

Christchurch quake: Latest updates

<https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/christchurch-quake-latest-updates/LTS46DVD4WPW3IDACZWR3NX7BU/>

23 Feb, 2011 10:58 PM



A large land slide lands on a house in Sumner. Photo / Getty Images

Scroll to the bottom of this story for our map showing the location of the most recent aftershocks.

10.58pm

That concludes our Christchurch earthquake updates for this evening. They will resume from early tomorrow morning.

10.36pm

A construction manager who joined rescue efforts after the earthquake describes rescuers using a hacksaw to cut off a man's leg to free him after he was pinned under concrete.

Fred Haering says rescuers used sledgehammers and chain saws to cut into the collapsed Pyne Gould Guinness building from the roof, slicing downward through layers of sandwiched offices and finding bodies crushed under concrete slabs.

One man had a leg pinned under concrete, and a doctor administered medicine to deaden his pain. A fireman asked Haering for a hacksaw. Haering handed it over and tried to avert his eyes as the man's leg was sawed off, saving him from certain death.

Haering says: "It's a necessity of the game."

10.26pm

Two Irish citizens have died in the New Zealand earthquake, the Department of Foreign Affairs said.

A DFA spokeswoman told AFP that they had "serious concerns" about two other citizens and concerns about a further 10 - a figure down from 70 on Tuesday.

The spokeswoman said they would not be giving out further details about the dead at this time.

10.15pm

Janet Goza Ryle from the United States has emailed nzherald.co.nz looking for news of her brother and sister-in-law in Christchurch. They are Patrick (Pat), who works at the airport, and Elaine Hoyat Goza. She would also like news of their son Nathaniel, who is in the NZ Air Force, his wife Teresa, and Pat's daughter Tiffany Burke.

Janet lives in Warner Robins, Georgia. Her email is ryle7@juno.com and phone number 001 478 297 2740.

9.45pm

Telecommunications companies have repeated their call for people to continue to use text messages instead of calling on mobile phones when contacting people in Christchurch.

Telecom, Vodafone and 2degrees are working to repair their networks following yesterday's devastating magnitude 6.3 earthquake.

Ongoing power problems remained the main problem disrupting Christchurch's cell phone network and the companies were working to get backup generators to mobile sites without power.

People in Christchurch were also asked to change their voicemail message's to let callers know their location and give alternate contact details if possible.

8.45pm

Automatic six-month visa extensions would be issued to foreign nationals whose applications can't be processed because of the Christchurch earthquake, the Government said tonight.

Immigration Minister Jonathan Coleman said 2000 temporary visa applications were held at the Immigration Department's Christchurch office, which couldn't be accessed for safety reasons.

"I have issued a special ministerial directive, effective immediately, that any foreign national who is here legally and whose application is caught up in the Christchurch office will have a six-month visa extension issued," he said.

"Any foreign national whose travel plans have been disrupted by the earthquake will similarly be granted a visa extension to allow them to remain legally in New Zealand for the reasonable duration of their visit."

8.41pm

Cash donations are the best way to support people affected by the Christchurch earthquake, Civil Defence Minister John Carter says.

"Donations of money are the quickest and easiest way to help organisations on the ground get exactly what they need," he said tonight.

"That way, affected people can make their own choices about putting their lives back together and what's more, money spent locally helps the local economy at a crucial time."

Mr Carter said if people offered goods it would be some time before they could be handled.

"Staff need to focus solely on saving lives and protecting the public at this stage," he said.

"Down the track, if there's a need for specific goods to be donated we will make a public call."

Mr Carter said cash donations could be made through the Red Cross, the Salvation Army, and any ANZ, National Bank, ASB, BNZ or Kiwibank branch.

8.32pm

Foreign Minister Murray McCully tonight issued updated details of foreign assistance on its way to help rescue and recovery work after the Christchurch earthquake:

From Taiwan - a search and rescue team of 24 will arrive later tonight;

From Singapore - a search and rescue team of 71 personnel will also arrive later tonight;

From the USA - the US Dart (Disaster Assistance Response team) of 80 personnel is due to arrive tomorrow about 8am;

From the UK - a specialised search and rescue team of 63 personnel is due to arrive tomorrow.

8.30pm

Welfare staff have managed to contact more than 1300 elderly and disabled people since yesterday's Christchurch earthquake, Social Development Minister Paula Bennett says.

"Because we can't get around the city physically yet, phoning those who are vulnerable in the first instance is a matter of urgency," she said tonight.

"So far 5333 calls have been made and Work and Income staff have managed to get hold of 1344 people."

Ms Bennett said of those contacted so far, two required emergency help, 11 needed home visits, 24 were referred to welfare centres and the rest were either going to stay with family or were fine where they were.

