Shaken and Recovering:
Christchurch City Libraries’ earthquake response

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Hikuwai Weekend School
March 2012
10,661 earthquakes & counting……
Immediate aftermath - buildings

- Libraries were all closed until buildings were checked
- Central Library was in the Red Zone cordon
- Council staff commandeered 3 of our busiest libraries
Central Library
Linwood Library
Immediate aftermath - people

• Impact on staff varied
• Team Leaders kept in touch regularly with team members
• Library Leadership Team met 3 times a week to monitor situation and share information
• Some staff left the city
• Many staff volunteered to assist with the huge recovery effort
On the road to the “new normal”

• Outreach staff read stories in welfare centres
• As a few libraries were able to open they were overwhelmed by customers
• The mobile library responded to areas of need as road conditions allowed
• Study Centres in partnership with MOE
Achievements

- Opening temporary libraries
- Implementing Bibliocommons
- Developing earthquake archive
- Refurbishing Papanui Library
- Implementing a new service model – SMART Library
- Responding to changed business patterns
Central South City
Linwood Mini
Central Library Peterborough
Papanui – first Smart Library
Papanui Library
Kete Christchurch

We want to collect and preserve your Canterbury earthquake stories and pictures.

And what happened next, and how some things have changed and some have remained the same.

Welcome to our basket for collecting material about the Canterbury earthquake on September 4, 2010, the following aftershocks, the Boxing Day event and the earthquake on the February 22, 2011.

A 7.1 magnitude earthquake - centred 40km west of Christchurch and with its epicentre 10km south-east of Darfield - occurred on Saturday 4 September 2010 (NZ time). Widespread damage occurred, with disruption to water, power and sewerage services.

February 22, 2011, was a smaller magnitude but because of its epicenter had a much larger impact on Christchurch including loss of life.

This basket has open membership.

Register on Kete, and automatically join this basket.

Add your stories, photos, memories of
What did we learn?

• Ordinary business continuity plans go out the window in a major disaster
• External server hosting was a lifesaver
• Disaster trees with up to date staff contact lists essential (including group texts)
• Social media and a telephone service were invaluable (for those with power and phone!)
Recognise early the things you can’t control
Sometimes it’s hard to get your ducks in a row
What did we Learn?

• In a disaster of this scale many things will move slowly and then change by the minute
• Take good care of your staff – provide staff support. EQ days
• You can’t communicate enough
• Ideal for all staff to have cell phones and home PCs
• Be patient with staff and customers
There will be times when work isn’t every-one’s highest priority
10 weeks doesn’t always mean 10 weeks

May 2011

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Get libraries back today
On the Horizon

- Aranui Library
- Retrieval of EVERYTHING from Central Library to storage
- LTP
- Possibly more temporary facilities
Silver Linings

The biggest positive, I think, has been barriers between teams coming down to some extent. Personally I found sharing space with members of other teams was great in that it made me realise how many talented and energetic people were out there who I had never met. Working together on projects - such as the stocking of libraries, the destocking of libraries - was great and the sense that you never knew what you might be doing in a workday was stimulating (everything from various library things to being part of the service centre and unloading trucks and wheeling portable toilets to customers to clambering over boxloads of rescued books in our garage). The sense that what we were doing in libraries having a positive impact on people would have carried a lot of us through a terrible time and accentuated the fact that libraries are important community spaces and much valued by people throughout the city.
• Definitely meeting and working with new people and teams.
• Sense of achievement and pride in the library.
• Supporting each other through tough times
• Appreciating the public response to the importance of the Library being a place to meet and be part of a community
• The information that the library website has been able to convey.
• Working with more people from the wider council - eg EOC work.
• The support we received from other NZ libraries - feel part of a bigger "family"
The incredible value that individuals and communities place on our library services was constantly re-iterated, hugs and tears from customers overjoyed when their library re-opened, goodwill of colleagues in going way beyond the extra mile. Calm response to evacuations, change and increased levels of business and busyness.