



## **MEDIA RELEASE FROM WAIKATO CIVIL DEFENCE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT GROUP**

1300hrs 24 February 2011

### **WAIKATO OFFERS BEDS TO QUAKE EVACUEES**

Waikato people are responding generously with offers of free accommodation for people needing to leave Christchurch following the earthquake.

By 11.30am today offers of more than 170 bed spaces had been received by the Waikato Civil Defence Emergency Management Group's Environment Waikato-based Group Emergency Coordination Centre (GECC), with more offers continuing to roll in on an ongoing basis.

The offers included one offer of space for a family of four for a month, food, airfares and pick up from Hamilton airport. Offers have come to the GECC directly or via local council officers.

Group controller Chris McLay said the offers were a clear sign of the Waikato's willingness to help.

"The recovery from the quake is going to be a long-term exercise and it will be good to have these bed spaces on hand for when they might be required.

"At this stage we expect a lot of Christchurch people wanting to leave their city will initially move to other South Island centres but having space in our region may also become important.

"We'll assess any requests to take in evacuees as they are made but it's important to start planning now."

Meanwhile, a Civil Defence welfare officer from Hamilton has already gone to help out in Christchurch, as has an urban search and rescue team from Taupo.

Mr McLay said another 64 people – the majority of them staff from various councils around the region – had offered to go to Christchurch if needed. These included roading and traffic engineers, water and wastewater engineers, public information staff, welfare staff, environmental health officers, animal welfare officers, drivers, electricians and builders.

The Waikato Civil Defence Emergency Management Group has established a Christchurch Earthquake Fund to receive donations in the Waikato.

Members of the public will be able to make donations direct to account number 06 0317 0096442 05 or take donations to local council offices. Donations to this fund are not tax deductible.

Donations can also be made to:

- Red Cross - visit: [www.redcross.org.nz/donate](http://www.redcross.org.nz/donate)

- Salvation Army: 0800 53 00 00 (Specify that your donation is for the 'Canterbury Earthquake Appeal')
- Any ANZ Bank branch: Account number 01-1839-0188939-00
- Any National Bank branch: Account number 06-0869-0548507-00
- Any Westpac Bank branch: Account number 03-0207-0617331-00
- Any ASB Bank branch: Account number 12-3205-0146808-00
- Any BNZ Bank branch: Account number 02-0500-0982004-000
- Any Kiwibank branch: Account number: 38-9009-0759479-00
- Christchurch mayoral relief fund at any BNZ branch: Account number 02-0800-084958-000

**Media contact:**

Stephen Ward 021 756 310