This is what the criteria was, this is the model, here is your property, here's all the different layers of maps"; and explaining all that, explaining statistics and [people] being able to then to ask information specific to their property ...

Zoning reviews were a necessary stage in implementing the Crown offer and ensuring land assessments were accurate. Designing an engagement strategy tailored to meet the needs of individual property owners in both receiving the news and making sense of

what it meant for them exemplifies how people-centered implementation can “help people move forward with their lives.” The Port Hills zoning review illustrates how people-centered implementation requires a range of activities to communicate with and inform people and communities experiencing unprecedented uncertainty and change.

LONGER-TERM ISSUES

The policy objectives of the Crown's offer were to create certainty of outcome for residential red zone property owners and to give them the confidence to move forward with their lives using the best information available. CERA's engagement with affected communities aimed to provide people with the information they needed to make an informed decision regarding the Crown offer.

A preliminary analysis of data collected for successive CERA Wellbeing Surveys shows a unique pattern of wellbeing impacts for those within the sample who identified themselves as residential red zone residents. Although trends must be treated with caution due to low sample sizes, they indicate that red zone residents reported higher levels of stress and lower quality of life in the late 2012 period compared with the rest of the greater Christchurch population. However, over time red zone residents' responses to these questions normalised in that they are now more closely aligned with the findings for the wider population. The red zone cohort was more likely than the wider population to report a higher level of satisfaction with communication and information from CERA.

This data provides a very tentative indication that the policy objectives may have been met. However, CERA is initiating a more robust research project to gain a more nuanced understanding of outcomes across the red zone population.

While this case study emphasises the value of engagement processes, wider recovery activity has focused on the social implications of widespread population movement of red zone households (as well as households comprised of non-red zone residents and newly arrived migrant rebuild workers). Local authorities such as Waimakariri District Council have focused on surveying newcomers⁵² to better understand their needs and to support the growth of social cohesion and connectedness in new residential developments.

CERA and partner agencies have strongly emphasised the importance of building social connectedness to drive community-led recovery and to ensure communities are better prepared for any future disasters. Cross-agency activity has occurred to foster neighborhood-based events and neighborhood planning and to build, repair and rebuild community 'hubs' where people can meet and gather to build stronger communities. This activity is occurring in new and growing communities, as well as in those communities where nearby red zoning has reduced their population.

As noted in previous sections, over 95 percent of eligible property owners accepted the Crown offer. Further, over 7,300 properties across the Christchurch and Waimakariri red zone areas are now Crown owned.

⁵² Waimakariri District Council, *Waimakariri District Change of Address Survey 2012–2013*.

Land clearances of Crown-owned red zone properties are underway and interim land management is in place. A vegetation plan was put in place to retain specimen and heritage trees, and cleared land has been levelled and grassed. Hazards are being removed, although opportunistic dumping of rubbish remains a land management concern. A limited number of third-party interim land uses are allowed, including training for emergency services such as the Police and New Zealand Army, and foraging for fruit and vegetables and redistributing them to local charities.

The future use of the residential red zones is now being explored. In April 2014, the Minister for Canterbury Earthquake Recovery announced a community participation process to gather ideas for future use of flat land red zone land in Christchurch city and in the Waimakariri district.⁵³ Subsequently, in July 2014, a public engagement process (the 'Canvas' engagement) regarding the one square kilometre of residential red zone within the Waimakariri district was completed.⁵⁴ Nearly 600 people contributed their vision for future uses of the land and a technical panel is now working its way through these.

A similar process will be run to determine the future uses of the much larger residential red zone in Christchurch city.

⁵³ Office of the Minister for Canterbury Earthquake Recovery, "Residential Red Zones."

⁵⁴ CERA, *Canvas: Your Thinking for the Red Zones*.

