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Views of the Canterbury region

Top Jobs

If you fit any of the job roles below then contact us now! Our clients are desperate to speak with the following:

- REVIT Technicians
- Bridge Design Engineers
- Bridge Design Technicians
- Civil Geotechnical Engineers
- Seismic Structural Engineers
- Stormwater Engineers
- Water Resource Engineers

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There will be so many things to consider when you move to New Zealand. Luckily you can share our contacts for:-

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- Renting property on your arrival
- Banking
- Tax & Trusts laws (UK to NZ)
- Child care and schooling
- Moving money to NZ
- Moving Pets to NZ
- Relocating your belongings
- Buying and Driving a car in NZ
- Kiwisaver (NZ pension scheme)
- Tax advice on keeping a UK rental property

We do not receive any benefit from these referrals, only the knowledge that your move will be less stressful!

Want more info? Click here!

New Zealand market update

Welcome to the February edition of the state of the nation. Even with the extra day in the month it still feels like it has flown by and already there are whispers about a quickly arriving Easter weekend.

Dominating the calendar this month was the first anniversary of the 2nd and most devastating Christchurch earthquake. 185 people lost their lives on the 22nd February 2011 and services throughout the country focussed on their memory. The country as a whole took the opportunity to pause for a second to remember the events during the afternoon of that day. As the news of fresh earthquakes first hit the media I remember thinking very little of it, presuming it to be only another shake. Unfortunately as the details started to filter through I like many others sat transfixed as a very dark day in New Zealand's history unfolded.

Tuesday's TV coverage showed much of the early footage from the 22nd and reminded me of how big this disaster is. A city centre the size of Cardiff has effectively been taken off the map, destroying not only the buildings but the infrastructure and the land on which it once stood. The cost of the rebuild is being estimated at \$30 billion (roughly £16 billion at today's exchange rate); double the cost of hosting the London Olympics. When you compare populations of 4 million in New Zealand and 60 million in the UK you get an understanding of the impact this disaster is having on the country.

As a whole the country is very quiet at the moment with very little happening in any of the major regions. In Christchurch the civil contractors are starting to see a small amount of projects coming through and the hope is that over time the number will increase dramatically. Most of the building contractors still have a freeze on recruitment

whilst they wait for the next raft of work but like the civil companies they know they will need to recruit heavily as things pick up.

The engineering consultants are also keeping up with current demands but appreciate that as the construction gets underway and new projects come online they will need to recruit strategically. In the current climate they're utilising offices around the country to deal with Christchurch work whilst other regions are quiet but this can only last for so long. As work starts coming in nationally the pressure will be on to bring new staff into the Christchurch operation. Both the consultant engineers and the contractors are focussed on the second half of 2012. Although the December shakes caused delays there is still a belief there will be a significant lift in activity from July onwards.

It's only now, one year on, that most of us are realising how big the Christchurch rebuild will be and the timeframes involved with such a project. All of us at some point have been frustrated by the time taken for anything to happen, frustration that's also felt by our clients, but we all consider ourselves lucky compared to those on the ground who may have lost everything including loved ones. The resounding message that came from all the ceremonies last week was that Christchurch will be rebuilt and it will be better than ever. This won't happen overnight but once things do start moving forward we'll see the birth of New Zealand's newest city... who wouldn't want to be involved in that!

As ever do keep in touch with us and let us know of any visits or moves in plenty of time and we'll do everything to help. Also keep following the blog (<http://catalystrecruit.wordpress.com/>) and also follow us on LinkedIn to get the latest up to date news.



How much Damage can be done in 2 Minutes

In terms of 2 minutes - I have made a bit of a guess here, but I am told the two big earthquakes lasted about 40 seconds each and the two smaller ones lasted about 20 seconds each - so using a bit of poetic or seismic licence - I reckon the total time of shaking is around 2 minutes.

The total repair bill is estimated at \$30 billion, (Reserve Bank's estimated total cost of earthquake claims).

- The EQC has been required to assess 447,943 residential properties (many more than once)
- At least 181,000 houses need repair
- Around 10,000 houses will need to be demolished
- 840 buildings have been earmarked for demolition - with many more to come (at least 1200)
- \$3 billion of infrastructure damage has occurred
- 4 million tonnes of rubble to be carted away from commercial and residential areas
- 300km of sewer pipes and about 124km of water pipes are being fixed - or replaced
- 535,000 tonnes of silt removed (due to liquefaction)
- At times 90% of water and sewerage network was down
- At times 80% power supply was lost
- 50% or 30km of 66kV lines damaged and 15% or 330km of 11kV damaged

Two minutes to destroy...

...20 years to repair

Forrest Lanning Case study of moving to Christchurch, NZ from the USA

Current Employer: Aurecon, Christchurch - Senior Structural Engineer

Having lived and worked in Christchurch during his overseas travels prior to gaining his engineering degree, Forrest forged an emotional connection with the city. In fact Forrest was re-visiting Christchurch 10 days prior to the February earthquake, which re-affirmed his desire to return and he contacted Catalyst with the aim of securing a position involved with the rebuild. Forrest is a Structural Engineer with specialist seismic design expertise. Within days of making initial contact, Catalyst secured Forrest four interviews which resulted in three job offers and Forrest decided to join Aurecon.