"One elderly gentleman in his eighties had suffered injuries in a fall - he said he didn't want to bother anyone but obviously we arranged to get him to a doctor," Ms Bennett said.

"Many others were distressed, scared and needing comfort and reassurance, so our staff are doing their best to provide that."

She said staff were still making calls, attempting to contact more than 14,500 people on a priority list.

8.26pm

Police spokeswoman Kim Perks told Newstalk ZB that houses on and below Clifton Hill have been evacuated temporarily because cracks are emerging in some of the cliff-sides.

Their particular area of concern is Kinsey Terrace.

7.59pm

Two streets in the Christchurch suburb of Sumner have been evacuated, TV One reports.

7.22pm

The Canterbury District Health Board (CDHB) is calling for all staff able to work to come in if they are able and says it will pay for any child care needed.

CDHB chief executive David Meates urged all staff to contact their manager if they were available.

"This goes for all staff from laundry service staff to mental health staff," he said.

"If you are able to come into work, it would be greatly appreciated, as we consider all staff to be essential.

"The CDHB will pay for child care if staff need care for their children."

7.14pm

British High Commissioner Vicki Treadell is among those scrambling to track people down in Christchurch's disaster zone.

There were a number of British people caught up in yesterday's quake, many of whom had gone to triage centres at Hagley Park and Burnside, Ms Treadell told NZPA.

"I personally spoke to about 30 of them this morning and I've got staff on the ground who are getting their details."

A number of Britons had been taken to Christchurch Hospital, although Ms Treadell said hospital staff had told her none were in intensive care.

"They're...going round all those who have been admitted to try to find out who they are, and we're hoping that during the course of tonight, certainly by tomorrow morning, we'll have confirmation."

Ms Treadell said concerns were being raised by people in Britain about loved ones caught up in the quake.

"I think our hotline in London is getting a lot of phone calls from family and friends worried about loved ones that they know are in this part of the world. Whether or not they are in Christchurch we don't know."

6.29pm

Rescuers are still looking for survivors after pulling five people out of the collapsed Pyne Gould

Guiness building alive today, the Fire Service has reported.

Transalpine Area Commander Ross Ditmer said the rescues had inspired emergency services to keep looking for survivors amongst the rubble strewn through Christchurch city centre.

More than 200 Urban Search and Rescue staff from around the world were now moving through the CBD checking every damaged building for signs of life, he said.

"We're spreading ourselves to less damaged buildings. We still believe there is a good possibility of saving lives."

6.07pm

Two children hurt in the Christchurch earthquake have arrived at Starship Hospital in Auckland for treatment.

Auckland District Health Board has confirmed the pair are in its care, with three more adult patients expected to arrive from the quake zone for dialysis treatment this evening.

Incident controller Margaret Dotchin said the DHB was giving all the support it could to help those in need of medical care after yesterday's 6.3 magnitude quake.

Three intensive care nurses had already been sent to Christchurch and a further six nurses with adult and paediatric experience were on their way, she said.

Clinical supplies such as pain pumps and a patient transport team had also been offered.

6.05pm

The West Australian government will send 50 general duty police officers to Christchurch to assist where needed in the quake-devastated city.

WA Emergency Services Minister Rob Johnson said the New Zealand government had requested 50 general duty police officers.

"There's been no request for specialist officers at this stage but obviously if we get a request we will willingly send them there to help our New Zealand cousins," Mr Johnson told reporters.

He said the officers would go some time in the next week and it was believed they will assist local officers to ensure the safety of the Christchurch community.

"Obviously their own police officers are flat out in trying to assist the New Zealand public and we want to keep them as safe as possible so our police officers, I imagine, will support the constables in New Zealand," Mr Johnson said.

5.58pm

All the delegates who came to Christchurch for the United States New Zealand Partnership Forum and arrived the day before the earthquake are safe and accounted for, the NZ-US Council says.

The forum meeting began on Monday and was due to run until Tuesday evening, but the quake

brought it to an early close.

The US sent a 43-member delegation which included an assistant secretary of state and nine congressmen.

US ambassador David Heubner yesterday used Twitter to get a message through to the delegates, telling them to go to the US Antarctic Centre if they had lost contact with each other.

The New Zealand delegation of 63 included cabinet ministers and senior government officials.

Today US-NZ Council director Stephen Jacobi said all the delegates and staff were safe and accounted for.

"Forum delegates are dismayed and distraught by the loss of life, the injuries and damage in a city that had welcomed them so warmly," Mr Jacobi said.

5.52pm

All White defender Winston Reid has expressed his condolences for the victims of the Christchurch earthquake after scoring his first goal for Premier League side West Ham.

"It was a fantastic night for me and for the team, but obviously a thing like this happening puts it all into perspective," he told the [club's website](#).