LESSONS LEARNED

... the red zone was about the people. It was about the land, but it wasn't merely about the land, and it wasn't merely about the built structures on the land. It was about the people and the communities and that's why [the programme] had to sit in [the Social Recovery] portfolio of work ... that's always been ... the ethos behind the whole thing, it's about the people... it's quite easy to get caught up in the numbers and the percentages, and where we're at with things, but actually it is about the communities and how they've been able to move on if that's what they've chosen to do.

The case study illustrates how effective communication and engagement can enable people-centered implementation to occur. It describes how CERA, an organization established just months after the damaging February 2011 earthquake, used the leadership and engagement skills and expertise of people with extensive social and public sector experience to communicate and engage with insured residential property owners in the flat land and Port Hills red zones as they considered the Crown offer. Communicating and engaging with affected communities took many forms and occurred in many contexts, and CERA was not the only agency working with red zone residents. CERAs people-centered approach built upon existing community and agency networks and relationships that, in turn, enabled CERA to 'front up' and deliver authentic and effective engagement activities. CERA used international evidence and local experience, and ensured services and supports were in place that addressed both community and individual needs. CERA also developed trusted organizational systems, and deployed interdisciplinary teams with specialist skills in community relationships and community engagement expertise. The lessons highlighted in the case study are listed below:

5.1 Community engagement leadership

... we fronted up, we always fronted up ... [W]e did announcements and we always fronted up to the public afterwards, no matter how uncomfortable that was going to be. We always stood by [our] commitment to front up and ask questions and stay with people and try and make sure people had information and [we'd] keep going back [to] ... public meetings, the workshops and everything like that. And I think we did keep communicating with people ... I think that's really important.

5.1.1 Take a people-centered approach

- Leadership of community engagement requires an appreciation of the importance of genuine engagement, along with proven expertise in developing, implementing and delivering engagement approaches and processes. Expertise should be drawn from those with experience in client-facing or community-facing roles as opposed to those with the technical knowledge of the hazard.
- Co-design your engagement strategy, messaging, resources, processes, and meetings with leaders of the affected community.
- Lead from the top. Ensure your highest-level officials deliver key messages in person.

- Value the expertise and knowledge of those within the organization who understand the local context and/or who have experienced the impacts of the disaster themselves. Sensitivity and empathy through shared understanding will increase levels of trust between participants and those delivering the engagement.
- Establish multi-disciplinary teams to ensure that the engagement encompasses and aligns messages from experts on communication, engagement, policy, science, and psychosocial support services.
- Engage psychosocial experts early to help develop and review engagement strategies, processes, and messaging.

5.2 Embarking on a people-centered community engagement process

... [The government] made a decision and people needed to understand and have absolute confidence in what they were going to do as a result of those decisions. So it was about clarity of information ... giving people enough space and time to consider ...

People realised that it wasn't a compulsory thing and there was a lot of genuineness in terms of the delivery. [The Chief Executive] was there every night and [other senior leaders] who had a great deal of credibility and trust ... which was essential. I guess we couldn't predict, because we hadn't been in any situation like this before, what was going to happen. The anxiety and level of stress in communities, you know, was something that was constantly considered.

5.2.1 Make clear the purpose of engagement

- Engagement brings those who are affected by a decision into the process by providing them with the information they need to be involved in a meaningful way.⁵⁵ Determine the best approach for each engagement opportunity.
- Recognise that all engagement approaches have validity if those participating understand the parameters of the process. For example, 'informing' communities about decisions that have already been made requires skilled engagement – as does 'empowering' communities to co-design decisions.

5.2.2 Tailor engagement to the unique characteristics of the affected community

- Carefully consider the timing and location of each engagement opportunity to best align with the needs of that community. Where possible, hold face-to-face meetings in meeting spaces known to and located within the community.
- Build on existing community networks and facilitate new ones to flourish. Communities will support each other through this process more effectively than government can.

⁵⁵ International Association for Public Participation, <http://www.iap2.org>.

