

Christchurch red zone now 'like a ghetto' – resident

Sat, 09 Feb 2013

Police say thieves are stooping to a new low in Christchurch, stealing trees and plants from abandoned quake-damaged properties.

Red-zoned suburbs have become ghettos, with the few remaining residents constantly calling the police.

Resident David Tattle says the situation is getting worse. “It has deteriorated rapidly,” he says. “It is awful now with intruders”. Mr Tattle is one of the last left living on Avonside’s River Rd, and is sick of all the thieves and burglars. “You can hear spouting removed at two and three in the morning. It’s like the ghetto from what it used to be – a quaint village.” His four-bedroom home is a wreck. And while he waits for insurer AMI to come to the party, everything has stayed where it is and the house has gone towards the river. There’s only one toilet that works, and though water comes out of the taps, there’s no drainage.

Mr Tattle, a crack shot hunter, says he now feels like the hunted. People have even tried to steal his plants.

“I have people come up my drive discussing which plants they are going to take and I go out and say, ‘I still live here’. And they apologise usually and, ‘I thought it was abandoned’. So they have got shovels in their hand and wheel barrows ready to take all your plants. It is very common.”

Police say stealing any property including plants will be treated seriously. “Any theft in an area such as this, which has been so badly hit by the earthquakes, the jewel in the crown of Christchurch, is pretty low,” says Senior Sergeant Phil Dean.

Red zone residents can take plants with them when they leave, but apart from community groups who can apply to remove plants, most gardens will be cleared as part of the demolition.

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167 Christchurch school teachers to lose jobs

17/09/2011

A Government plan to axe nearly 170 fulltime teacher jobs in Christchurch will be a "huge loss", principals say. Education Minister Anne Tolley said yesterday that government funding for the equivalent of 167 fulltime teachers – or 4.5 per cent of the Christchurch teaching work force – would be cut from next year as pupils had moved to other parts of the city or away since the devastating earthquakes. Tolley said 3500 pupils remained enrolled in schools outside the city and 1500 had moved to different schools within Christchurch.

The Government had guaranteed to keep teacher numbers and school funding at pre-February 2011 levels until the end of this year. "Students who have moved because of the earthquakes have not left the education system, and we are now effectively redistributing resources from one area to another, be that within the city, within the region or within New Zealand," she said. "Staffing levels directly correlate to student numbers, and the 2012 teacher entitlements will reflect the change in enrolment patterns in the wake of the earthquake." She said schools with falling rolls would have a reduction in staffing levels, while schools whose rolls have increased would get extra teachers. Tolley said the cuts would not equate to 167 lost jobs as attrition and completed fixed-term contracts would "largely account" for losses.

Schools could also choose to make up for losses out of their operational budgets. She said redundancy support of up to 40 school weeks salary could be available to permanent fulltime staff.

Avondale School principal Mark Scown said the announcement was no surprise. "It's been hinted at for a number of months. We have been preparing for it and will be exploring what we need to do and the potential for staff cuts," he said. "It will be a huge, significant loss of a large, experienced pool of teachers."

Banks Avenue School Murray Edlin said it was incorrect to think teachers could be re-employed at schools that had experienced role growth. "It's not as simple as it sounds because children don't shift in class lots," he said. "They go in twos and threes and have little effect on staffing. There will not be 167 positions elsewhere. It's a pity because we are going to lose some really good teachers." It was also going to be difficult for graduates to get jobs. Mr Edlin said his school lost 98 pupils between July 2010 and July 2011 and three staff would probably have to go.

Canterbury Primary Principals' Association president John Bangma said using operational budgets to make up losses was "easier said than done", with schools already struggling to stretch budgets. "It's just a matter of us trying to think strategically, but some of it is just survival at the moment," he said. "Another concern is if we are going to lose a whole lot of people – if they get lost to Canterbury – in a couple of years time we will be struggling to find staff when we re-grow, because we will re-grow. "We are grateful we got our operations grant for the rest of the year. It's just when it's so many ... it is a shock to the system. A lot of angst will be around, that's for sure."

Tolley said she would soon announce widespread consultation with communities and the education sector. "As the movement of students and their families continues within Christchurch, we are continuing to face challenges about what the future of education provision will look like."

