



MEDIA RELEASE FROM WAIKATO CIVIL DEFENCE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT GROUP

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39 Christchurch self-evacuees registered in Waikato

Thirty-nine people who have self-evacuated from Christchurch to the Waikato have registered through Work and Income but there are many more now sheltering in the region following last week's earthquake.

As of 5pm yesterday, 39 people had registered at Work and Income service centres in the Waikato, with 27 of those people seeking assistance. Te Puni Kokiri also advised yesterday that 89 people are now staying on marae at Morrinsville, Huntly and Ngaruawahia. There may be an overlap in numbers.

Christchurch people can register through the Government's helpline, 0800 779 997, or by visiting any of the region's Work and Income service centres.

In Hamilton, a one-stop-shop has been set up in Housing New Zealand's Victoria Street office for Christchurch residents seeking help, information and advice. A similar information service has been established at the Huntly marae.

Waikato Civil Defence Emergency Management Group controller Scott Fowlds renewed the call for people from Christchurch to register upon their arrival in the area.

"The welfare of people seeking refuge in the region is one of our key priorities, we want to ensure they have all the assistance they might need," Mr Fowlds said.

To help evacuees, Waikato Civil Defence is producing information cards which are expected to be available by the end of the week for distribution through key portals, such as the region's airports, transport centres and hospitals.

"These cards will ensure displaced Christchurch people know where to go for support, as well as for information on accommodation, health, finance, employment and schooling," said Mr Fowlds.

"Anecdotally, however, we know it's likely there are many more Christchurch people arriving in the region to stay with family and friends, or checking into other accommodation," he said.

So far the region has received five medical evacuees – one suffering earthquake-related injuries – with another 30 disabled clients being placed with current providers.

Mr Fowlds reminded displaced Christchurch residents that offers of accommodation are being centrally coordinated by Housing New Zealand. People requiring assistance, or Waikato residents wanting to make offers of accommodation, should contact 0800 435 700 or visit www.housinghelp.govt.nz.

Full details of arrangements and services for Christchurch residents arriving in the region is available on the Waikato Civil Defence website, www.waikatoregioncdemg.govt.nz.

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