

Media Release

Support available over Christmas period

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It has been a difficult year for a number of people living in greater Christchurch. The earthquakes have changed lives and caused stress and grief for many people. Christmas time often adds more stress to families and CERA General Manager for Community Wellbeing, Michelle Mitchell says this is the time to take even more care of ourselves and our families and to access the support that is available.

"While this is a time for people to come together and celebrate, we are acutely aware that this is also a time when we can see the results of continuous uncertainty and the pressure that families have been under. This year we need to be even more aware of the impacts of the past fifteen months on ourselves and loved ones," she says.

"We try to ensure people can easily access the support they need when ever they need it. Last week we led a multi agency door knocking programme visiting 6000 homes in Christchurch's orange and red zones to make sure residents are aware of services that are available, and how to access them."

"It was very successful. We were able to put a number of people in touch with services and agencies to help them with issues they were having in rebuilding their homes and their lives. We also allocated Earthquake Support Coordinators to those still trying to navigate their way through to organisations and experts for advice and information.

Most CERA staff and staff at the Earthquake Hub in Kaiapoi and Avondale Earthquake Assistance Centre will be taking a well earned break over the Christmas period with all offices reopening on 4 January.

The Temporary Accommodation Service will be available on normal working days throughout the Christmas and New Year period. Their contact number is 0800 673 227. For accommodation assistance on other days people can go to www.quakeaccommodation.govt.nz or call 0800 777 846.

The Canterbury Support Line for services such as counselling, accommodation assistance, financial assistance, legal services or health services will be available to callers over the Christmas period from 8.30am to 11.00pm seven days a week on 0800 777 846.

The 0800 Government Helpline (0800 77 99 97) is closed on the statutory holidays. The normal operating hours are 7.00am to 6.00pm weekdays, and 8.00am to 1.00pm Saturday.

CERA has a list of support services available under 'support and assistance' on the CERA website.

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

"The team at CERA encourages people to take care of themselves and each other and to contact services should they need any assistance or advice," Mrs Mitchell says. "We wish everyone a safe and happy holiday period."