5.3 Delivery of a people-centered community engagement approach

5.3.1 Rationalise the need for a decision and repeat

- Focus early messaging on the rationale for the decision, emphasising the science in particular. Affected communities will engage more actively and trust will grow when there is a shared understanding of the impact of the hazard.
- When people are facing complex situations and are experiencing stress and anxiety, it is important that technical messaging is framed simply, repeated frequently and delivered using multiple formats across multiple channels. Make use of meetings, workshops, formal websites, social media, and print channels.

5.3.2 Review and continuous improvement – listen, be flexible, be responsive, be patient

- Constantly review and adjust your settings to reflect emergent knowledge around the obstacles to decision-making experienced by the affected community.
- Deliberately capture information and evidence from partners and participants in the engagement and use this feedback to develop and refine processes, messaging, services, and supports.
- Anticipate that population-wide messaging may be sufficient for the majority of the affected community, but that individualised support will be required for those with greater vulnerabilities or individually complex circumstances. This individualised support is likely to develop over time as needs become more apparent. While both approaches are likely to be required simultaneously, those with greater needs will require more individually tailored support for longer.

5.3.3 Align services and supports around the engagement process

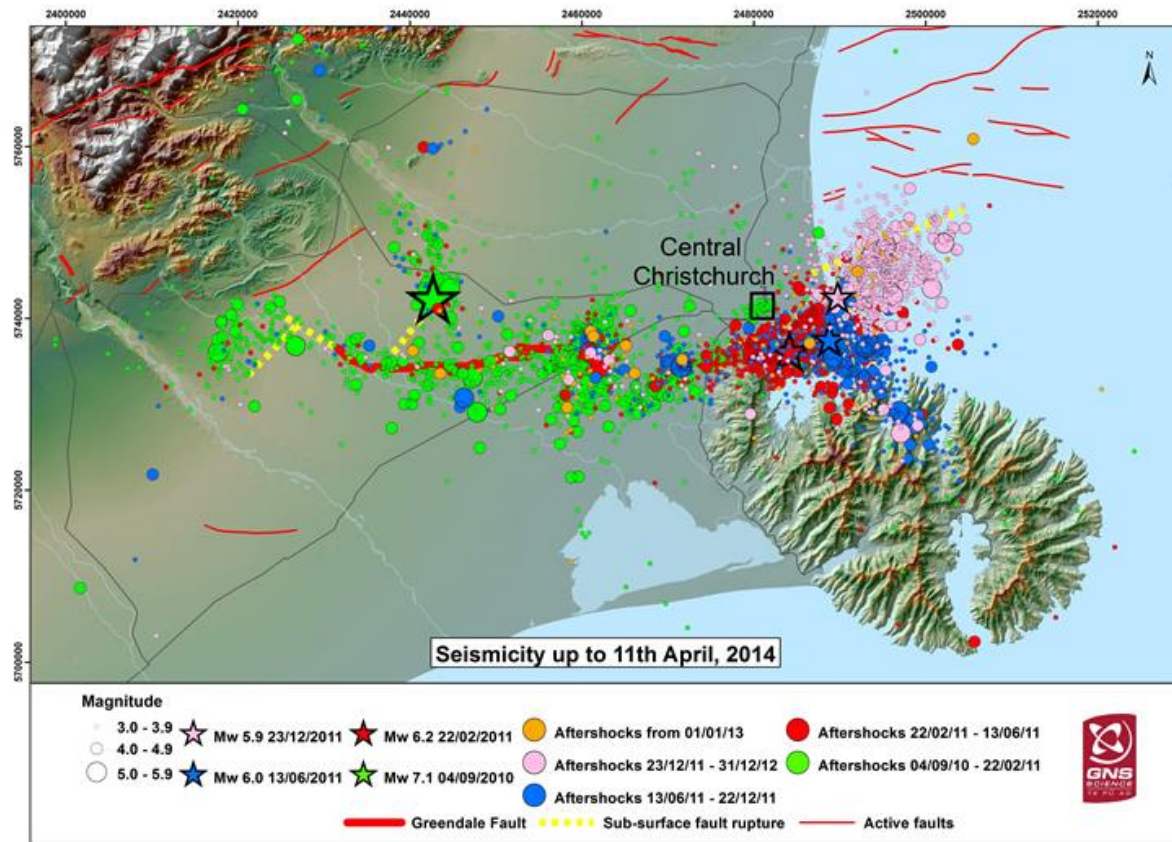
- Mobilise support partners across government and non-government agencies to assist with the engagement to ensure that no one is left behind.
- Recognise that affected households may require additional support to inform their decision to relocate or not. Relevant services may include navigation (a support worker who can walk alongside the affected household and help its members to make sense of the process and connect them to other services), counselling, financial and legal advice, or additional technical advice (engineering, surveyor).
- Where possible, co-locate these services so that they align their responses around the needs of affected households and provide the household with a ‘one stop shop’ from which to seek information.
- Hold services and supports to account. Timely and effective service delivery is crucial to building trust and confidence.

