SUMMARY

- This account of social recovery services in the Waimakariri District following the earthquakes which began on 4 September 2010 is based on the Waimakariri District Council records, an informal debrief with members of the Waimakariri Earthquake Support Service (WESS) in August 2014 and interviews with the WESS’ two coordinators in August 2012 and August 2014.

- The paper provides a brief account of the history of Kaiapoi and the impact of the 4 September and subsequent earthquakes on the town’s infrastructure. It also outlines the plans prepared by the Waimakariri District Council in 2010 to undertake a comprehensive rebuild of the most seriously damaged parts of the town.

- Social recovery services for the people of Kaiapoi features a series of stages:
  - The immediate support provided by the Welfare Centre;
  - The Recovery Assistance Centre which emerged after the closure of the Welfare Centre; and
  - The Waimakariri Earthquake Support Service, supported in turn by Pastoral Care Teams and the Kaiapoi Earthquake Recovery Hub.

- The account of the work of the Welfare Centre include a number of observations relating to improvements that could be made to the operation of such a centre, including issues relating to the deployment of staff from government and other agencies from outside of the District.

- The Recovery Assistance Centre was established because it was clearly apparent that on-going support would be needed when the Welfare Centre closed. This centre brought together representatives of a wide range of government agencies, and saw the development of an advocacy role particularly with respect to people encountering tenancy difficulties.

- The WESS was funded by the Ministry of Social Development and worked under the auspices of the Kaiapoi Senior Citizens and Friends Day Care Inc., (the Darnley Club) which ensured it was not only staffed by local people but maintained its local focus.

- The brief of those working for the WESS was to listen and support people who needed their assistance. Their role was to “walk beside” people and ensure that they received all the information they needed to make sound decisions relating to their circumstances.

- The service worked with people on a “one to one” basis, and this was the only feasible approach as everyone’s circumstances were different, particularly the amount and type of damage to their property.

- The Pastoral Care teams that undertook door to door visiting to ascertain if people needed support, and the Hub office played key roles in social recovery as they were links in the organizational chain of social recovery.

- The locally based approach to social recovery services for Kaiapoi was underpinned by the overall attitude of the Council, and its support for the work of the WESS.
1 Introduction

This report provides a review of the social recovery programme undertaken following the major earthquake of 4 September 2010, which saw Kaiapoi a small town in the Waimakariri District, just north of the Waimakariri River and close to the coast suffer extensive damage. The earthquake that occurred early in the morning of Saturday 4 September impacted severely on Kaiapoi which experienced considerable areas of liquefaction, and the lateral spreading of areas close to the Kaiapoi River and smaller Kaikanui Stream. The beach settlement of Pines Beach and Kairaki, located close to the mouth of the Waimakariri River also suffered severe damage.

As the result of this earthquake approximately 2000 homes lost services and ultimately 300 houses in Kaiapoi, Pines Beach and Kairaki were deemed uninhabitable. In addition, 40 percent of the town’s commercial floor space was lost as well as some community buildings including the Waimakariri District Council’s Kaiapoi Library and Service Centre.

While the Waimakariri District Council played a leading role in social recovery, this paper traces the progress of the social recovery programme which involved the collaboration of multiple agencies. It also saw the establishment of a “hub” on Darnley Square, adjacent to the Kaiapoi Community Centre that provided the base for this programme. The hub became the base for the parallel work to restore the town’s physical infrastructure. Once the Council’s programme was halted by the Government, it became the base for contractors and others involved with the rebuilding or repairing damaged homes.

The social recovery process for Kaiapoi can be divided into a number of stages commencing with declaration of a state of emergency and the establishment of a welfare centre, as the immediate response to the disaster. The successive stages of the recovery, following the period when working under the civil defence emergency can be seen as:

- October – December 2010 with the focus on developing plans for the rebuilding of the badly damaged areas of Kaiapoi, Pines Beach and Kairaki;
- January – May 2011 with the Council negotiating an agreement with the Government for it to take control of the rebuild, and the plans for this were explained to those affected;
- June – August 2011 with a period of inaction after the Government called a halt to plans to rebuild and prior to the first announcement of the areas to the “red zoned” in Kaiapoi, Pines Beach and Kairaki;
- September 2011 – mid-2013 with the focus on supporting the community through the evacuation of the areas “red zoned” and the tortuous process of repairing or rebuilding homes not abandoned.
- Mid-2013 onward with ongoing calls for support from people still wrestling with the repairing or rebuilding of damaged homes.

2 Kaiapoi prior to 4 September 2010

Kaiapoi owes its origins to its location on the Kaiapoi River, previously the north branch of the Waimakariri River. Prior to the moves in the 1930s to divert the Eyre River into the main stem of the Waimakariri River at Eyreton, and the shutting off of the north branch to form the Kaiapoi River, the town had been subject to severe flooding from time to time and the prospects for substantial development were limited.
Until late in the 20th Century Kaiapoi was not only a river town, but also hosted a woollen mill, a freezing works, and a major packing facility for the New Zealand Apple and Pear Board. During this period Kaiapoi did not have close links with its hinterland. It was Rangiora that played the role as the main service town for the surrounding rural areas. In the middle of the 20th Century there had been a relatively substantial area of residential development to the north east between the Kaiapoi River and Beach Road, but the main thrust of residential development occurred later in the Century and in the first few years of the 21st Century.

