



Upheavals and opportunities

There's little left to say about the 4 September earthquake that hasn't already been said.

Communications technology enabled people throughout the country and the world to see the extent of the devastation. Images of collapsed buildings, broken sewers and gaping holes where the ground was torn apart painted a dramatic picture of destruction. What the graphic television and Internet images didn't show is the torn fabric of the affected communities.

Neighbourhoods of families and friends, who have known each other for years, and sometimes generations, have been forced to live elsewhere while their homes are rebuilt. Some may never return to their neighbourhoods and communities. Infrastructure and housing is generally easier to fix, but rebuilding the social fabric of the worst-affected communities will take more time and a concerted effort on the part of the UDS partnership.

Connections and cohesion are essential to the wellbeing of any community. The earthquake demonstrated the value of strong communities, as neighbours rushed to assist each other and offered shelter and food to those without either. The value of this community spirit can't be underestimated. It's what makes people want to live in Greater Christchurch and keeps them here against the lure of opportunities in bigger cities elsewhere.

The UDS recognises the importance of quality of life for residents of Greater Christchurch. While the contractors fix the infrastructure, the partners will focus on fixing and strengthening the community connections.

Some change is inevitable, particularly where residents chose not to rebuild, but repairing community cohesion is important for the future wellbeing of residents throughout the area.

Change is also occurring within the UDS partnership.

James Caygill, the UDS Implementation Manager for the past three years, has resigned and been appointed as Chief Executive of the Christchurch Symphony. James brought valuable skills and experience to the new role of Implementation Manager when he was appointed in 2007. We appreciate his contribution and commitment to transforming the UDS from a consultation process into an implementation one, ensuring the partners and community successfully contribute to that transition. An interim Implementation Manager has been appointed until early in 2011 when decisions regarding a permanent replacement will be made.

One thing that remains steadfast following the earthquake is the partnership's position on the Regional Policy Statement Plan Change 1. We continue to support the need for an orderly and co-ordinated approach to managing growth in Greater Christchurch.

May you enjoy Christmas and the New Year. This may be the only year when many of us will be wishing for a truly uneventful holiday break. The events of the past few months send a clear message about the importance of family and friends – in good times and bad.

Bill Wasley, UDS Independent Chair

State highway bridges survive being shaken

A NZ Transport Agency (NZTA) programme to improve the capability of state highway bridges and other infrastructure to withstand a strong earthquake, proved its worth during the recent Greendale earthquake.

No bridges on the state highway network through the Greater Christchurch area sustained any major damage, due to the seismic retrofitting work carried out on many of these bridges. More than \$20m has been invested nationally in seismic retrofitting bridges and other state highway infrastructure in the last decade.

Many bridges built prior to 1972 were less capable of surviving an earthquake than those built more recently. In 1999 a seismic screening exercise of state highway bridges got underway to identify bridges at the greatest risk of being badly damaged in an earthquake.

The process separated bridges that only required simple linkages to their spans to stop them falling off their supports, from those needing complex analysis to assess their quake vulnerability. Since 2001, 135 bridges have had linkages designed and installed as part of the bridge linkage retrofit work programme. In the Greater Christchurch area these include the Heathcote Valley Overpass, Horotane Valley overpasses and the Port Hills overpasses on State Highway 74 which provides the essential link to Lyttelton Port from elsewhere in the region.

The NZTA is continuing with detailed assessments of high priority bridges needing larger-scale seismic upgrading. While it is too soon to measure the exact impact of this seismic screening and retrofitting work on State Highway bridges, in the Greater Christchurch area the bridges on the State Highway network were undamaged and remained open.

Christchurch and Heritage Recovery – new takes on earthquake damaged heritage buildings

Challenge and opportunity will be at the heart of the Christchurch City Council delivering on aspects of the Urban Development Strategy in the wake of the Greendale Earthquake. An important focus will be on the retention, repair and rebuilding of heritage buildings damaged in the earthquake and aftershocks.

Some tough decisions lie ahead around the Urban Development Strategy actions relating to Cultural Heritage, City and Town Centre Revitalisation and Urban Design. However, new opportunities may also emerge – long-term job creation, ideas and support for heritage, high quality urban design, and rethinking approaches to public space.

Heritage and character building owners face some challenging decisions around the economics and timeframes for retaining and repairing damaged buildings.

These include the application of the recently revised Earthquake-Prone, Dangerous and Insanitary Buildings Policy 2010 to earthquake-damaged buildings and the strengthening of any earthquake-prone buildings.

Robust discussions around heritage may stimulate ideas on:

- the appropriate balance between maintaining heritage buildings and seismic and fire safety standards;
- opportunities to reflect on the use and application of Regional and District Plans, and heritage protection orders,
- voluntary protection options for heritage buildings.



A novel approach to heritage building stabilisation presents a vibrant face in the Central City

The Urban Development Strategy’s overarching principle of ‘sustainable prosperity’ is guided by a number of values, including “resilience: managing risk and uncertainty through strategy and implementation frameworks that enhance how individuals, communities and organisations respond to hazards and the unexpected.”