"I heard about the earthquake and then saw the pictures of it all on the news. It is devastating and my heart goes out to everyone back home.

"It is not a large country, but the spirit among the people there will be what gets them through. They will all help each other out and will help each other to recover from what has happened. My thoughts are with everyone."

5.50pm

The rail network in Canterbury has been largely cleared and rail operations are set to resume in a number of areas, KiwiRail says.

Repairs on the Main North Line between Rangiora and Christchurch were expected to be completed tonight and trains would begin moving south from Picton early tomorrow.

The line south between Dunedin and Christchurch has been reopened, with some speed restrictions. The first rail service into Christchurch from the south was expected tonight.

The line between the West Coast and Christchurch was open and general freight services were expected to start tomorrow.

But the line to Lyttelton Port is closed due to bridge damage at Heathcote, KiwiRail said it was unsure when it would be repaired.

TransAlpine and TranzCoastal services are cancelled until Monday, with resumption planned for Tuesday.

KiwiRail had arranged accommodation and transport for all passengers forced to stay in Greymouth and Picton last night.

5.49pm

The New Zealand Law Society is co-ordinating offers of help from the legal profession for victims of the Christchurch earthquake.

The society had set up a special earthquake response committee and would co-ordinate lawyers who volunteered to provide first port-of-call advice and assistance to anyone in Christchurch with an urgent legal matter, president Jonathan Temm said.

Lawyers around the country were also offering office space and support resources to

5.47pm

People who cross police cordons in quake-ravaged central Christchurch could be arrested, superintendent Dave Cliff says.

A "large" number of cordons were in place to restrict access to high risk areas.

People who enter those areas without permission could be arrested under the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act, Mr Cliff said.

The cordons were there to protect people's safety and were "also about keeping out the criminal element, who we know will try and take advantage," he said.

Six people had been arrested for looting in central Christchurch since yesterday's magnitude 6.3 quake, which has killed more than 60 people.

The only people who could go beyond the cordons were residents who lived in the areas and legitimate workers, both of which had to produce identification.

Police and army would be patrolling the cordons, he said.

5.46pm

International flights have resumed from Christchurch airport after a 24-hour suspension following yesterday's earthquake.

The airport website's Twitter feed said check-in resumed shortly after midday and international flights had departed by mid-afternoon.

Domestic flights had resumed about 8am.

The international and domestic terminals both suffered damage during the earthquake and had to be checked and cleaned up before flights resumed.

Tourists and visitors to Christchurch who spent the night in the city's Hagley Park were the first to leave on two special flights to Auckland and Wellington this morning.

5.43pm

More than 100 residents of rest homes damaged in yesterday's aftershock will be transferred to safe accommodation today, Canterbury District Health Board has confirmed.

A statement from the DHB said many of the residents are going to stay with friends and family. Others are going to safe accommodation both within Canterbury and out of the region.

The DHB also confirmed free GP care would be available to Canterbury residents with urgent medical needs until tomorrow night.

5.14pm

The welfare centre in Hagley park will close this evening, says Social Development Minister Paula Bennett.

"The welfare centre at Burnside High remains open, with the new addition of Cowles Stadium which is open now and Pioneer Stadium which will be open from 6 o'clock this evening," says Ms Bennett.

With rain forecast over the next few days, the decision has been made to move everyone from Hagley Park to the other, more suitable buildings.

"People are being shifted by bus out of Hagley Park to other welfare centres," says Ms Bennett.

5.12pm

Civil Defence Minister John Carter has confirmed devastating aftershock that hit Christchurch yesterday is likely to go down in history as New Zealand's worst ever disaster.

The 6.3 magnitude quake was the first disaster serious enough for Government to declare a national state of emergency, said Mr Carter.

There were few in New Zealand who would not be connected to the tragedy in some way, he said.

5.10pm

New Zealanders are showing incredible generosity towards the people of Christchurch, Social Development Minister Paula Bennett says.

"Growers from around the country are offering fresh food donations, church groups are donating goods to those in need and Food and Grocery Council members are also working to get donated food to the people of Christchurch," says Ms Bennett.

All offers of help can be emailed to earthquakehelp@msd.govt.nz, which is a central co-ordination point.

4.55pm

Social Development Minister Paula Bennett says generous offers of help for earthquake-hit residents are flooding in from around the country.

She says all offers of help can be emailed to earthquakehelp@msd.govt.nz which is a central co-

ordination point.

4.52pm

Civil Defence Minister John Carter says authorities will provide whatever facilities they can to prevent any health risks associated with the earthquake.

He says 17 people have been admitted to intensive care and that triage centres are working very well.

4.46pm

Civil Defence Minister John Carter says it is the first time a national state of emergency has been declared in New Zealand.

He says the emergency declaration means national Civil Defence staff can work alongside personnel in Christchurch.