From the late 1980s the character of Kaiapoi began to change markedly. The Kaiapoi Woollen Mill closed in 1978 and the North Canterbury Freezing Works closed in 1991. At the same time, the development of a series of major residential subdivisions on the outskirts of the town began. The first of these was to the South of Kaiapoi, and included the Mansfield Drive, Isaac Wilson Road area as well as the Holland Drive subdivision, a small area to the east of Williams Street. The next major subdivision was Courtenay Downs, a development to the east of the railway line in south Kaiapoi on land which was previously the site of the North Canterbury Freezing Works. The Moorcroft subdivision further to the north east of Kaiapoi was approved in 2001, when decisions on submission to the Proposed District Plan were released. At the 2006 Census Kaiapoi had 10,499 people, and with the absence of new areas available for development the town had seen very little new home construction between March 2006 and August 2010.

While Kaiapoi had seen considerable change over the 20 – 25 years preceding the earthquake of 4 September 2010, it was seen as having a developed community by some of those leading the social recovery. Council surveys found people who had moved into the area recently had positive reasons for choosing to live at Kaiapoi. Residents of longer standing had extensive social networks and a strong commitment to the town. The town had a reasonably wide range of community buildings developed over many years, which provided bases for the members of the town’s many community groups to meet, with the Kaiapoi Workingmen’s Club probably the “jewel in the crown”. The Kaiapoi Aquatic Centre, constructed in the mid-1990s, stood out as at least in part as a tribute to the work of community people in raising a substantial amount of the funds required to build the complex. The Waimakariri District Council’s combined Kaiapoi Service Centre and Library and the recently extended Kaiapoi Community Centre at Darnley Square were also focal points for the community. The Kaiapoi River and its environs including the wharf area and the Tuhoi birthed there provided huge amenity value and contributed much to the character of the town.

3 The impact of 4 September earthquake on Kaiapoi

As a result of the earthquake the Waimakariri District Council immediately declared a state of emergency and established an Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) at Rangiora, which was maintained for 12 days i.e. until 16 September 2010. A Welfare Centre opened at the Kaiapoi North School on that Saturday, and on the following Tuesday it transferred to the Kaiapoi Rugby Club Pavilion, provided support to those requesting it. Communications were seen as a high priority by the Council, and in the days following the earthquake Council staff not required for other duties were involved with the house to house delivery of newsletters from the Chief Executive, providing regular up-dates about the situation and what was being done to look after people of Kaiapoi, Pines Beach and Kairaki.
While working under the “declaration of emergency”, the Council began the task of restoring services, and assessing the damage to homes across the District. Initially the work of assessing the structural integrity of buildings was undertaken by local staff, but as this work gathered momentum during the week following the earthquake building inspectors came into the District from other South Island territorial authorities and some private firms. By the end of the day on Thursday 10 September 2500 assessments had been completed.

Homes coded “red” were ones deemed unsuitable for occupation, while people were able to continue to live in those coded “yellow”. The worst areas for “red” coded homes were Courtenay, and Pines Beach, and there were significant clusters of homes coded “yellow” in areas such as Charles from Williams Street to Boys Street, and in the Hilton Street/Peraki Street area. Immediately after the earthquake approximately 250 dwellings were vacated, and by December 2010 residents had left over 400 houses in Kaiapoi, Pines Beach and Kairaki.

By 13 September water supplies had been restored to the boundaries of all residential properties in Kaiapoi, Pines Beach and Kairaki. At this stage, 300 portaloos had been brought into Kaiapoi, and work was proceeding with re-establishing sewer lines. The stormwater situation was considered to be “under control”, although there was concern that if silt collections did not continue, silt could block the stormwater system if it rained or if the weather remained fine it would create a dust nuisance as the silt dried out.

As the Council moved into recovery mode and the state of emergency was lifted, the Welfare Centre closed and a Recovery Assistance Centre was opened in main hall of the Kaiapoi Community Centre. Within a short time the Council had established an Infrastructure Recovery Unit, initially based in Rangiora, and recruited key personnel from consultancies some of whom were familiar with the District and the Council’s operations having previously worked for the organisation. During October and November 2010 this unit undertook most of the work required to plan the rebuilding of Kaiapoi. During this period the Council also negotiated with the government for it to project manage the rebuilding work in Kaiapoi with the Earthquake Commission.

In December 2010 the Council held its first round of meetings, to which it invited the people from Kaiapoi, Pines Beach and Kairaki who would be involved in the rebuild. At these meetings participants were given the opportunity to work in small groups, to identify the questions that they wanted answered and these were posted on the venue walls. The most frequently asked questions were selected, and these were answered at the meeting by the various experts and/or representatives of organisations responsible. Questions about insurance were answered by representatives of the insurance industry, and ones related to land were answered by geotechnical engineers. All the answers to questions asked at these meetings, irrespective of whether they were answered from the platform, or involved an issue raised by a single person were compiled into a “Q & A” booklet and posted on the Councils’ New Foundations website.

By this time it was becoming apparent that the need to coordinate the social recovery efforts was significant, and this led the Waimakariri District Council to appoint its Community Team Leader to the position of Social Recovery Manager for two years commencing on 1 February 2011. The community’s need for post-earthquake leadership was also reflected in the
emergence of a residents’ association recognised by the Council which provided a “voice” to represent needs with respect to aspects of the recovery effort.

