

Media Release

Index sets the scene for recovery

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CERA is releasing the Canterbury Wellbeing Index which tracks the progress of the social recovery across greater Christchurch and a number of indicators.

The Index brings together data from multiple agencies that look at a range of social issues facing Cantabrians including health, employment and housing.

"The Canterbury Wellbeing Index sets the scene for where we can focus our efforts over the coming months and for the longer period of the recovery", says Michelle Mitchell, Deputy Chief Executive for Social and Cultural Recovery, CERA.

"The Index highlights some really encouraging results. In particular, we can see that people in the 20 – 24 age group are moving quickly in to employment, many of those, involved in the rebuild. Notably, unemployment rates in this age group are half the national average.

"We can also see that there has been a high uptake of community based support services. A large proportion of the population experienced significant stress as a result of the earthquakes. It's encouraging to see that over 7,000 households took advantage of the Earthquake Support Co-ordination Service and over 51,000 free counselling sessions have been held. It is great that people recognise the need in themselves to ask for support.

We are committed to a process of checking whether services provided meet the support needs of communities, families and individuals. Over the next few months, we will continue the conversation to ensure that the services provided meet these needs, to check whether other interventions may be required, and to do our best to create opportunities for people to help each other. We also realise that we still need to keep an eye out for others and be mindful of our neighbours and families, especially the impact upon children.

"While it is encouraging to see a good number of positive results in the Index, there is, as always, work to be done in other areas. What we know from international research is that we're all in this together. We can't look to one single agency to solve a raft of social issues.

Today, agencies across the social sector are getting together to share the information in the Canterbury Wellbeing Index and plan ways it can be used to inform further work required to create positive opportunities and results for local people.

"Today's session allows agencies to get together and discuss how we're going to continue our work across the agencies and with local communities to achieve tangible improvements and outcomes with the people of Canterbury" says Michelle Mitchell.

"The earthquakes affected everyone differently. Sarb Johal, Associate Professor at the Joint Centre for Disaster Research, Massey University has reviewed the Index and noted that, 'intervening early and in low-key ways can help to prevent more extensive and

expensive interventions later in recovery trajectories. So far in the Canterbury Recovery, this seems to be working well at a population level, but the data suggests that a clear and significant minority continues to struggle with everyday life'.

"The Canterbury Wellbeing Index has given our best picture yet of where we are at. It is a challenge for the months and years ahead as we work with our partner agencies to improve on these results", said Ms Mitchell.

The data in the Canterbury Wellbeing Index will be updated every six months and is available on the CERA website at <http://cera.govt.nz/cwi>