- The Press

Schools on the move

02/03/2011



PHOTO: *Alistair Hayes and his sister, Charlotte, are uncertain about the future of their schools, Shirley Boys' and Avonside Girls'.*

ARTICLE: Quake-damaged Christchurch schools could be forced to share sites, with pupils being taught in two shifts. About 20 primary and secondary principals met Education Ministry officials yesterday to discuss options to reopen city schools. For schools that will not be able to reopen for months, if not years, options include

setting up prefabricated classrooms on site, temporarily moving to a new site and school sharing.

Shirley Boys' High principal John Laursen said it was unlikely its 1500 pupils would return to the North Parade site this year, as the school might have to be demolished. The school grounds were awash with silt and many buildings had serious structural damage. The South Island's largest boys' school was considering sharing premises with an undamaged school. "We are exploring the logistics of linking with another school until our site is remediated or rebuilt," he said. That would mean splitting the day into a morning and afternoon shift, with one school starting early and the other starting late, he said. The practicality of such a move needed to be discussed with teachers, unions and parents. He rejected the suggestion that Shirley Boys' High pupils be distributed among other schools because it was important to keep the school community together.

Avonside Girls' High principal Sue Hume said structural damage meant the school would need to share another campus for at least the short term. "It seems clear that in the interim we will need to move," she said. "Site sharing seems like a sensible option." Marian College principal Anna Heffernan said her school was looking at sharing the St Bede's College campus. She believed many high schools would have to share sites for the short term. "There are 10,000 students affected and you can't bring in prefabs for 10,000 students." It was still unclear when pupils could return to the Marian College site: "We are awaiting feedback from engineers."

All three principals hoped to reopen at new sites as soon as possible, with Laursen targeting next week. Canterbury Primary Principals' Association president Denise Torrey said about 15 primary schools were "quite significantly damaged". Those schools were discussing solutions such as site sharing, combining schools and running schools in shifts with ministry project teams. "Splitting schools and sending pupils to other schools is really not ideal for most schools as they want to keep their community together, especially after what they've been through," Torrey said.

Education Minister Anne Tolley said 19 Christchurch schools had contacted the ministry about reopening. "We are doing everything we can to make sure Christchurch schools are up and running as quickly as we can," she said. Some had told the ministry they could reopen immediately, while others were working towards opening next week. Schools and preschools needed to fulfil staffing, health and safety and access issues criteria, and liaise with the Education Ministry before reopening. Those within the cordon, however, had to remain closed. In total, 2252 Christchurch pupils had been enrolled at schools around the country. Timaru schools had enrolled 237 quake refugees, followed by Dunedin (168), Ashburton (147) and Auckland (142).

SCHOOLING DOUBTS SHAKE SIBLINGS

Brother and sister Alistair and Charlotte Hayes are both uncertain about where they will spend the rest of the schooling year. Alistair, 15, is a year 12 pupil at Shirley Boys' High School and Charlotte, 17, a year 13 pupil at

Avonside Girls' High School. Neither was at school on the day of the quake as both schools had the afternoon off for a PTA meeting. Alistair said he and a friend checked out the damage to Shirley Boys' last Wednesday. They found water through much of the school from burst water mains and liquefaction on the sports fields and courts. Charlotte said she had not been allowed back in to her school grounds and there had been little communication about what would happen to the school. Charlotte, who wants to study medical physics next year, said many of her friends were disappointed about disruption to their high school ball, which was to have been held at the end of the term at the Hotel Grand Chancellor. Both siblings said they would rather not have to leave their school or their classmates. "I'd like to stay with the groups in my school. I don't really want to move," Alistair said. Charlotte said: "Year 13 is so hard, having these weeks off is just going to make it that much harder."

SILENT CLASSROOMS

Christchurch's badly damaged schools:

State: Avonside Girls' High, Banks Avenue, Burwood, Chisnallwood Intermediate, Christchurch Girls' High, Ferndale, Freeville, Heathcote Valley, Heaton Normal Intermediate, Manning Intermediate, Mt Pleasant, North New Brighton, Phillipstown, Shirley Boys' High, Shirley Intermediate, Shirley and St Martins.

State-integrated: St James (Aranui), St Peter's (Beckenham), St Mary's (Christchurch), St Paul's (city), Our Lady of the Assumption (Hoon Hay), Our Lady of Victories (Sockburn), St Albans Catholic, Catholic Cathedral College and Marian College.

Independent: Christ's College, Cathedral Grammar and St Andrew's College.