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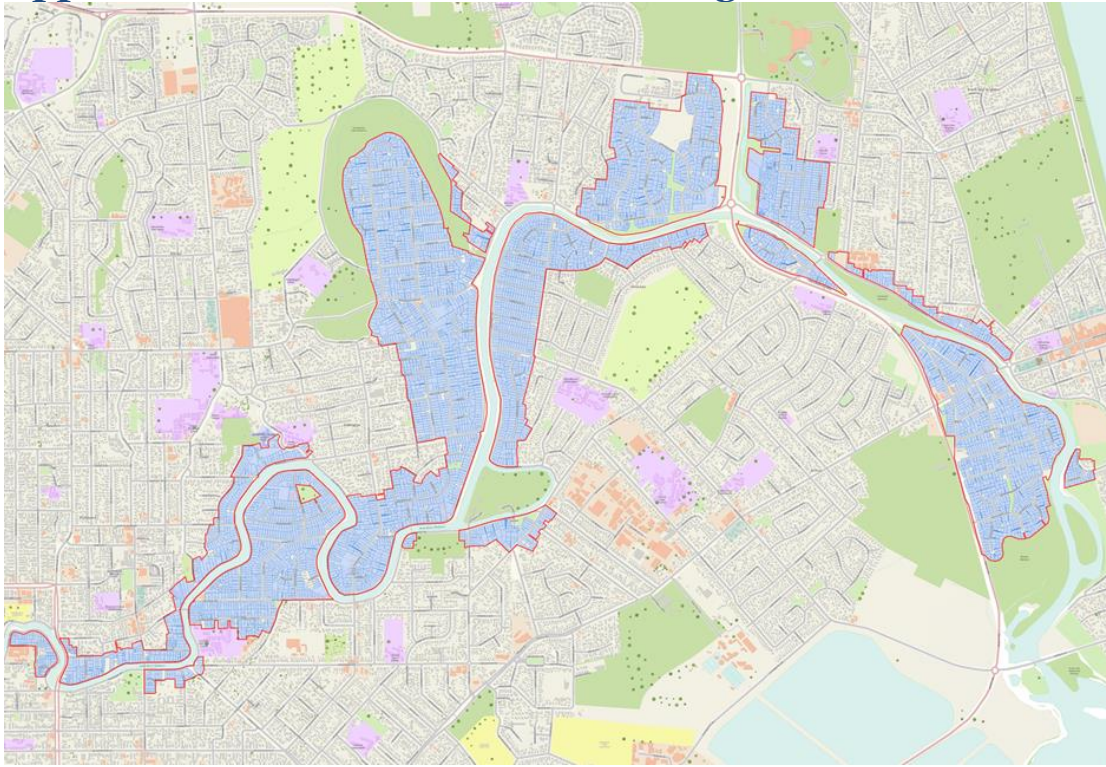
Appendix 1: Map of seismic activity in Canterbury, September 2010 to April 2014



