

Annex F - Letter from Habitat for Humanity International in response to inquiry

From: PWitton@habitat.org
To: savemyhome1@hotmail.com
CC: I@habitat.org.nz
Date: Fri, 14 Oct 2011 10:35:59 +0000
Subject: HFH New Zealand's work in Christchurch

Dear Mr Tsao,

Thank you for your email of 10th October 2011 concerning the work of Habitat for Humanity New Zealand in Christchurch following the February 22nd earthquake.

HFH New Zealand is working on a program to assist with repairs of homes in the Government-designated "green zone". The Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority (CERA) website (www.cera.govt.nz) partially defines the green zone as follows: "The residential green zone is the 'go zone'. This means that generally there are no significant land issues in this area that prevent rebuilding based on current adopted seismic standards. The majority of greater Christchurch properties – about 100,000 properties – are in this zone and have been given a green light to go ahead with the repair and rebuilding of their homes."

Conversely the Government has determined that the red zone is an area where there are significant land issues, where rebuilding and repair work is not advised to proceed. The Government has determined that structures will need to be cleared and has offered settlements of various kinds to owners of properties in the red zone.

As much as we would like to assist every family who needs help, our resources are very limited. Indeed we have been ready to undertake repair work in Christchurch for seven months, but have not had sufficient funds to purchase materials. Following Government and CERA guidance, the leadership of HFH New Zealand has taken the decision that we can be most effective if we concentrate on families in the green zone where, with limited expenditure on materials, we can address emergency repairs: albeit more work and resources would be needed to return these homes to full building code standards.

We are offering to help complete limited emergency repairs for vulnerable families including the elderly, those with disabilities, those with young children at home, and those without insurance. In line with Habitat's normal approach, we are sending volunteers to work alongside those families, providing free labour, but overseen by Licensed Building Practitioners. We are also using paid contractors for specialist work which requires certified skills. This approach allows us to reach more families with our limited funding available and also to complete the work more quickly.

To date, we have assisted 10 families in the northeastern suburbs of Christchurch with repairs. We have offered free labour: these families or their support networks have funded the cost of materials. Depending upon the availability of funding for materials, we plan to assist approximately 200 families in Christchurch and the Canterbury region over the coming 12-to-18 months.

Our involvement is a small contribution in a massive rebuilding task that will take many years to complete. Even if you disagree with our decision on where we can best be used, we hope you will understand our thinking and respect the good faith of our intentions. You mention that you have donated to Habitat's work in the past. We hope you will be encouraged to donate again whether for our work in Christchurch or elsewhere in the world. If you haven't done so already, we would invite you and your friends to volunteer on a Habitat work site: the experience can be transformative and a practical step in the fight against poverty.

If you would like to have any further information, please feel free to contact our New Zealand national director, Pete North. He can be contacted on I@habitat.org.nz

Yours sincerely,

Peter Witton

Director, Communications, Asia-Pacific

Habitat for Humanity International · Asia-Pacific Office

Q House, 8th Floor, 38 Convent Road, Bangkok 10500, Thailand

Tel: +66 (0) 2 632 0415 ext. 5320 Mobile: +66 (0)86105 1767 or + 852 909 72014 Fax: +66 (0)2 632 0445

pwitton@habitat.org · habitat.org/ap | **What will you build?**