Source: Ministry of Education

SCHOOL UPDATES

Shirley Boy's High School students had to stay home for a month after the earthquake. The school was badly damaged, as was Avonside Girls' School.

Sharing of school facilities was the only way for some students to be able to get back to school. Students from Shirley Boy's High School, had to go to Papanui High. The Papanui High students had lessons from 8am to 1pm, and the Shirley Boy's students has lessons from 1.15pm – 5.45pm using the same classrooms. Shirley Boy's High School was re-opened on 13th September and students returned to their normal classrooms.

Avonside Girls students have been sharing classrooms with Burnside High. They have afternoon lessons and Burnside High has morning lessons. Avonside Girls High will reopen at the start of 2012.

In February 2013 it was announced by the Ministry of Education that 7 schools in Christchurch will close, affecting 670 students and another 12 will merge to create six new schools. This is due to falling roll numbers in Christchurch as people have left the city after the earthquakes and because of earthquake damaged buildings in some schools.

- **The Press**

Fears over \$500m tourism spending loss

22/09/2011

Canterbury will lose \$500 million of tourism spending from international visitors in the year after the February 22 earthquake as visitors avoid Christchurch, an industry estimate shows.

Tourism bosses are advising Christchurch to take urgent steps on rebuilding accommodation and a new convention centre to make sure it continues to draw in the 900,000 visitors who passed through the province annually before the catastrophic quake. Hotel representatives have attacked inner-city height restrictions - suggested under a draft city plan - but think they are making some progress with the Christchurch City Council on a way forward. Christchurch & Canterbury Tourism chief executive Tim Hunter said a lack of insurance for rebuilding in the region was holding back the hotel industry, which was the backbone of tourism. The central city needed an "area of normality" to attract tourists and quick hotel rebuilds.

Domestic and international expenditure in Canterbury totalled \$2.7 billion in the year to last December 31, and there were 22,600 tourism sector jobs in Canterbury before the February quake, Hunter said. The sector now expected there would be a \$500m drop in international tourism receipts in the 12 months to next February. This included the loss of lucrative business and conference tourism. There were also lower guest-night totals for the region. "Coach tours and ad hoc group tours . . . because they can't get hotels in Christchurch, they're either bypassing Christchurch altogether or they're staying fewer nights in Canterbury," Hunter said. "I think by the middle of summer if we haven't seen some good progress with visitor numbers, then inevitably we will see some casualties."

While it was not known how many accommodation job losses there were to date, the hospitality group had indicated the loss of at least 900 jobs. Tourism Industry Association chief executive Tim Cossar said operators were concerned by the lack of spending in a region that was vitally important as part of the country's tourism infrastructure and represented 15 per cent of the country's international guest nights. "Tourism receipts have certainly taken a hit down there and that's why we as an association have put resource on the ground to try to understand the issues and to try to make sure tourism has a voice in the recovery."

Tourism in New Zealand in the past couple of years had been a tough market, and it was important to ensure visitor flows returned to Christchurch, Cossar said. "I don't think we're going to get all those [losses] back in just two years. I think it is a five or 10-year sort of process," he said. Tourism New Zealand chief executive Kevin Bowler said there was no question that Canterbury tourism businesses "have had a hell of a hard year on the back of the earthquakes, but you'd be hard-pressed to say there was much you could do about it". There were large discrepancies within regional New Zealand, with Auckland helped by the Rugby World Cup, he said.

New Zealand Hotel Council regional chairman Bruce Garrett said the special nature of hotel operations needed to be recognised in terms of the council's proposed height restrictions, which could have "a profound economic impact on the viability of any future new hotel developments".

Hotel developments usually needed at least 100 rooms, and these could not be accommodated in five or seven-level developments. There was some indication of a softening in the council's stance, he said. "I'd like to think there's some flexibility there."

- The Press

Quake stress may cause hair loss

24/08/2011



Girls as young as eight are losing their hair to stress after the Canterbury earthquakes. Janine Antram, a government-approved wig provider, said about 100 girls and women from Canterbury had contacted her since last October wanting wigs because they were suffering from alopecia. "I have an inquiry from a Christchurch resident experiencing hair loss almost every day," she said.

Ministry of Health figures show 218 people in Canterbury had claimed grants for wig and hairpiece services for temporary hair loss since September 4. Only 83 people had applied for the grant for the year between September 2009 and September 2010. Antram, of Cambridge, has alopecia and said she did not have any Christchurch clients until after the September 4 quake, and now they made up about 50 per cent of her business. "There is huge hair loss going on in Christchurch," she said. "I don't know if it is related to the earthquake, but I do know alopecia is related to stress, and clients have said [alopecia] has come on since the earthquakes."