He says yesterday's earthquake looks likely to be the worst disaster in the country's history.

4.43pm

Civil Defence Minister John Carter says there a number of people authorities knew were in hotels who have just gone making it hard to determine the number of those missing.

4.43pm

Civil Defence Minister John Carter says Christchurch residents are receiving "significant offers of help from right across New Zealand".

He says he understands that there are sufficient supplies of food and water in the city.

4.40pm

Superintendent Dave Cliff says the area within the four avenues area of the central city will be restricted from 6.30pm tonight for safety and security reasons.

"We have made six arrests for theft and burglary in the CBD today," he says.

4.35pm

Christchurch deputy mayor Ngaire Button says people should stay out of the central city as they are impeding rescue efforts.

"We don't want to have to step up authority - we want our army and police on recovery not have to tell people to stay out."

Ms Button says wastewater remains an issue for the city, particularly in Bromley.

"We don't want anyone flushing their toilets."

She says it will be "longer than a few days" before the system is fixed.

4.21pm

Police operations manager Dave Lawry says staff will be leaving the CTV building site for safety reasons.

"We don't believe this site is survivable," he says. "I'm not going to risk my staff on a site where I believe there is no survivability."

3.51pm

There are genuine fears that the Crusaders will have to find a new home for the remainder of Super Rugby season after liquefaction caused major damage to AMI Stadium.

3.50pm

The Australian state of New South Wales will send 200 police officers to Christchurch this week to join state emergency specialists already on the ground.

NSW Premier Kristina Keneally says the officers will leave for Christchurch on Friday morning.

They will be used for traffic control, patrols to prevent looting and other tasks, joining 100 police from other parts Australia.

3.48pm

Parliament set aside its usual business and today adjourned until March 8 after expressing its sympathy and condolences to those who have lost loved ones in the Christchurch earthquake.

"Yesterday was indeed one of New Zealand's darkest days," Deputy Prime Minister Bill English said on behalf of Prime Minister John Key.

"It is hard to believe this Parliament is again assembling to mark another tragedy."

Mr English says the focus now is on saving lives.

3.39pm

Social Development Minister Paula Bennett says two extra welfare centres have been opened to help victims of the Christchurch earthquake.

Welfare centres are in operation at Cowles Stadium (170 Pages Road, Aranui) and Burnside High School (151 Greers Road) and by 6pm another will open at Pioneer Stadium, (75 Lyttelton Street, Spreydon).

Hagley Park welfare centre is now full and people are being asked to go to the other three centres if needed.

3.32pm

BP says the majority of its Christchurch service stations have reopened.

The following BP stores have reopened and are trading - BP says the list is subject to change given circumstances after the quake:

Woodend Service Station, BP 2go Halswell, BP Connect Rolleston, BP Connect Bush Inn, BP Connect Fendalton, BP 2go Sockburn, BP Papanui, BP Westburn, Sawyers Arms BP
BP 2go Ashburton - only open to Emergency Services at present
BP 2go West Melton - only open to Emergency Services at present

3.28pm

A website has been set up to help people from Christchurch find accommodation either in the city or around the rest of the country.

<http://findaroom.danielwylie.me/>

3.24pm

Problems that affected the eftpos system following yesterday's devastating earthquake in Christchurch have been resolved and the network is now fully operational, says Paymark.

But Paymark says eftpos in Christchurch will be subject to power outages and damage to equipment.

3.20pm

Finance Minister Bill English says while yesterday's Christchurch earthquake is an economic setback, "we can handle it".

Mr English says the Government was able to absorb the cost of the last earthquake - put at \$6 billion to \$8 billion by Prime Minister John Key this morning - and he is confident that remains the case with

yesterday's disaster.

While much of the cost of repairing homes will be met by the Earthquake Commission and the large offshore "reinsurance" companies the commission purchases its own insurance cover from, Mr English says he has been assured by private insurance companies who will also bear large costs that they also have sufficient reinsurance cover.

Ultimately overseas reinsurers will meet 80 to 90 per cent of the cost of rebuilding Christchurch he says

3.14pm

Search and rescue teams could continue looking for survivors for a second night following yesterday's Christchurch earthquake, Civil Defence national controller David Coetzee says.

Mr Coetzee says the search for survivors is not expected to be completed tonight. "It will be completed as these teams work through it. They will not stop until they go through it."

3.12pm

Power has been restored to over 60 per cent of quake-ravaged Christchurch but progress is slow, lines company Orion says.

Up to 80 per cent of customers lost power when the magnitude 6.3 quake hit yesterday afternoon. The company said parts of Lyttelton had power again but Christchurch's eastern suburbs were more problematic due to network and road damage.

The suburbs of Dallington and Brighton were among the worst affected, but there were still pockets in the western suburbs without power.