By February 2011 the final plans for the staged rebuilding of the badly damaged residential areas of Kaiapoi was complete, and plans were in place for a series of meetings to present these to the affected property owners stage by stage beginning on 22 February 2011. This first meeting was immediately cancelled after the Christchurch earthquake, and the series of meeting were re-launched on 22 March. At that stage, it was planned for the first group of residents to move out of their homes by 30 June 2011 while their homes were being rebuilt or renovated. In April 2011 the Council reached agreement with the Department of Building and Housing for the placement of 25 units on the Kaiapoi Domain at the corner of Ranfurly and Dale Streets, to accommodate people while their land was being remediated and homes repaired or rebuild. These units were opened in July 2011.

From March 2011 work on repairing infrastructure continued. Work to replace sewer pipes along Featherston Avenue, Kairaki, halted because of the Christchurch earthquake on 22 February was completed, and work began on the replacement of the Dunns Avenue sewer line in Pines Beach. During this period a second attempt was made to repair the Mandeville footbridge across the Kaiapoi River. This bridge was badly buckled in the September earthquake as the result of the lateral movement of the river banks, and an initial attempt to repair it in January 2011 was only partially successful. The decision to undertake further work on the Mandeville bridge at this time was influenced by a desire to prevent further deterioration of the structure, and because it provides an important link across the Kaiapoi River for children walking to school.

On 8 June 2011 the Government called a halt to the Council’s plans for the rebuilding of Kaiapoi while further investigations were carried out. At that stage it was indicated that 70 homes at Kairaki were considered unsuitable for prolonged occupation, and a further 1600 homes were zoned “orange” which meant that further investigations were required before a decision on their future could be made. This left many Kaiapoi residents who previously had a plan, albeit one possibly stretching out to the first half of 2014, without any idea of what the future held for them. It was not until 18 August 2011 that the Government finally announced the areas within Kaiapoi, Pines Beach and Kairaki that would definitely be zoned “red”, and that residents in these areas would have to leave their properties by April 2013.

The settlements for these properties offered by the Government were to be based on either, the replacement value of their homes and the value for their land, if their home was insured and it was so severely damaged that it would have to be rebuilt their insurance company was liable for the insured value of the house. Those who were insured but whose homes could be repaired would receive the 2008 government valuation for their properties from the Government.

For some of the residents with properties in the “red” zones this announcement was a relief as they would be able to get on with their lives, while for others it was the beginning of another period of uncertainty. An immediate cause of concern for some was the fact that the initial announcements about “red zoning” in Christchurch were made before the announcement for Kaiapoi. This prompted fear among some Kaiapoi residents that many of the lots becoming available in the new Sovereign Palms subdivision in north east Kaiapoi were being purchased
by people from Christchurch, and they had not had the first opportunity to buy lots in this subdivision.

Some of the insurance companies also chose to reassess properties, and began to tell clients that instead of their house being a “rebuild” it would now be repaired. This meant that for those affected there would be a significant difference in the amount of money that they could expect from their settlement, as they would have to accept the 2008 government valuation for their property rather than the higher replacement valuation from their insurance company plus the value of their land from Government.

While the focus was on the “red zoning” of properties involving land on which it was considered inappropriate to repair, many other people in Kaiapoi also had damaged homes. For these people recovery was often fraught with difficulties associated with the lodging of claims following the September 4 earthquake and subsequent one, and working with the Earthquake Commission and/or their own insurers. For those with claims valued at under $100,000 plus GST repairs were organised through Fletcher Building Ltd., while those with larger claims worked through the construction company contracted by their insurance company.

This led to differences of opinion around the assessment of the value of claims and the organisation responsible for overseeing the repairing or rebuilding of homes. Those outside of the areas zoned “red” also faced issues with respect to the quality of the land on which their homes were built, which particularly affected those faced with the need to rebuild. A classification system was developed, with TC1 land which presented no difficulties to TC3 land on which additional expenditure on foundations was to be required depending on the severity of the situation. Within the TC3 band there were a range of classifications, with worst indicating that the land in question differed little from “red zoned” land.

When the government introduced its two tier method of compensation it was recognised by some that it brought forward the time at which the differences in the situation faced by people qualified for a “rebuild” and those whose homes were to be repaired emerged. If the initial plan to progressively restore the “red zoned” areas had been carried through, it was likely that the market was likely to ultimately distinguish in terms of value between homes that had been rebuilt from those in the same neighbourhood that had been repaired. In terms of the consequences for the people affected, the immediate impact of the government’s two tier approach to compensation was more probably more severe than the ultimate market differentiation which might not have been realised for many years.

It is against this series of events following the 4 September 2010 earthquake that the recovery work was undertaken, with each step along the way bringing with it separate sets of issues for residents and separate challenges for the people providing support. Even after the extended deadline for people to vacate “red zoned” properties in 2013, many residents still faced difficulties dealing with repair or the rebuilding of homes not “red zoned”. In addition, the need to find another which they could afford with the payout received from the government presented a challenge, particularly for those who had to accept the 2008 valuation for their property. A significant legacy of the “red zoning” of properties is that there are some people who will not own their own home again, others faced with making mortgage repayments at a time in their lives when they had planned to be mortgage free, and others who have taken on mortgage commitments which they are likely to find very difficult to meet.
4 Social recovery

4.1 Introduction

There were various dimensions to the support that was provided for people living in Kaiapoi, Pines Beach and Kairaki, to help them to deal with the situations that they faced as the result of the 4 September 2010 and subsequent earthquakes. The overall approach adopted by the Waimakariri District Council was summed up by its Chief Executive:

“Our success will not be measured by the kilometers of pipe and road that we replace, but by how the people come through this”.

