

# Media Release

## Support continues after latest shake

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Associate Minister for Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Nicky Wagner says Sunday's earthquake provides a timely reminder that it is OK for people to reach out and take advantage of the free counselling and support services on offer.

"The Valentine's Day quake has certainly rattled peoples' nerves again and for some it has brought back some difficult memories of those big quakes of 2010 and 2011," Ms Wagner says.

"My message to people is there is no shame in saying you are finding things difficult, and asking for help. The services that have been put in place with backing from the Government are there to support people through this recovery.

"The support available for Cantabrians since the earthquake sequence began includes free advice and referrals from the Canterbury Support Line and Earthquake Support Co-ordinators, and free earthquake counselling.

"Thousands of people have made use of these free services and it's certainly made a difference in peoples' lives. More than 22,000 calls have been made to the Canterbury Support Line since it was set up in 2010, and more than 50,000 sessions of free counselling have been provided. Of course when it comes to seeking specialist help your GP is still your first port of call.

"The Ministry of Social Development has contacted providers this week following Sunday's quake to ensure than any increased demand for counselling services is met.

"There is also the 'All Right?' campaign, which has valuable information on its website [www.allright.org.nz](http://www.allright.org.nz) about attending to our mental health and wellbeing.

Ms Wagner says the latest CERA Wellbeing Survey of residents in greater Christchurch had encouraging signs, including more than three quarters of respondents reporting a positive quality of life. However it also found one in five people dealing with ongoing stress stemming from the earthquakes.

"The stress relates not only to further quakes, but the impacts of ongoing insurance issues and other impacts caused by the quakes. That's where supports like the Residential Advisory Service (RAS) come in, to provide free advice to help people work through complex rebuild and repair issues.

"The Government will continue to back those services that directly help those in need," Ms Wagner says.

More information:

- The Canterbury Support Line and Earthquake Support Co-ordination Service are on 0800 777 846.
- Free counselling sessions can be accessed by calling the phone number above.

- The 'All Right?' campaign works to support Cantabrians' mental health and wellbeing: [www.allright.org.nz](http://www.allright.org.nz).
- The Residential Advisory Service (RAS) can be accessed on 0800 777 299 or at [www.advisory.org.nz](http://www.advisory.org.nz).