Canterbury earthquake series seismic overview
Source GNS Science⁵⁶

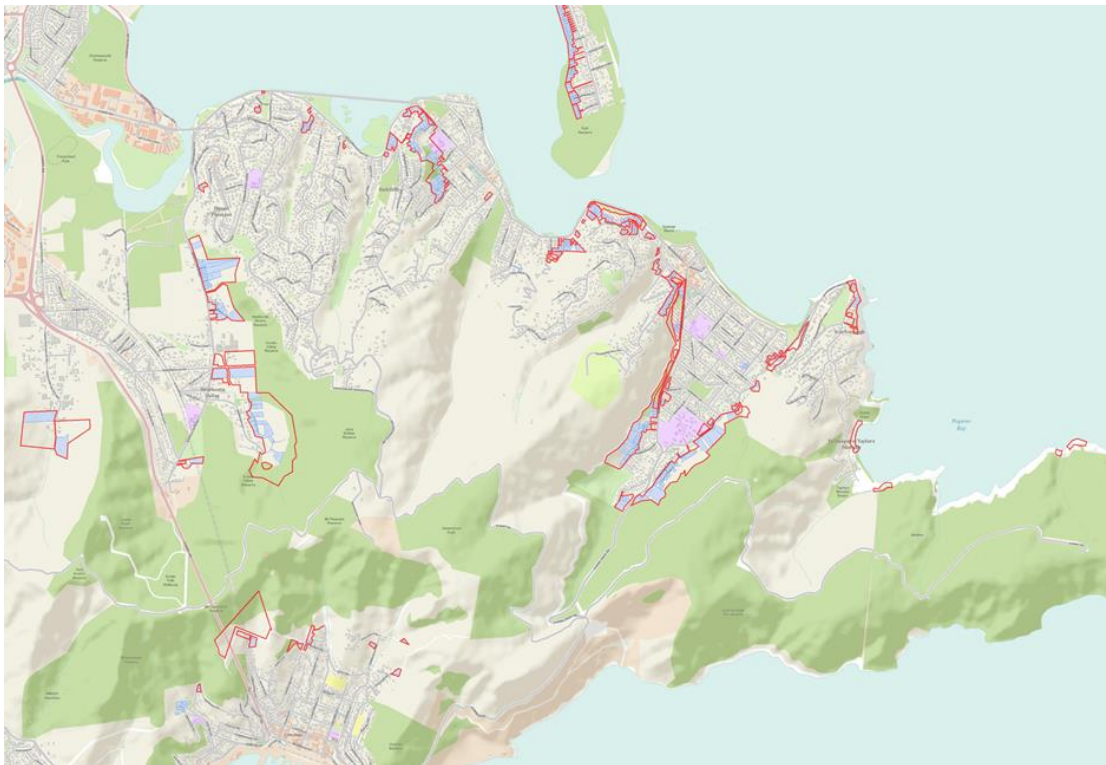
⁵⁶ www.gns.cri.nz/index.php/Home/Our-Science/Natural-Hazards/Recent-Events/Canterbury-quake/Recent-aftershock-map.

