

Media Release

Coordinated winter resilience programme rolled out

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Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Minister Gerry Brownlee says a group of companies and agencies involved in the recovery have combined to share knowledge and create a winter resilience campaign, ensuring all parties know what each is doing and promising to refer those who need help on to their partners as required.

In a first step, major construction companies have volunteered staff to respond to any emergency works created by this week's expected snowstorm, working alongside Civil Defence and the Christchurch City Council.

Mr Brownlee says the impact of a third winter in an earthquake-damaged home cannot be underestimated, especially where warmth and sanitation issues are concerned.

"While almost 50,000 urgent repairs have been carried out to ensure homes are weathertight, and 19,000 winter heat devices have been installed, we accept that cold weather could cause problems.

"I want to be sure we get the message across to everyone that there is a lot of help available in a variety of forms."

As per normal procedure in the case of an emergency, Civil Defence through the Christchurch City Council will lead the response, while other agencies will form an additional layer of support.

That is where the intensive winter resilience campaign comes to the fore, with ongoing support from EQC, insurers, building companies, the Red Cross, the Student Volunteer Army, Community Energy Action, the Canterbury Earthquakes Temporary Accommodation Service (CETAS), the Families Commission, Canterbury District Health Board and the Christchurch City Council all essentially acting as one.

"Each stand-alone agency has its own winter programme with different roles, but has convened and agreed to work in a co-ordinated way to ensure the right assistance is rapidly provided to everyone in need over the coldest months," Mr Brownlee says.

"In practice it means anyone in need who calls any of the existing helplines and 0800 agency numbers will be directed to the right agency to help – either in the predicted storm or over the following months of winter."

CERA Deputy Chief Executive, Social and Cultural Recovery, Michelle Mitchell says a huge variety of initiatives are in place and this major push would help make sure people know what they are.

"We have the Insurance Council's commitment to ensure mould is removed from the over-cap homes still being lived in, while the collaborative Healthy Homes project offers a reduced rate on insulation costs for people with chronic health needs.

"CETAS has helped hundreds of families find housing and with rental subsidies so far and is standing by to support anyone in need.

This announcement was originally published on cera.govt.nz and beehive.govt.nz

"The Red Cross is distributing 7500 Winter Warmer Packs of clothing from Kathmandu and the Warehouse, as well as practical information about physical and psychological wellness.

"In addition to that, 1000 packs included DIY home insulation material and door draught rolls provided by Community Energy Action (CEA).

"And the Canterbury Health System is running its own insulation and heating assistance programme which will benefit around 3000 people who were hospitalised twice or more last winter," Ms Mitchell says.

Mr Brownlee says he has asked CERA to produce a special assistance edition of the monthly Greater Christchurch Recovery Update supplement, so the contact details and information about what help is available is again captured in one place.

"The main aim of this winter resilience campaign is to make sure that whichever door people knock on, someone will point them in the right direction.

"With all relevant agencies involved in recovery linked in to this winter campaign, I'm confident anyone who calls any existing number will be directed to the right place."

Helplines and 0800 numbers

CERA 0800 RING CERA

Christchurch City Council (03) 941 8999

EQC 0800 DAMAGE

Red Cross 0800 RED CROSS

CETAS 0800 67 32 27

Christchurch Hospital (03) 364 0640

Community Energy Action 0800 GET WARM

Emergency 111