3.11pm

Australian Prime Minister Julia Gillard confirms a long-term Australian resident has died in the Christchurch earthquake.

Ms Gillard tells reporters in Canberra the man was a New Zealander by birth but has been an Australian permanent resident.

She says the man's wife and children live in Australia.

"He lost his life in the earthquake as a result of being trapped in rubble."

2.55pm

Two aftershocks within eight minutes of each other have rocked Christchurch after another measuring 3.9 struck at 2.31pm, Geonet reports.

2.51pm

Telecom says 260 payphones in the Christchurch region are enabled with free calling for local, national and mobile calls.

2.43pm

A message on Twitter says property managers at a Westfield-owned mall in Auckland told people who were collecting donations for the Canterbury earthquake to leave.

2.34pm

A woman has been rescued from the ruins of the Pyne Gould Corporation building in central Christchurch, more than 24 hours after being trapped by the earthquake.

Wrapped in blankets, the woman was lifted down to an ambulance, to the applause of onlookers.

2.32pm

The Ministry of Consumer Affairs reports that scammers are using the Christchurch earthquake as an opportunity to prey on the goodwill of Kiwis.

The emails, sent from "James McCoy" and claiming to be from "Donate4Charity NZ" use a legitimate UK-based charity organisation's name and website address.

The emails call for people to receive donated funds into their bank account from overseas for a 10 per cent cut. This is a scam.

"Please delete these emails straight away, and do not reply", advises the Ministry.

2.20pm

All courts in Christchurch will remain closed for the rest of the week following yesterday's earthquake.

A Justice ministry spokesman said there had been extensive damage to a number of its sites in the city.

Anyone summoned for jury service in Christchurch this week was not required to attend, the spokesman said.

2.15pm

Christchurch's Rolleston prison is being cleared to create beds for the influx of rescuers into the city. Corrections minister Judith Collins said the prisoners would be moved to the higher security Christchurch Mens' prison, emptying 320 beds for rescuers.

The rescue teams now include 200 police from Australia on top of their specialist search and rescue team.

2.05pm

Some light rain but mostly fine is the forecast for Christchurch for the coming days, MetService forecasts.

The high this afternoon is forecast to be around 18C, dropping to 11C tonight.

Tomorrow is forecast to be fine with moderate northeasterlies. The temperature is expected to be around 22C in the afternoon, falling to around 11C at night.

On Friday colder southerlies and showers arrive around dawn, easing in the afternoon. A cool evening is expected, with the winds dying away.

1.55pm

Former All Black and Canterbury rugby star and rugby commentator, Justin Marshall, spoke to nzherald.co.nz while on a flight from Auckland to Christchurch this morning.

In Auckland for work when the quake struck, Marshall said his family was safe, but his wife had had trouble finding their three children, all of whom were at school near their Sumner home when it hit. One of Marshall's brothers had narrowly escaped injury when the roof of a shop he had been in collapsed. "You feel so hopeless being so far away," said Marshall."

1.52pm

Luxury cruise liner *Queen Mary 2* has cancelled its visit to Christchurch after the earthquake.

The vessel, which is currently docked in Sydney, will not be calling to Christchurch's port at Lyttelton as scheduled on Saturday and will probably stop at Wellington instead, cruise operator Cunard said.

1.48pm

New Zealand Post has suspended all mail deliveries in Christchurch following yesterday's destructive quake.

Group chief executive Brian Roche today said all postal services, including those at Christchurch Mail Centre and PostShop Kiwibank outlets, would be suspended until February 28.

1.40pm

According to radio reports, the Hotel Grand Chancellor - at 26 storeys, the tallest building in Christchurch - is in danger of imminent collapse.

1.38pm

Power provider Orion hopes to have half of Christchurch reconnected by the end of the day. Power was cut to around 75 percent of the city after the quake.

"We are finding it difficult to get to some parts of our network to assess the damage, however we have not found any significant damage to our network so far," a statement read. "A large amount of Banks Peninsula is now back on, however we are still fully assessing Lyttelton and parts of Christchurch City."

Orion said further aftershocks could cut power to those areas that have had power restored, so people should continue to have a torch handy.

1.32pm

Statistics New Zealand has suspended the delivery of census forms nationwide due to yesterday's devastating 6.3 magnitude quake in Christchurch.

Census general manager Carol Slappendel said the forms would not be delivered before February 25.

1.30pm

Geonet reports that another aftershock of magnitude 3.1 struck at 1.07pm within 5km of Lyttelton.

1.20pm

Twenty four of those reported missing after the powerful Christchurch quake struck are Japanese nationals.

They include a group of students from Toyama College of Foreign Languages in Toyama City, who were believed to be trapped in the King's Education Ltd language school, located in the collapsed CTV building.