While the supports that were developed overlapped and interlocked, these will be reviewed in turn in an effort to explain how each developed in response to circumstances change. They were:

- the initial welfare response;
- the Earthquake Recovery Assistance Centre;
- the Waimakariri Earthquake Support Service;
- the Pastoral Care Team; and
- the Kaiapoi Earthquake Hub

4.2 The Welfare Centre

The establishment of a Welfare Centre followed the declaration of a state of emergency on 4 September. Initially this centre was established at the Kaiapoi North School hall, and later at the Kaiapoi Rugby Club facilities. The two people who were to lead the social recovery effort which eventually became the Waimakariri Earthquake Support Service were involved at the outset working in the Welfare Centre.

For those working in the Welfare Centre it was seen to be well organised, with plentiful supplies of food and clothing from the outset, but gaps that emerged in the early stages when there was the need to develop a method of ensuring that people who needed supplies were given them. The gap associated with the distribution of donated food and clothing was sorted out relatively quickly by a community trust coordinator based elsewhere in the District, but a full triage system was not developed until sometime later. The initial response reflects the fact that while there was some damage to property elsewhere in the District, people from throughout the District focused on supporting Kaiapoi people.

During the days immediately after the earthquake the Welfare Centre was open until about 11.00pm each evening. The exception was on the night of Sunday 5 September, when it remained open overnight and accommodated people evacuated from the Riverlands Motor Camp. The residents from this camp, close to the Waimakariri River, were evacuated because the river was running very high as the result of nor ‘west rain in the catchment during the previous 24 to 36 hours, and there were concerns about whether the stopbanks damaged by the earthquakes would hold. While the EOC in Rangiora was not open that night, the person
supervising the Welfare Centre overnight would have been able to contact the Police immediately if difficulties arose. There were, however, no incidents necessitating a call for help.

The Welfare Centre moved to the Kaiapoi Rugby Club Pavilion on Tuesday 7 September, and the centre was seen as continuing to operate well from a local perspective, particularly after a triage system was introduced. This meant that people who came in uncertain about what they needed, or what help was available could be assisted thus ensuring that they received what they really needed. There were also people assigned to “meeting and greeting” those who came into the centre and their work was also seen as very valuable. By talking to people as they came in, they were made to feel more comfortable and were assisted to work out for themselves what they needed, before talking to the volunteers undertaking the triage needs assessment.

The smooth running of the Welfare Centre was attributed to the fact that it was being run by community people working with their own community. The people running the centre knew the people they were assisting, and often knew in advance about specific problems people coming to the centre were facing such as mental health or family issues. It was also observed that people coming to the centre generally did not have high needs, other than food and clothing.

Local knowledge and local networks were also seen as being very valuable, particularly when screening offers of accommodation to see if they were appropriate. In some instances, offers were quickly turned down because they were known to be unsuitable. In others, offers were checked with local people who were known to understand the situation. In this context, the locally based Housing New Zealand Corporation (HNZC) officer made a particularly important contribution.

The difficulties identified were:

- **The administration of the Mayoral grants.** It was observed that if grants were to be made available in an emergency again, there should be a much more systematic approach with clear guidelines concerning the administration of such a scheme.

- **The integration of Red Cross people from outside of the District into the Welfare Centre.** The performance of the people brought in by the Red Cross was variable. Some of these people were very good, while other did not even know how to fill in Red Cross forms or were unwilling to do so, despite assurances given by the Council’s Civil Defence Officer that it was one of the tasks they would be doing. In addition, they did not know the area which added to the frustration for stressed and anxious people seeking help.

- **The lack of briefing of people coming in from elsewhere to work at the Welfare Centre.** The importance of a thorough briefing of people coming into the Welfare Centre to help was stressed. It was observed that a busy place can look as if it is not working well, when it is in fact functioning effectively. Some of those coming in were suggesting that changes be made before they had taken time to assimilate what was going on, and this was not helpful. It was recognised, nevertheless, that when someone came in with extensive emergency management experience their advice was well received, and this was likely to have been offered after that person had spent some time observing what was in place.
• The value of people brought into Kaiapoi by government agencies was questioned. The HNZC officer who was working in the District prior to the earthquake was seen as very helpful, because he understood the area and related well to the needs that were presenting. People brought in by agencies from elsewhere, however, were considerably less helpful. It was recognised that the officers based locally could not remain on the job all the time, but it was suggested that government agencies should consider “back filling” with staff who know the area, and substitute these people with staff brought into the area from elsewhere.

• The need to screen independent people offering assistance before they reach the Welfare Centre. Counsellors who arrived unannounced were a significant cause for concern, and were often difficult to deal with. On one occasion a counsellor arrived and was so persistent about being involved that it delayed the closing of the Welfare Centre for about two hours. The centre would have closed at 9.00pm, but did not close until 11.00pm that evening.

• The relationship between the Welfare Centre and the Council’s EOC. There was some concern among those working in the centre that they did not see very many Council staff at the centre. This was not seen as a problem by those leading the Welfare Centre as requests were being followed through, and assistance given when it was needed. Subsequent moves by the Council’s Civil Defence officer to integrate the Council’s Community Team into the EOC team, to look after welfare will mean that there is a much stronger link between any Welfare Centre and the EOC that may be set up in the future. In addition, a link between the EOC/Welfare Centre when operating under a declaration of emergency and key service providers including non-governmental organisations has been established, so that contact with the most vulnerable members of the community can be established quickly in a future emergency.

• The term Welfare Centre. It was suggested that the term Welfare Centre may not be the most appropriate for the type of activities being undertaken in such a centre. The alternatives of “Emergency Response Centre” or “Emergency Help Centre” were considered to be more appropriate for Welfare Centre set up under the Civil Defence and Emergency Management Act.

