

Residential Red Zone Fact Sheet

Geotechnical engineers Tonkin & Taylor have assessed and mapped residential land damage caused by the Canterbury earthquakes of 2010 and 2011.

Some land in the Christchurch City and Waimakariri District areas has been so badly damaged by the earthquakes since 4 September 2010 it is unlikely it can be rebuilt on for a considerable period of time. Engineers have mapped these areas and categorised them as residential red zone.

These properties are located in:

- the east of Christchurch (along the Avon and in related areas usually associated with waterways or former waterways);
- in the north-east of Christchurch (e.g. Brooklands); and
- in the beach area of Waimakariri District (i.e. Kairaki Beach).

There are currently about 5000 properties in the Christchurch City Council area and around 100 properties in the Waimakariri District Council area in the residential red zone.

The criteria for defining areas as residential red zone are:

- There is significant and extensive area wide land damage;
- Most buildings are uneconomic to repair
- There is a high risk of further damage to land and buildings from low-levels of shaking; and
- The success of engineering solutions would be uncertain and uneconomic; and
- Any repair would be disruptive and take a considerable period of time.

In the residential red zone, area-wide land damage is so extensive there is an increased likelihood of further damage due to liquefaction and lateral spreading from the ongoing series of aftershocks. The 5.7 and 6.3 magnitude earthquakes on 13 June 2011 demonstrated this.

Homeowners in the residential red zone face lengthy disruption that could go on for years. Such wide scale land repair would take a considerable period of time and result in ongoing social dislocation, which would have major impacts on schooling, transport and employment for whole communities.

The Government has moved to ensure residents in these zones have the option to get on with their lives as quickly as possible.

What does this mean for me?

For people who owned property with insurance in the residential red zones on 3 September 2010 there will be two options:

- the Crown makes an offer of purchase for the entire property at current rating value (less any built property insurance payments already made), and assumes all the insurance claims other than contents; or
- the Crown makes an offer of purchase for the land only, and homeowners can continue to deal with their own insurer about their homes.

The varying degrees of damage to the houses and land in the residential red zone mean it will take more time to develop these offers.

The Government hopes to be able to come back to residents in the residential red zone with an offer of purchase within the next eight weeks – by mid-August 2011.

Residents will then have nine months from that date to consider the offer of purchase.

What if I want to move out of my house now?

In the meantime, if residents wish to leave their badly damaged homes in the red zone they should talk to their insurers about accessing any unused portion of their temporary accommodation allowances immediately.

The Crown also has temporary accommodation assistance available, so this means people in the red zone have the choice not to live in substandard conditions. Visit www.quakeaccommodation.govt.nz for more information.

Where can I get more information?

Residents can visit the www.landcheck.org.nz website and enter their address to find out what zone their property has been mapped into.

Residents can also contact the Government helpline on 0800 779 997 if they are unable to access the website or if they want more information.

Further information – including a Q&A for homeowners – is available as part of the media pack and on the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority (CERA)'s website www.cera.govt.nz