Fortunately, the number of severely damaged heritage buildings is low, and many can be repaired. Programme Manager Liveable City Carolyn Ingles said retaining and repairing heritage buildings are a key part of the earthquake recovery.

“In addition to creating a unique character for Christchurch, heritage buildings make an important contribution to our economy, beyond the already well-understood benefits of heritage tourism. Their adaptive reuse and maintenance creates long-term employment, as do the opportunities brought about by distinctive retail and office areas.”

“Following the earthquake Christchurch’s Central City quickly reopened for business and a tour of the inner city is positive proof that Central City Revitalisation initiatives, such as the lanes network, City Mall upgrade and the trams extension project continue to deliver on UDS actions.”

Net safety gains

Free high-quality netting supplied by Solid Energy is now securing rock that was loosened by the Greendale earthquake on the Port Hills above State Highway 74 (SH74), the Lyttelton Tunnel access road.

NZTA Canterbury Highways Operations Manager Peter Connors says the Agency is grateful for Solid Energy’s generosity in providing the netting free of charge, as part of their contribution to the earthquake recovery effort.

Initially the plan was to remove the rock, though that would have taken longer and may have caused greater disruption for tunnel users, as well as nearby residents. Using the strong high-quality netting is a more effective solution, enabling the rock to be secured more quickly and minimising disruption to road users. Another benefit of using netting is there is no further disturbance of the quake-affected rock face that may have occurred by removing material.

The rock netting has already been successfully used by Solid Energy to prevent rock falls at their Stockton Mine in the Buller District.

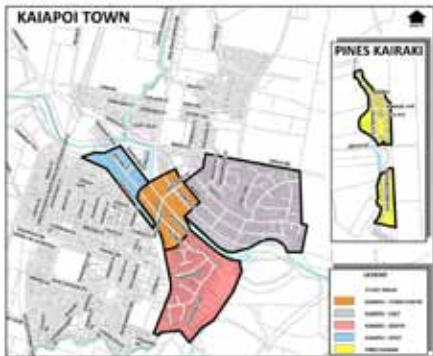
Many of the businesses that make up the economy of the Greater Christchurch area rely on road transport to get goods to and from Lyttelton Port through the tunnel. Ensuring SH74 stays open is therefore a critical responsibility for UDS partner NZTA.



Planning the new look of Kaiapoi

Plans are well underway for a major rebuilding programme in the Kaiapoi and Pines Beach/Kairaki Beach areas that suffered substantial damage in the earthquake.

Five key study areas have been identified (see plan below) where buildings were significantly affected by the earthquake and streets and public spaces damaged.



Kaiapoi Town – Key study areas

The task now is to repair and rebuild these areas, and examine opportunities to revitalise and enhance them, based on community wants and technical feasibility.

A dedicated Streetscape and Town Centre team has been talking to residents to get their ideas and concepts on how they would like the Kaiapoi Town Centre and their streets to look and feel in the future. 'Street Ideas' barbecues have been held for each of the affected areas at which draft plan options were put forward for feedback. 'Open Days' were also held for the Kaiapoi Town Centre, focussing on urban design opportunities – what buildings could look like when they are rebuilt.



Overview of draft town centre plans

The objective is to prepare a town centre plan which addresses a range of issues including a possible town square, improved parking, greater pedestrian access and a focus on the river and 'niche' values that Kaiapoi, as an historic river town, can offer. Residential streetscape plans address issues unique to each specified area including road widths, cycleways, footpaths, and parks and reserves.

It is intended to have the town centre and streetscape plans largely completed before the end of the year to allow for detailed design to begin in 2011.

The team website features plans and information about the rebuild of Kaiapoi and Pines/Kairaki – www.newfoundations.org.nz



An example of one of the streetscape plans

Valedictory from James Caygill

It's been a great privilege spending the last three and a bit years working for all of the UDS partners as their Implementation Manager. As you may have heard, I have chosen not to renew my contract with the UDS Partners; from 1 December I've taken up the exciting role as Chief Executive of the Christchurch Symphony Orchestra and Southern Opera.

The last three years have been an amazing period of change for Christchurch and its local government, whether that's been apparent in the city and surrounding towns in the form of new infrastructure and growth, or not, because a vast amount of planning and regulatory change takes place largely hidden from public view.

But I'm really pleased with what we've been able to achieve as a partnership. We've made great strides putting the UDS into the statutory framework of the Resource Management Act 1991 and the Land Transport Management Act, and all of the UDS partners are now working hard to achieve their bit of the vision for Greater Christchurch over the next 32 years.

The next three years should be just as busy as legal processes come to an end, and increased investment, including that directly related to rebuilding after the earthquake, starts to produce real change in the look and feel of our city. Town planning and urban design are, in truth, slow moving beasts, but I remain confident and excited about where Christchurch is heading. I won't get to see it from the fantastic vantage point I've enjoyed over the last three years, but I'll enjoy watching it nonetheless.