4.3 Recovery Assistance Centre

The state of emergency was lifted by the Waimakariri District Council on 16 September. With this the Welfare Centre at the Kaiapoi Rugby Club closed and a recovery assistance centre opened in the main hall at the Kaiapoi Community Centre located nearby on 20 September 2010. The Recovery Assistance Centre as established because it was clearly apparent to those involved with the Welfare Centre that further support services were going to be needed.

The transition from the Welfare Centre to the Recovery Assistance Centre was seamless as many of those involved in running the Welfare Centre transferred to the new centre. At the same time the food bank from the Welfare Centre transferred to Kaiapoi Community Services, an agency under the direction of Wellbeing North Canterbury, the District’s Community Development Trust. The Recovery Assistance Centre remained in operation until just prior to Christmas in 2010.
When it opened the Centre had representatives of key agencies such as the Work and Income (WINZ), the Inland Revenue Department and HNZC. A senior Council building inspector was present at the Centre, and representatives of other agencies including the Canterbury Earthquake Temporary Accommodation Service (CETAS). Initially representatives of the major trading banks were based at the Recovery Centre. Requests for accommodation were among the most frequent calls for help received by those working at the Recovery Assistance Centre.

Just as there had been people present at the Welfare Centre to ensure that those who called for help received support, the Recovery Assistance Centre included a person to act as an advocate for people encountering difficulties with any matters that concern them. This advocacy role quickly gained momentum as people approached the Centre with difficulties with their tenancies.

The number of dwellings identified as “not owned” by their occupants in Kaiapoi at the 2006 Census was 828, and some of the town’s rental accommodation was among the more severely damaged in September 2010. While tenancies could be terminated if properties were red stickered, there were occasions when landlords took red stickers off their properties and argued that their tenant was liable to continue to pay the rent. Arguments over tenancies saw the advocate based at the Recovery Assistance Centre taking a number of trips to the tenancy tribunal during the early weeks after the establishment of the centre. At the heart of the problems was that regulations covering tenancies did not provide for emergency situations. This meant that if the situations were to be sorted out amicably all parties needed to demonstrate good will, which was not always the case. To assist with situations such as this, it was suggested that it would be advantageous if regulations, such as those relating to tenancies at that time, carried provisions to allow additional discretion in emergency situations where the position of one party is clearly disadvantaged.

While the Recovery Assistance Centre was operating from the Kaiapoi Community Centre, the Infrastructure Recovery Unit, initially established at Rangiora, moved to a group of portacom buildings on Darnley Square adjacent to this Community Centre. This provided the opportunity to establish an integrated operation reinforced by the fact that the portacom offices of the Infrastructure Recovery Manager and the Social Recovery Manager, when appointed in February 2011, were side by side within the compound.

### 4.4 Waimakariri Earthquake Support Service

#### 4.4.1. Its origins and organisation

The decision to establish a Waimakariri Earthquake Support Service (WESS) to replace the Recovery Assistance Centre was made small group of people including the Council’s Manager: Earthquake Recovery, the Social Recovery Manager, and the two people who become the Support Coordinators. The establishment of the service can in part to attributable to the experiences of the those working in the aftermath of the major bushfire disaster in Victoria, Australia, and a major landslide in the Bay of Plenty in New Zealand. The service, funded by the Ministry of Social Development, was established under the umbrella of the Kaiapoi Senior Citizens and Friends Day Care Inc., also known as the Darnley Club, and one of the Support Coordinators is also the manager of the Darnley Club.
The decision to establish the service under the auspices of a small locally based non-governmental organisation (NGO,) the Darnley Club, was seen as one of the main contributors to its success. In the view of those involved, it would have been more difficult for WESS to have achieved its local focus if it had been under the umbrella of a larger NGO with a wider geographic focus and more contracts. Under the Darnley Club, the contractual obligations and source of funding from the Ministry of Social Development was completely separate from those associated with day care for the elderly, the responsibility of the umbrella organisation. It was also considered that this allowed the scope for the service to develop its own flexible style, because of the trust that existed between those responsible for the service and the Board of the Darnley Club, which would have been unlikely if WESS had been working under a larger and more formal NGO.

The members of the new support service included people who already had links with the Recovery Centre and were known to be working well together. Also, the group of people selected for the service had a range of backgrounds which mirrored the diversity of the community with which they would be working. It was made clear to those who joined WESS that their contract was for one year, and that there were no guarantees of employment past that point. While those who joined the service were known to the coordinators each was formally interviewed, with one of the main objectives being to make sure that they fully appreciated the role that they would be playing. The decision concerning the number of people required was essentially an “educated guess”, and the first recruits provided a core upon which further capacity was built.

Some of those who become involved were in employment, and one or two maintained some ongoing involvement while working for the support service, including one of the coordinators who continued in her role as the manager of the Darnley Club. Others who joined were doing voluntary work in the community prior to the earthquake, had lost their job because of the impact of the earthquake on the business they were employed by, or were recently retired.

When the service was first established it had two leaders and a team of 18, although not all of these people were fully funded through the main contract held by the Darnley Club. Those not funded in this way were funded by Te Mana Waka, Te Waka Tapu, and WINZ, although the source of funding did not affect the ability of these people to become integral members of the WESS team. Since WESS was established there have been some changes in personnel, with a few leaving because other permanent employment opportunities became available. By mid-2014 the number of people in the WESS team had reduced by the workload for each member was similar to that earlier.