Q. What inspired you to consider moving with your family to New Zealand?

A. I have lived overseas in other countries before and focused on earthquake engineering, so the job in Christchurch worked out well being an earthquake recovery scene. So I guess it was more for the type of work than the pure reason of living overseas. Also, my partner hasn't lived overseas before and she expressed an interest - prior to settling down somewhere.

Q. Has New Zealand lived up to your expectations?

A. Yes, but also I have been to New Zealand before, so I knew what I was getting into: Smaller cities, shorter business hours, mild summers, amazing outdoor lifestyle.

Q. How has your life changed since moving to New Zealand?

A. Besides changing countries, I don't believe my life has changed all that much on the grand scale of things. But I do feel more normal working in a developed nation (past jobs were in developing (and sometimes dodgy) nations.)

Q. What one thing would you have done differently?

A. Not sure if there is anything I would.

Q. What one thing do you wish you had known about before moving?

A. How hard it was finding a car. I was really surprised how old the cars are and how much they still cost. Though, I'm not sure if knowing this ahead of time would have allowed me to do things differently. Finding a house to rent was also hard. (Catalyst - Both were earthquake affected)

Q. What advice would you pass to someone commencing the process?

A. Make sure you know Christchurch is a broken city, if you're looking for city life (pubs, sidewalk cafes, etc.), don't expect it here. If you're into the outdoors (mountains, beaches, hiking etc.) there is heaps of things here. Christchurch has a very small town feeling, that may be great for some people, but not all. Also, if you haven't lived overseas before, New Zealand is an easy place to start, but it's still a big step and may be hard at first if it's your first time.

Q. Looking back with hindsight, do think you have made the right move?

A. I believe so. At first it was very hard for my partner to move here (being far from her family and having to make new friends), but I think it's going good and getting better.

Useful Facts:

1 st Contact -	11 th May 2011
1 st Interview -	16 th May 2011
1 st Interview to Job Offer -	2 Days
1 st Contact to arrival -	138 days

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One Year On...

Last week was a difficult week for Cantabrians commemorating the first anniversary of the catastrophic earthquake that hit at 12:51pm on Tuesday 22nd February 2011.

I spoke with a number of our Christchurch based clients on the day and everyone reported feeling subdued and slightly empty. On Wednesday last week – a series of commemorative services were held around the world and the key players were interviewed.

Roger Sutton – the CERA (Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Agency) boss talked of a *“big mixture of emotions”* on the day – but he is felling *“really positive”* overall. He suggested that next year would be all about the *‘guys in suits’* – meaning future investors.

He believes that the rebuild is starting to happen but knows people are frustrated at the time it is taking.

Mayor Bob Parker also talked about the frustration the people of the city were experiencing but suggests that the people of Christchurch *“should take a moment to reflect on how far we have come.”* - *“There is a lot ahead of us,”* he says, *“but there is now the opportunity to build a beautiful city”*.

Prime Minister John Key described February 22, 2011 as *“a date that will go down in the history of New Zealand as one of our darkest days”*. Although now we can *“dare to dream”* about what a new Christchurch will be like. He went on to say that *“today is also a day to pause and reflect - to remember those who died, those who helped on that day and those who continue to work for the city”*.

Britain's Foreign Secretary William Hague has written offering his condolences to the people of New Zealand on the anniversary of the Christchurch earthquake. *“I am writing to express once more my condolences and assure you that my thoughts remain with all those affected by the tragedy, especially the residents of Christchurch,”* Hague writes.

“It is a testament to the Kiwi spirit that we witness the citizens of Christchurch determined to see their city rebuilt. Britain stands ready to help you in the journey ahead.” - William Hague

My personal opinion

It is horrific to think that you can be sitting in a modern building in the countries third largest city one minute and thirty seconds later – one building has collapsed killing 115 people, another has collapsed killing 18, while a further 36 people have died from falling masonry.

The Royal Commission of enquiry is looking into the Who, What, When and Why for every fatality. From my unprofessional observations – the enquiry has so far blamed poor construction, poor design and poor design codes, followed by poor follow up of inspections between earthquakes.

I do not think anyone is going to come out of this process smelling of roses – but let us make sure we all learn!

I mean – who would have believed that those beautiful old brick fronted Christchurch buildings that added so much character would be so deadly when the masonry fell on buses, cars and passers by? It does make you wonder how safe other buildings are in other cities in the world. We didn't even know that Christchurch was built over a fault line!!

Light-heartedly we say that Christchurch is now one of the safest cities in the world. There isn't much else to come down! Everything that wasn't rock solid has either been demolished or is in the process of being demolished. New residents to the city are able to choose the suburb and property in which they live and apart from the fact that the CBD has been heavily damaged (and is closed) and the ongoing aftershocks – many people are able to live mainly unaffected lives.

In the next couple of weeks - Catalyst Recruitment will be publishing a **60 page booklet** all about **moving to, living and working in Christchurch as it is today**. Included are 20 short interviews with people we have assisted to move to Christchurch over the last few years. If you are interested – don't worry – we will email you how you can download our booklet in the next few weeks.