Her youngest client was an eight-year-old, and most of her clients were aged between 10 and 30. Antram said she got into the wig business after struggling to find decent wigs in New Zealand. Finally she ordered a wig from the United States that looked natural and was 100 per cent human hair, she said. Antram said she would be showing her wigs at the Women's Lifestyle Expo in Christchurch on September 17 and 18. Christchurch dermatologist David Hepburn said that while there were various causes of alopecia, it could be linked to stress, and the earthquake could explain instances of "shock hair loss".

LIFE'S NOT ALWAYS SUCH A "FUN PLACE" FOR GENDI

A bald head is not new to Gendi Roberts, but this time it is not by choice. Gendi, 14, has alopecia. In April, while holidaying on the West Coast, she woke up and a perfect square of hair had gone. Four days later, she was bald. "It happened so fast. It was really surprising. I didn't have time to think about it before it was gone," she said. She believed the stress of the earthquakes was to blame. Gendi had shaved her hair off twice to raise money for young people's cancer foundation CanTeen. Last August she raised more than \$4000. Gendi said she tried to keep a sense of humour and stay positive. Her classmates were "lovely" and wearing a wig helped her feel more confident.

However, some comments could make it hard. "People have called me an attention-seeker because they think I cut it this way. I go to swimming and some adults there were calling me an attention-seeking little brat and people ask me why I shave my eyebrows off. "I have been really gutted because it's not a choice to be bald again. People just comment and don't think before they say things." Girls were worse than guys, who thought it was awesome. "I think girls have an image of what a girl should be and when you don't fit in, it's not the most fun place. "The part that hurts me the most is that I haven't done it by choice and it isn't going to grow back like it has the last two times."

The Press

Christchurch reopens for tourists

By JANE E FRASER 22/02/2012 www.stuff.co.nz

It's a sombre day in Christchurch as the city marks one year since the powerful earthquake that claimed more than 180 lives and turned parts of the picturesque city into rubble.

But far from relying on the long process of rebuilding to slowly bring about recovery, the city has been fighting back with an abundance of energy and creativity.

Visitors report being surprised by how much the place is buzzing, with new restaurants, bars and entertainment options emerging around the place.

In fact, an entire shopping strip has popped up, with trendy shops, cafes and bars located in brightly coloured shipping containers in a temporary mall in Cashel Street in the city centre.

While the complete rebuilding of the city is thought to be at least five years away, visitor numbers are expected to return to normal long before then.

The chief executive of Christchurch & Canterbury Tourism, Tim Hunter, says visitor numbers from many overseas markets have already recovered, with the earthquake pretty much now being forgotten.

For the Australian market, which received far more media coverage of the earthquake and its aftershocks, numbers are still down about 30 per cent.

"The issue we have in Australia is that the earthquake got so much disaster coverage a year ago. I think a lot of Australians would think the whole of Christchurch was flattened," Hunter says.

Hunter says he expects the full recovery of Australian visitor numbers to be 18 months to two years away but many travellers are not being deterred.

Much of the city centre is still closed off but there is plenty for visitors to see and do in other parts of Christchurch and it remains a good base for exploring the Canterbury region.

"The city, to live in, is quite functional and there's a lot going on," Hunter says.

"We live here and think 'what's all the fuss about?' in terms of people staying away."

Hunter says that while the pop-up mall is not a permanent solution, it has the ability to gradually morph into one. "I think it could have quite a long life; it could be there for three to four years," he says.

"It is certainly bringing vitality to that part of the city."

Hunter says the city is lucky that the Ballantynes department store - "the David Jones of Christchurch" - sustained little damage in the earthquake and has been able to reopen to customers, forming a nucleus for the shopping precinct.

One thing the city continues to struggle with is hotel rooms, having lost about 40 per cent of its total stock in the earthquake.

"A lot of our large hotels are in the central city and that's the area that has been most affected by the earthquake," Hunter says. "We have 14 out of 36 hotels operating in the [central] city."



But Hunter says hotels are steadily starting to reopen their doors, adding a couple of hundred beds to the mix each time.