Probably one of the more disconcerting aspects for those working for WESS was the lack of certainty that the funding for the service would be continued. For example, information about the renewal of the contact came through so late on one occasion that members of the service left for their Christmas holidays no knowing whether they would have a job to return to. The service currently has funding to the end of June 2014, and although the service is likely to continue there is uncertainty about whether it will continue in the Waimakariri District in its present form. A potential issue in this context is the fact that the Darnley Club is a small NGO, and the government is moving to streamline its contracting system focusing on larger organisations.
Despite these uncertainties, the relationship between WESS and its funder the Ministry for Social Development was generally a reciprocal one. The Ministry assisted with training for the people working for the service, and provided guidelines and job descriptions at the outset. In addition to weekly meetings of the WESS team, the coordinators undertook monthly appraisals to maintain an overview of how the service was working. Later the Ministry developed a quality assurance programme for the support co-ordination services across the greater Christchurch area, and its approach reflected what had been learned from the Waimakariri experience. That the Ministry was able to learn from WESS is attributable in part to the fact that Kaiapoi was so badly damaged in the first earthquake on 4 September 2010, while it was not until after the Christchurch earthquake on 22 February efforts to provide social support gained momentum in the City. At a local level this was also aided by the service’s relationship with the widely respected WINZ manager based in the Waimakariri District.

Within the context of post-earthquake social recovery the people working for WESS, nevertheless did encounter some barriers. In particular, there was skepticism among some working for other agencies about their ability to undertake their role because they were not trained social workers or mental health workers. To a certain extent this could be seen as a misunderstanding of their role. They were there to listen and support families through the challenges they faced, by ensuring that they had access to all relevant sources of information. The people working for WESS were working with people on a one to one basis in their homes and offered life skills and common sense, and not necessarily the sort of advice that would have been tendered by professional social workers.

This was reinforced by the way in which the coordinators “matched” those working for WESS with people calling for support. For example, one of the members of the WESS team was a retired builder and he was asked to assist people with building issues. Similarly, if the problems faced involved working with children support worker with experience of working with families became involved. The fact that no complaints have been received about the service is testimony to its success. Ultimately, however, would not have been able to achieve its results without a pastoral care team and the hub office.

**4.4.2 The Pastoral Care Team**

The Pastoral Care Team was an initiative of the churches which was strongly supported by the Social Recovery Manager, who had made herself familiar social recovery literature. This team involve a relatively large number of people from the District's churches, many of whom lived outside of Kaiapoi. The role of this group was to door-knock and to establish whether people needed help. For some it simply involved sitting down with a resident and having a talk over a cup of tea, but in other cases this initial contact provided an indication of whether more help was needed.

At the end of each of their rounds the members of the Pastoral Care Team would hand a list of the people that they thought likely to need the support of WESS to the support coordinators. The coordinators would then work through the list, to identify who should receive a follow up phone call to confirm whether more assistance was needed and who should be immediately allocated to a member of the WESS team.
As late as March 2014 it was reported to the Kaiapoi Community Board that the Pastoral Care Team were knocking on approximately 50 doors each week, in both the older parts of Kaiapoi and the areas of new housing and people with difficulties being passed on to WESS. At that time the future of the Pastoral Care Team was under review. Although the Pastoral Care Team played an important role in linking the WESS with people who needed their support, having the service based at the Kaiapoi Community Centre also provided an easily identifiable contact point for people seeking help from the service.

### 4.4.3 The Hub

The Hub office was the third element of the organisation that underpinned the success of Kaiapoi’s social recovery. The Kaiapoi Hub was set up in January 2011 initially as part of the rebuild programme. At that stage the Waimakariri District Council’s Infrastructure Recovery Unit was based at the Hub with up to 14 engineers involved, plus a land remediation team with representatives of the geotechnical specialists Tonkin and Taylor.

During the first half of 2011 emphasis was placed on a coordinated approach to recovery, and this was exemplified by the location of the offices of the Infrastructure and Social Recovery Managers beside each other in the portacom “village” that was the Hub. Hub meetings involving those working on both infrastructure and social recovery were being held regularly at this stage, with involvement of representatives of Fletcher Building Ltd. and various insurance companies from time to time.

Once the planned rebuild was halted the operation of the Hub changed. The Council’s Infrastructure Recovery Unit was disbanded, to be replaced by representatives of the Earthquake Commission, insurance companies and the construction companies undertaking the coordination of earthquake repairs valued at more than $100,000.00 (GST exclusive), the threshold at which private insurers assumed responsibility for earthquake damage from the Earthquake Commission.

In September 2011, with the announcement of the areas zoned “red” there was another major change in the operation of the Kaiapoi Hub. CERA had already established a “hub” at Avondale in Christchurch, and the value of the recovery agency having a presence in Kaiapoi was appreciated. This meant that instead of the Hub being a Waimakariri District Council initiative it became a joint Council and CERA presence in Kaiapoi. The Kaiapoi Earthquake Hub Coordinator also became CERA’s representative in Kaiapoi.

From the perspective of social recovery the establishment of a reception service at the Kaiapoi Hub was a very significant move. It meant that people frustrated trying to make contact with their insurance company, EQC and/or other agencies involved with the recovery via the 0800 telephone service could call at the Hub in person and have appointments organised for them. Not only did this approach mean that people had improved access to recovery services, but it also contributed to an improvement in relationships between these organisations.