Japan's government was to dispatch an emergency quake rescue team of some 70 rescuers and police officers.

Like New Zealand, Japan sits on the "Pacific Ring of Fire" zone of seismic activity and is also often hit by powerful earthquakes.

1.15pm

Auckland University Students Association is looking to gather volunteers during the university's Orientation Week next week to help gather donations to go to the aid of victims of the earthquake. Find out more [here](#).

12.58pm

Police are advising people travelling north of Christchurch that Kaikoura, which only has one petrol station, has run out of petrol. (Newstalk ZB)

12.54pm

Fonterra today delivered 200,000 litres of fresh water to quake-stricken Christchurch. The city council earlier said clean water was likely to run out within days as yesterday's 6.3 magnitude quake had damaged the water supply on the eastern side of the city. The water was delivered in rail pods usually used to transport milk and was being distributed to water centres set up at six local schools.

12.53pm

Christchurch Airport can confirm some international arrivals and departures this afternoon:

- * Emirates flight EK 419 is arriving at 3.20pm and departing at 5pm.
- * Qantas flight QF 45 is arriving at 4pm and departing at 5.30pm, and
- * Pacific Blue has a flight arriving at 3.30pm from Melbourne.

Flight information is now available on the Christchurch Airport [website](#).

12.51pm

It is now 24 hours to the exact minute, since the deadly earthquake struck yesterday.

12.49pm

Hopes that 15 people have been rescued from the Canterbury TV (CTV) building in Christchurch this morning have been dashed, with police saying no one had been recovered alive from that site. A Fire Service spokesman told Radio NZ that 15 people had been pulled alive from a "pocket" in the collapsed building after using a cameras to locate them. But police then said the report was incorrect, and the 15 had not been saved.

12.45pm

The first group of Aucklanders has departed for Christchurch to offer expert help and support to the Canterbury earthquake recovery operation.

The group left Whenuapai this morning and include building inspectors and civil defence staff.

12.38pm

The NSW Fire Brigades boss says he's shocked by the level of devastation he's seen on the ground in Christchurch.

Gary Picken and his team of 72 men touched down in the city today to lend a hand to exhausted local fire crews.

"The whole team is happy to be here," Mr Picken told AAP.

"The crew they're relieving are dead on their feet and when you're in that condition you can start to make mistakes, so we're helping out."

12.28pm

Canterbury's devastating earthquake has massive economic implications for the region and the rest of the country, a leading economist says.

However, trying to estimate the economic impact of yesterday's 6.3 magnitude quake at this stage was foolish, BNZ head of research Stephen Toplis said.

However, the economic toll would be far bigger than the impact of September's magnitude 7.1 quake. (NZPA)

12.16pm

The civil defence is urging people in Christchurch not to buy petrol unnecessarily as fuel is being

rationed for emergency vehicles.

Emergency management controller for Civil Defence Canterbury John Mitchell told Radio New Zealand there are petrol stations outside of the city if people need fuel.

Many petrol stations have long queues to buy petrol while others are not open due to earthquake damage.

"If they don't need to buy fuel they should not be rushing off to buy fuel," Mr Mitchell said.

11.30am

At John Key's press conference, the PM said Christchurch will be back after this crisis, as strong as ever. He praised the resilience of Cantabrians. He confirmed that the number of fatalities currently in the morgue is 75, including 20 as yet unidentified. Finally, he confirmed that a national State of Emergency has been declared.

11.27am

The Fire Service is saying they believe 15 people are alive in an air pocket within the CTV building - one of the two worst-damaged buildings in yesterday's quake.

11.25am

Police have confirmed there have been 55 identified bodies, and there are 20 more bodies which have yet to be identified.

There are 300 people listed as "missing".

"With those 300 missing people could just be someone called up saying so and so is missing - they may have just left town."

Police said 200 Defence Force personnel have been deployed, which includes 30 medics, 30 engineers and two helicopters.

11.20am

The Auckland District Health Board is awaiting the arrival of two children injured in the earthquake. ADHB incident controller Margaret Dotchin said there was also a possibility an adult woman would be transported to Auckland for treatment later today.

"Following a request, three ADHB Intensive Care Unit nurses were last night dispatched to Christchurch," Ms Dotchin said.

11.15am

Christchurch Airport confirms they will open for international flights at their revised schedule times this afternoon. Check-in opens starting from 12pm. The first international flight arrival is expected at 3.20pm.

10.55am

Hamish Riach, CEO of Canterbury Rugby, has confirmed that a board member of the Crusaders was among those killed at the Pyne Gould building yesterday.

He went on to say the future of any matches at AMI Stadium, including Rugby World Cup fixtures, was uncertain until an inspection of the stadium was carried out this afternoon.