Appendix 2: Residential red zones in greater Christchurch



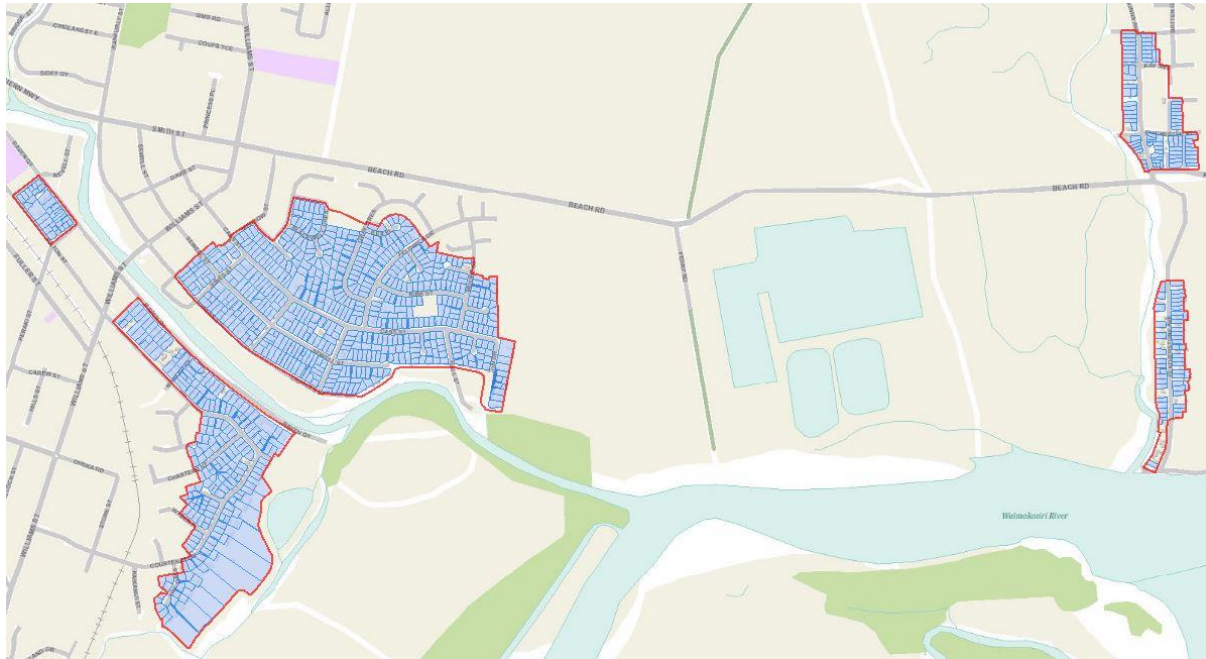
Christchurch (eastern suburbs) residential red zone (boundary December 4, 2013)