Reports prepared in August 2012 by the Kaiapoi Earthquake Hub Coordinator provide an overview of the work undertaken during the period since 16 September 2011 when the “red zone” announcement for Kaiapoi was made. From 16 September 2011 to 24 August 2012 the Hub had handled 2020 requests for appointments or enquiries. In the reports for August 2012 the
following were identified as the key issues being raised by people visiting the Hub and these included:

- People seeking clarification that their EQC claims had been received by Fletchers
- Green Zone residents frustrated by lack of information about the timeframes for Fletchers to undertake their repairs
- People needing repeat appointments with EQC because they had not received the answers they were seeking within the timeframes promised
- People facing financial difficulties meeting mortgage payments, associated with the need to live in rental accommodation because of earthquake damage and the difference between the temporary accommodation allowance and the amount being paid in rent
- People in “red zone” properties concerned because they were being refused emergency repairs by EQC and/or their insurance company

In August 2012 the Canterbury Earthquake Temporary Accommodation Service (CETAS), based at the Hub was getting a steady number of cancellations of temporary accommodation assistance allowances because “red zone” people had moved into new homes, and from people with homes on land classified as TC3 because they had purchased other properties rather than waiting to return to their affected properties. Some people were also concerned about the fact that there had been no official confirmation that the temporary accommodation allowance would continue beyond 16 February 2013.

Matters of concern directed to CERA included people worried about the expiry date for their government offer that were still waiting for the results of the insurance/EQC joint assessments. There was also one person who approached the Hub reception frustrated because a home under construction had not been insured by the builder, which meant that the owner would not qualify for an offer to purchase from the Crown. Other “red zone” residents were concerned about what would happen if their new homes were not completed by April 2013 when they were required to vacate their current properties.

The pattern of enquiries changed as people with “red zone” properties settled with the government and move away. After mid-2013 the most concerns being those relating to the requirements for rebuilding homes on Technical Category 3 (TC3) land, and people from “green zones” living in damaged houses without any clear indication of when their homes would be repaired. The position faced by people with TC3 land was particularly difficult as there were significant delays in establishing the standard of foundations that would be required for homes rebuilt on this class of land, and irrespective of the final specifications these would mean significant additional costs.

4.4.4 Waimakariri Earthquake Support Service at work

WESS began work with a list of the more vulnerable people with whom the RAC had been in contact, and these included Maori and elderly people. At the outset, a major focus of the Service’s work was to ensure that people were warm, dry and safe in their homes. The support workers were also involved with explaining the Earthquake Commission’s processes, and assist those who asked for help with how to lodge claims. Once the rebuilding plans began to be announced from 22 March 2011, the focus was on ensuring that people affected understood the implications of the Council’s rebuild plans for them.
Also, before the decision to halt the rebuild in June 2011 WESS worked with the small group of mainly elderly people who were scheduled to be the first to leave their homes in June/July 2011. After the announcement of the properties to be “red zoned” in August 2011, the Support Service workers continued to support people through their negotiations with the EQC and the various insurance companies, but were also involved with ensuring that people understood the alternatives for the sale of their homes that the government had offered.

The number of households with which the Support Service was working peaked at approximately 800 in 2011, and at the beginning of 2012 it was 650. By August 2012 the number of households had declined to 470, with a further 535 cases “closed”. Approximately 12 months later at the end of September 2013 there were 303 active households, and by the beginning of 2014 this number had fallen to 225.

This meant that WESS workers could have a case load of up to 40 households but the amount of time devoted to each could vary quite widely. Although one way of managing caseloads was to “close” them when it appeared that the situation had stabilized, it was made clear that if they needed more help than WESS was only a phone call away.

While there had been initial resistance to using a database to capture information about their case, the WESS team acknowledged that it was eventually recognised as a valuable tool as their memories often did not prove as good as they might have hoped.

Figure 1 sets out the pace of settlement for “red zoned” properties in Kaiapoi.

![Figure 1: Households settled with the Government January 2012 - April 2013](image)

Figure 1 shows that following the government’s announcement in August 2011 294 (28 percent) of households had made arrangement with the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority to sell their properties, and by May 2012 just over 50 percent (540 households) had settled.

By mid-2012 concerns were mounting about the extent of preparedness of red zone residents to vacate their properties by the government’s deadline of April 2013, and this prompted the circulation of a questionnaire to all the remaining red zone households. Approximately 450
questionnaires were circulated and 40 percent (177) were returned. Of these respondents, 61 percent (107 households) had firm plans to move with 58 percent going to other locations in Kaiapoi or Pines Beach, 27 percent going to properties elsewhere in the District, and 15 percent moving further away.

There were 70 households that responded to this survey that had no firm plans and 37 were home owners and 33 were living in rental accommodation. The responses to the mid-2012 red zone survey were significant as all the other surveys had been directed to property owners, and there had been very few opportunities for the Council to make contact with and assess the problems facing people in the red zone who were renting accommodation.

While the number of cases with which the service was involved was declining, the complexity of the issues being faced by these people is increasing. Some of the more complex problems being encountered involving insurance include lack of information about changes in claims, miscommunication between parties, changes in processes and procedures, and unfair disputes resolution. There was also concern among the members of WESS that some people had become so exhausted dealing with the authorities that they were accepting settlements which may well have been less advantageous than they would have been if they had continued to pursue their case.

Those working for WESS also indicated that they found the literature regarding people’s responses to their situation after a natural disaster valuable. They could appreciate how people were moving from “coping”, to “resolving” their situations and then to “angry”, and were able to treat these moods as normal. Members of the team were also close to the situations that they were dealing with as some also living area zoned “red”, and others had quite severely damaged homes.