10.50am

US President Barack Obama has just sent a message. In it he says he and his wife Michelle express their sympathies with the residents of Christchurch. He pledged the support of a US urban rescue team to assist locals at the scene of the devastation.

10.40am

A handy map showing the location of essential services: check [here](#).

10.35am

General practitioners, practice nurses, practice managers, community pharmacists and pharmacy technicians who are available to assist in Christchurch at short notice should register [here](#).

10.27am

Aucklander Andrew Stevenson told nzherald.co.nz from Christchurch that residents were queuing for food and money.

"There are queues of 50 cars outside every gas station, 10 people outside each ATM and a queue of 40 people just to get into New World - not at the checkout - this is just to get in the doors. And no bread or milk."

10.25am

TV is reporting that a survivor has just been removed from the ruins of the Pyne Gould building, 21 hours after the quake. Rescuers say contact - via txt messages - has been made with three further people still buried under the flattened building.

10.15am

Geonet reports that another aftershock of magnitude 3.9 struck at 9.52am within 5km of Christchurch.

10.10am

NZ Blood Services confirm they have sufficient blood stocks but say if you are not already a donor and would like to sign up to be contacted when they do need blood donations, call 0800 GIVE BLOOD (0800 448 325) or email [Donors](#).

10.05am

Christchurch Airport has reopened for domestic flights and it is expected the backlog will be cleared by the end of the day.

But it will take longer to clear international flights which are expected to resume from midday, Christchurch International Airport chief executive Jim Boult said this morning. (NZPA)

10.02am

A representative of the Canterbury Business Association, Peter Townsend, says there is no problem with food supplies getting in to Christchurch.

10.00am

The first plane load of evacuees out of Christchurch are expected to land at Auckland Airport in about 15 minutes, at 10.15am.

9.55am

"Drinking water should be available from various primary schools by 11am. Please bring your own containers to fill," says the Christchurch City Council via Twitter.

Available from these primary schools: Redcliffs, Phillipstown, Sth New Brighton, Shirley, Wainoni, Lyttelton Main.

9.40am

The 0800 779997 helpline will operate 24 hours, providing information, advice and transferring calls through to other appropriate agencies.

That helpline has so far taken more than 2000 calls.

"Food and water is being delivered to the welfare centres and people will be cared for there as we deal with immediate need," says Social Development Minister Paula Bennett.

9.15am

Orion Energy CEO Roger Sutton says most of the west of Christchurch now has fully restored power. However, the area at the epicentre of the earthquake, and the CBD, are both without power.

9.10am

With ATM machines all out of order in central Christchurch, Mayor Bob Parker understands that a lack of money will be a major issue for many. He says he is organising emergency cash grants for those most in need. More details to be announced at a 11am briefing.

9.00am

Commonwealth Secretary-General Kamlesh Sharma has written to John Key following the quake. "Our hearts and condolences go immediately to the bereaved..."

"The thoughts and prayers of fellow Commonwealth citizens around the world are with the people of New Zealand, and the residents of Christchurch especially, at this time of tragedy and challenge."

8.52am

At a stand-up with the media, Mayor Bob Parker says there are six primary search and rescue sites. He said it has been several hours since anyone has been pulled alive from the rubble, but some bodies have been recovered. He says the city was moving steadily forward since September's quake, but yesterday's aftershock has moved everything back "to a worse place".

8.45am

All Whites captain and Blackburn Rovers captain Ryan Nelsen has told Newstalk ZB he wishes he was back in his home town of Christchurch.

The Cantabrian says he feels helpless watching the disaster unfold on the other side of the world and would go back to Christchurch if he knew he could do anything to help.

Nelsen says his family is okay and his sister amazingly gave birth to a baby boy just half an hour after the quake.

Nelsen will wear a black armband in Blackburn's Premier League match against Aston Villa this weekend.

8.27am

Cabinet will hold an emergency meeting at 9.30am today to decide whether to declare a national state of emergency, Prime Minister John Key said.

Although a state of emergency has been declared in Christchurch, Mr Key said a national state of emergency would give central government more capacity to act.

8.20am

The Black Caps, currently at cricket's World Cup tournament in India, have [sent their thoughts](#).

8.15am

The International Rugby board says it is too early to comment on what affect the earthquake has had on plans for this year's Rugby World Cup.

"The thoughts and deepest sympathies of the global Rugby family are with the people of Christchurch, their families and all New Zealanders at this very difficult time," a statement read.

"We feel it would be inappropriate to comment at this stage on the status of Rugby World Cup 2011 infrastructure or operations. The focus at this point must be on the emergency response."

8.10am

Mayor Bob Parker advises that the central business district will be completely closed for business for a minimum of the next three days.

8.00am

Police say they can still hear cries for help emanating from damaged buildings in Christchurch's CBD.

7.42am

Air New Zealand has offered special fares - for *immediate family* only - for those wishing to travel in or out of Christchurch.