Source: CERA



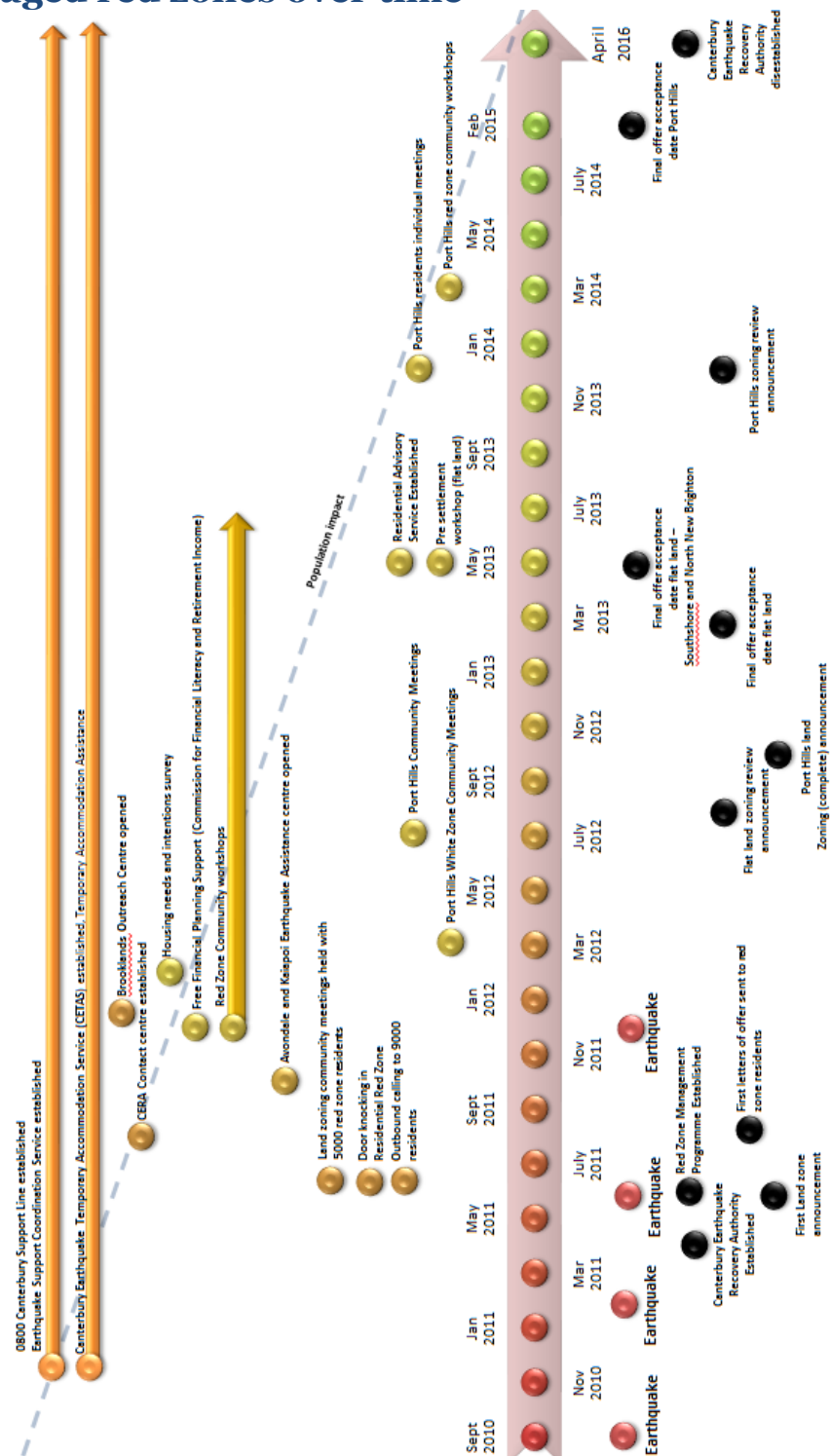
Port Hills residential red zone (boundary December 4, 2013)

Source: CERA



Waimakariri residential red zone
Source: CERA

Appendix 3: People-centered implementation: informing, consulting, and involving insured residential property owners in land-damaged red zones over time



Appendix 4: Purchase offer supporting information for the Residential Red Zone

Appendix 5: CERA Community engagement strategy and framework



Community engagement strategy

TO THE PEOPLE OF CANTERBURY

“Our goal is to enable you and your communities to participate in decision-making around the rebuilding and revitalisation of greater Christchurch.”

Our approach

Our community engagement approach aims to communicate to and work with people in a range of ways, from sharing information, to asking for feedback; from problem solving and planning together to supporting people to shape their own futures and make their own decisions.

We will work with communities, recognising the diversity of need and perspectives across greater Christchurch and commit to building and nurturing the relationships which will support our recovery.

Why this matters

We know that CERA cannot do this alone; international research on recovery suggests it works best when communities are included in the decisions which affect them.

We aim to rebuild and revitalise greater Christchurch and where possible, empower communities and build the capacity of agencies to work in partnerships to achieve a full recovery.

We'll know that we are working with the people and communities of Canterbury the right way when:-

- **We are inclusive**, and seek out the voices of those that might otherwise not be heard, recognising that communities have diverse needs
- **We act with integrity**, engaging with communities in honest, consistent and responsible ways.
- **We build good relationships and earn respect**, recognising that this requires time, attention and trust.
- **We communicate in an honest, sensitive and timely fashion**, recognising that people need access to information that can help them make decisions for their futures.
- **We are clear and accountable** so that everyone knows who is making the final decisions and how much influence people and communities can have on the decisions that need to be made to rebuild and revitalise Canterbury.

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Community engagement framework

We aim to engage the community along a spectrum of participation. We will use a range of engagement methods and tools, recognising the diversity of community needs and skills. We are committed to moving as far and as often as possible towards the level of empowerment.



Source: International Association of Public Participation

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