In mid-2014 WESS was still being approached by new households requiring help. These people were still encountering difficulties with EQC and insurance companies, and also with “repairs” on “repairs” on “repairs” as poor workmanship became apparent. Other apparent injustices of the type that had been anticipated if the Council’s plans for rebuilding the moist seriously damaged areas of Kaiapoi, are emerging elsewhere in the town. There are instances where one neighbour’s home has been judged as a “rebuild” while the home next door apparently with a similar level of damage but with another insurance company is to be repaired, despite the representations of its owners.

4.4.5 Working with the Hub

The Hub office and WESS worked very closely in organising the meetings with the wide range of agencies and organisations able to assist home owners to work through the issues they needed to before making decisions with respect to the future of their properties. While April 2013 and then July 2013 was set by CERA for “red zone” residents to vacate their properties, the role of WESS and the Hub office continued. Throughout a member of the Support Coordination team was present at the Hub office, and when the Hub receptionist recognised that a person needed support to navigate “the system” they were immediately referred across to the Support Service.
In July 2013 it was reported that the Hub organised 147 appointments with the majority of these being with representatives of the EQC, while others involved CETAS for people seeking temporary accommodation and Fletcher Construction for people with concerns about the repairs for which this company was responsible. In August 2013 there were 112 meetings organised with EQC the main organisation involved in these meetings followed by Fletcher Construction. By September 2013 the number of meetings had declined to 91, with EQC and Fletchers again the main organisations involved. By the beginning of 2014 the number of meetings per month had approximately halved and almost all the meetings were with EQC.

4.4.5 The success of the Waimakariri Earthquake Support Service

The people involved with WESS identified a range of factors which contributed to the success of Kaiapoi’s social recovery:

- It involved local people
- They had a shared base in the Kaiapoi Community Centre that allowed them to work as a team, and it also meant that there was interaction between team members as they were coming and going.
- They had different backgrounds and skill sets, and there was respect for these differences across the team
- There was complete trust among the members of the group, although each might respond to a situation slightly differently there was no “right” or “wrong” way to do it.
- They were independent of the main organisations working in recovery and therefore without loyalties to a particular organisation, which allowed them to be objective.
- They were there to listen and not to “tell” which was in contrast to people working for many of the other organisation involved with recovery.
- Their work involved face to face meeting with people in their homes, which took time but that did not matters as it achieved results.
- They were not “trapped” into having to have professional social work or mental health qualifications. They offered life skills and common sense.
- They were in close contact with other organisations in the same space, and could get answers for people “on the spot”.
- The weekly meetings enabled those working for WESS to talk about individual cases, and share frustrations.

In terms of the values that underpinned the work of WESS, being “honest and real” was paramount. They did not make a commitment that they could not meet, and focused on preserving the dignity of people who had lost their homes, which for most was their main asset. The “one on one and face to face” work meant that people with which WESS was involved were placing huge trust in their support worker, and this was respected. Ultimately, they were community based and community focused, and their role was to listen.

A key role of WESS was to link people with the information that they needed to know, irrespective of whether it was good or bad, and it was better for this to be coming from an independent person who was able to interpret “official speak”. The importance of this was reinforced because members of the team heard about communication breakdown “time and time again”. This involved a one on one approach, which was challenged on the grounds of inefficiency. In this context, the Australian bushfire information helped to justify the approach, but significant differences between the two were also noted. “There was no level playing field after an earthquake the situation for every household was different.”
People did not leave WESS because of the pressure of work, but because they got other jobs or their contracts terminated. This did not mean that there were not pressures on members of the group. They were faced with some very sad situations, as a lot of people had worked hard to own their own homes. People, who had spent their working lives in the freezing works and had homes in the Cass/Charles Streets area, had had their assets “trashed”. Some people who had died were seen as likely to have been alive today, if it had not been for the earthquake, and the group found this distressing. There was concern too for the people without age on their side, and had no change of rebuilding or would never own their own home again. Members of the team were also regarded as “experts” when they were off duty, although people tended to respect that they needed to “take time out”.

The camaraderie in the group provided support for members to be able to carry on their roles as support service workers and at the same time deal with their own circumstances. The wide range of experiences in the group, mirrored those being faced in the community. It was explained as there being “one of everything in the group”. For example, some in the group were experiencing the isolation associated with remaining in a “red zoned” home as others moved away, while others had no problems. “Some were up and some were down”.

If there had been no “red zoning” team members considered that the situation that they would be facing would have been even harder. They did not consider that the Council would have been able to maintain its timetable, as insurance issues would have held up progress. More temporary accommodation would have been needed, and some people may have faced financial difficulties associated with rebuilding.

The Council’s Manager: Earthquake Recovery and Social Recovery Manager were seen as playing critical roles in the work of WESS. They provided the people working for WESS with critical support when they needed it. For example, by providing advance information to members of the group whose properties were to be “red zoned”, so that they could deal with their personal situation before they had to help other members of the community work through their issues. The support from the Council was also seen as critical in allowing WESS the freedom to develop its flexible approach and to adapt as circumstances changed. If it had not had the confidence of the Council, it could have felt more constrained by its central government funders, and this would have been more difficult to respond to the need of its community as these changed.

Overall, the members of the WESS team had pride in the contribution that they had been able to make their community by working for the service. It allowed them to work for the community for one of the biggest things to “hit” a community “that has seen a number of setbacks such as the closure of the freezing works”. In addition, they acknowledged that they would not have been able to do their job without the work of the Pastoral Care Team and the immediate link that they had with other agencies through the Hub office.