Fares are as follows:

- * All Tasman and Pacific Island fares, \$50 one way (plus tax)
- * All long haul fares, \$400 one way (plus tax)

Air New Zealand will operate a second return Boeing 747 service between Auckland and Christchurch this afternoon to meet the needs of family, friends and emergency services. The airline will also operate a special Airbus A320 service this afternoon from Wellington to Christchurch.

7.35am

British Prime Minister David Cameron has issued his condolences, and assured the people of Christchurch that Great Britain has them in their thoughts and prayers.

7.30am

Police advise that anyone entering the cordon without the authority to do so, will be arrested.

7.13am

Prime Minister John Key confirms the official death toll has risen to 38.

7.08am

Aftershocks have continued to hit Christchurch overnight, the largest a 4.8 magnitude tremor 10km south-west of the city at a depth of 7km at 9.21pm.

There have been at least 11 more quakes over magnitude 4, the latest a 4.6 magnitude earthquake 7km deep at 6am today, [GNS Science says](#).

7.03am

TV3 reports Civil Defence has revised the official death toll to 38.

6.57am

Christchurch mayor Bob Parker continues to urge people not to use their cars unnecessarily in the city.

All schools and childcare centres in the city will be closed until further notice.

Mr Parker tells 3News people should also not go to work unless their work is vital to the rescue or the supply of food for survivors.

Residents are encouraged to walk if they can to keep traffic off the roads.

Civil Defence says water needs to be conserved and advises people not to shower or take baths, and not to flush the toilet. The water needs to be boiled.

Around 80 per cent of the city is without water.

Mr Parker tells residents wanting to help to focus on their local community.

6.51am

The BBC reports that the United Kingdom is sending a 62-strong search and rescue team with more than nine tonnes of equipment to help relieve the rescuers.

It is due to arrive on Thursday or Friday.

UK Prime Minister David Cameron reportedly texted Prime Minister John Key - with whom he is friends - when the news reached him. He has followed it up with a more conventional message of condolence, speaking in Kuwait.

"I believe I speak on behalf of everyone in our country when I say that we all stand with New Zealand at this moment, at this dark and difficult time."

6.49am

The Press reports that a woman with a baby in her arms died instantly when she was hit by falling debris in the earthquake. It was not known how badly hurt the baby was. Newstalk ZB says another baby was killed when a television fell on him.

6.43am

Christchurch Airport will be open for domestic flights from 8am.

Chief executive Jim Boult says staff have worked through the night to ensure it's fit for use today.

Runways have been thoroughly checked by engineers and there were emergency flights throughout the night, bringing in medical personnel and supplies, as well as police, St John Ambulance, military and civil defence people.

It is expected that the airport will re-open for international flights in the afternoon.

6.32am

International media are reporting that Queen Elizabeth II has passed on her condolences to Prime Minister John Key and US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has phoned New Zealand Foreign Minister Murray McCully to express her sorrow over the earthquake.

6.24am

Christchurch Mayor Bob Parker tells *Breakfast* at least six schools will be used as water distribution centres.

Water tankers will be sent to them today for people to collect water from.

The schools are Lyttelton, Redcliffs, South New Brighton, Shirley, Wainoni and Phillipstown. Steps are also under way to get food supplies in.

Mayor Parker urges people to stay at home, saying the city is effectively "closed" for at least the next three days.

"We don't want you out driving and looking around. As we found in September those roads are

lifelines."

He confirms rescue teams are being sent from Japan and the United States.

6.19am

Civil Defence Director John Hamilton says international tourists, many of whom stayed overnight at Hagley Park, are being flown out of Christchurch this morning.

He says he does not know the nationalities of the confirmed fatalities.

5.58am

The Government of South Africa expresses its condolences to New Zealand over the earthquake.

"We also wish to express our support to the government and people of New Zealand for the commitment, dedication and tenacity with which they are doing everything in their power to assist the affected inhabitants of the area," it says in a statement.

5.45am

Director of Civil Defence John Hamilton tells media there is still no list of the missing or numbers trapped.

He says most emergency call-outs have come from Christchurch's CBD.

Further international assistance has been requested.

5.37am

Director of Civil Defence John Hamilton says the number of confirmed dead in the earthquake was 32 not 65 as John Key said last night.

Mr Hamilton says fatalities are only officially confirmed once bodies have been identified and their next of kin informed.

He says eight people were rescued from the Pyne Gould building and three from the CTV building overnight.

Mr Hamilton says the welfare centres had been busy overnight as have hospitals and medical facilities.

Government helpline is 0800 779 997 and the Red Cross line for people trying to track down others - 0800 Red Cross (0800 733 276).

View [Massive earthquake shakes Canterbury](#) in a larger map