Hereford Street gets a pedestrian makeover

Work on turning Hereford Street between Oxford Terrace and Colombo Street into a more pedestrian-friendly area is almost finished. The footpaths on both sides of the street have been widened and the road narrowed to provide the opportunity for outdoor dining and to create a slow street. This project is part of the Christchurch City Council's overall plan to revitalise the central city - a focal point for the Greater Christchurch area in terms of employment, culture and leisure - and a priority for implementation in the UDS Action Plan.

Tram extension on track

Work on extending the tram route is making good progress with construction expected to be finished by Christmas. The High Street upgrade, which includes enhanced paving and street features as well as the laying of tram tracks in the road, is nearly finished. Work on Colombo Street, to join up with existing lines behind the Cathedral, began in November.



Selwyn Star service shines on through earthquake damage

Environment Canterbury and Leopard Coachlines moved 'heaven and earth' to ensure the new Selwyn Star services began in November, despite other unscheduled earth movements.

Environment Canterbury commissioner, Rex Williams, says the Selwyn Star services are being introduced to meet increased demand to the city and to provide a direct link between Lincoln and Rolleston. This will provide an economic boost for the two key activity centres in the district at a crucial time for businesses.

Lincoln and Rolleston are key activity centres identified in the UDS for significant population growth and business development over the 32 years that remain of the Strategy. Providing residents with public transport connections to activity centres is a key transport outcome of the Strategy.

"We want to encourage people living in the south-west to choose the bus to get to shops and other local services because it's a safe, convenient and cost-effective way to travel."

The Selwyn Star adds to existing services between Selwyn, the southwest and Christchurch City. The three Selwyn Star routes include more frequent weekend services on the existing Lincoln route, a new City to Rolleston service and a Selwyn shuttle service linking Burnham, Rolleston, Springston and Lincoln.

The original plan had been to roll out a fleet of brand new, locally-built Selwyn Star buses at the beginning of November. Instead, the bus builder's factory in Rolleston was badly damaged by the Greendale earthquake so delivery of thirty two new bright yellow, state-of-the-art buses has been delayed until early 2011.

Leopard Coachlines had to work hard in a short timeframe to find temporary replacements from the North Island and some of them are a little older than Metro bus users have become accustomed to. The temporary buses are white, and most have entry steps and so are not wheelchair accessible. There is a brief message on the side, making it clear that they are in temporary service because of the earthquake.

"Leopard's quick response is yet another example of the resilience shown by Canterbury people and businesses in the aftermath of the earthquake. It is testimony to their ingenuity and willingness to get things done," says Mr. Williams.

Deputy Mayor Sarah Walters, who represents Selwyn District on Environment Canterbury's Public Transport Advisory Group, says: "As a frequent user of the existing bus services, I am really excited to see the introduction of the Selwyn Star buses to provide residents with a greatly improved and more affordable service."



In recognition of the importance of the new services to local people, Springston and Rolleston schools produced some brilliant designs to brighten up the temporary buses, on a helping hand theme. Children from Rolleston School made a welcome appearance at the service launch, adding life and colour to the celebration held at Selwyn District Council offices in early November.

Urgent stopbank repairs well underway

Environment Canterbury (ECan) river engineers are making excellent progress with earthquake damage repairs on the Waimakariri and Kaiapoi river stopbanks. Five teams of staff and contractors have been working through the priority damage sites since mid-September.



Most of the Waimakariri stopbank damage occurred in the lower reaches, downstream of the Northern Motorway on the northern (Kaiapoi) side, and in Stewarts Gully and Brooklands on the southern (Christchurch) side. Most of the Kaiapoi river stopbank damage occurred on both the northern and southern banks downstream of Williams Street.



The length of damaged stopbanks was estimated at five kilometres; approximately a quarter of the total length of the lower Waimakariri and Kaiapoi stop banks.

ECan Principal River Engineer Ian Heslop says although some stopbanks suffered serious damage due to settlement and cracking, the risk of flooding due to a stopbank breach immediately after the earthquake was still relatively low.

"Stopbank repairs remain a top priority and we're concentrating on restoring the highest standard of flood protection as soon as possible. It's expected that repairs to the high and medium priority sites will be completed by Christmas," he says.

"This will minimise the risk of Waimakariri or Kaiapoi river stopbanks breaching for river flows up to 3,000 cumecs, the equivalent of a one in 30-year flood. There have been only three such floods recorded since the 1930s."

ECan river engineers are confident of completing the \$2.8m repair programme by March 2011. This will restore the stopbanking system to full capacity, which would contain a flow of about 5,000 cumecs – a one in 500-year event. Protecting the Greater Christchurch area from a possible flood of the Waimakariri River is a key task identified in the UDS Action Plan. Maintaining stop bank protection is the responsibility of ECan, assisted by the other partner councils.