The managing director of New Zealand touring specialist Relaxing Journeys, Campbell Harris, says the shortage of hotel rooms has been the biggest issue for tourism operators.

Harris says Relaxing Journeys has had only three cancellations because of the earthquake but has often struggled to find suitable hotel accommodation. "We have to explain to people that while they may have chosen to do a four-star type itinerary, their Christchurch hotel might not be at that level," Harris says.

"But we have had a lot of feedback from passengers over the past year and no one has complained about it."

Harris says bookings for the North Island of New Zealand have gone up noticeably since the earthquake but many people are still travelling to the South Island and using Christchurch as a starting or finishing point.

Relaxing Journeys launched some independent travel itineraries that avoided Christchurch but they had limited take-up.

"The flights are still going in and out of Christchurch," he says.

"Christchurch is not a place that people tend to stay for a long time anyway ... most of them will have a day there and then the next day they'll be off."

Harris says bookings are down overall but he believes this is as much a result of the strong Australian dollar drawing people to other destinations as it is to do with the impact of the earthquake.

"I think the earthquake is not a major concern any more," he says.

Rebuilding anew

Christchurch day tour operator Hassle Free says many travellers are interested in seeing the aftermath of the city's earthquake. "It's not so much people wanting to come and see broken buildings but this has been a major event in New Zealand's history and there is a fascination and a wanting to understand where we are at," says the owner of the company, Mark Gilbert. "There is no way you could do any tour without the earthquake being a major part of it ... we try to focus on the rebuilding and keep it uplifting."

Families shattered by Christchurch school closures

Wednesday May 29, 2013

Andrew Smith hoisted daughter Serenity into air after the school bell today, a mural of her young, smiling face painted on a playground wall behind her. It's the same Phillipstown School playground in Christchurch that Mr Smith once enjoyed in the 1970s - along with most of his extended whanau. Three of his children have kept the family tradition alive, including Down's Syndrome daughter Terina, who's doted on as a "celebrity" by her peers. "I suppose the mural will be knocked down along with everything else," said Mr Smith, 50, just moments after learning the Ministry of Education was closing his beloved primary school as part of the \$1 billion city schools shake-up.



The decile one school with a roll of 165 pupils will merge with nearby Woolston Primary, across the busy commuters' arterial Ferry Rd, to create a 465-child super-school as early as next January.

A total of seven schools will close and six will merge from next year, Education Minister Hekia Parata confirmed today. Branston Intermediate, Glenmoor, Greenpark, Kendal, Linwood Intermediate, Manning Intermediate and Richmond will all close, affecting around 670 children.

The six to merge into three new schools are Burwood into Windsor School, Phillipstown with Woolston School, and Lyttelton West into a new school on the Lyttelton Main site. "The face and make-up of greater Christchurch has, and will continue to change dramatically due to the earthquakes, and the education sector must respond to those changes," Ms Parata said.

Phillipstown principal Tony Simpson held back the tears today as he told gathered tearful parents of the Ministry's much-awaited final decision. "It's a sad day for Phillipstown ... [with] the potential to destroy the community," he said. Mr Smith, and his wife Yvonne, agonised over the decision whether to send Terina, who has significant special needs, to school. But they were impressed with the family nature of Phillipstown, and trusted its teachers and staff, near the earthquake-damaged AMI sports stadium, to do the best for her. Over the last three years, Terina has flourished with the one-to-one attention, and even losing her fear of crowds thanks to the closeness of the other children. "It's unlikely we'll send her to Woolston," Mrs Smith said. "It took us a long time to get her settled in here, but she's come a long way. That's the nature of this school, and we're worried that all that work will be undone by a totally new environment."

The school is the heart of the community - no more so than when the devastating earthquakes struck in 2010 and 2011, many families told APNZ yesterday. The Ministry of Education, however, says there's an over-supply of small-roll schools in the area. But the Smiths, like a lot of Phillipstown parents, see it as a decision driven purely by financial motives. Education Minister Hekia Parata has been "heartless", Mr Smith said. "She doesn't care about the people. Only the pennies." Mr Simpson said the school will continue to fight the closure, and couldn't rule out the possibility of a judicial review. "I wouldn't like to do it at all, but this Board of Trustees has this decision in front of them. It's one of several options," he said.

"There's so much that will be lost if this place closes down. It's worth the fight," Mrs Smith said, as she rounded up her three kids, and walked round the corner and home.

Source: www.nzherald.co.nz