

CHRISTCHURCH QUAKE REPORT

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I gratefully submit the following report from Subud Christchurch to you and the WSA. It is very long; I'm sorry. I hope the few who manage to get through the whole thing will be able to appreciate how much your generous help has helped us.

In the years we have supported and read about the charitable work of Susila Dharma International, it never occurred to us that one day we would become the beneficiaries of our own charity. The WSA, SDI, and our donors locally and all over the world have given us material help in a way that feels priceless.

I will try to answer the following questions: What was it like on the day? How are things for us now? How much we have been given? How are we using funds donated for earthquake help? What for the future?

The most important thing to get across is that this disaster and the flow-on effects are continuing. We have had almost 7,000 aftershocks so far, and the scientists predict that we can expect some big ones in the next year.

What happened when the quakes struck?

Balance was gone. Even the idea of balance was gone. The sound was awful. The world moved, but for a snapshot in time, the mind and heart stopped absolutely. We ended up tossed wherever, and then struggled out of it. The wreckage was stupefying. It was mildly surprising to be alive.

Several Subud families send children to the local school in Heathcote Valley. The school is just along the road from our hall. On 22nd, February as the mothers felt the strength of the quake and ran towards the school, they could hear a terrified, mass scream from the children. They were safe, thank God. This was an extraordinary event.

Quoting from the 29 March Press, *Heathcote residents experienced the world's strongest recorded up-and-down shaking during last month's earthquake. Equipment in a Heathcote Valley School building measured peak ground accelerations of more than 2.2 times that of gravity only three seconds into the magnitude 6.3 quake.*

Over time, months not days, the tally of destruction is growing. In a city this size it seems that everyone knows someone who has died. It could be a really close friend or merely a friendly face from town, but their absence creates its' own weight on our

hearts. And the other heart, the heart of our beautiful city, is gone. We can only realise this piece by piece. Nobody can take it in all at once. We get confused driving on familiar streets because they are unrecognisable. There are facades and interiors of cherished buildings we will never see again, and only disorienting gaps in the air where they used to be. Historic Oaks in the park are gone, and our companionable Redwood tree next to the Subud Hall has been taken down. Trees were forced upward and their roots torn leaving them tipped and dangerous. 900 buildings in the central business district and more than 10,000 homes will be demolished. Extensive suburban areas have sunk 400 to 600 mm, and the land may never be usable again. The Port Hills between Lyttleton and Heathcote rose almost half a metre. With homes lost, jobs gone, schools gone, businesses disappeared along with the wreckage of markets, libraries, restaurants, theatres, roads and bridges, 70,000 people initially left. No one knows how many will return. The collapse of huge bits of the physical order continually reverberates in the social order.

How is it for us now eight months out from the September Quake?

Since September we have had almost 7,000 aftershocks. Some have been huge, but even the small ones are a steady hammering on our nerves and our structures. When the ground shakes it might be time to try to get out, or curl up in a ball near something big and sturdy. The brain kicks in and says, 'Hey, don't panic, it's only a small one.' The body, however, drops into fight or flight mode with all the typical physiological and neurological response. At night, it is a nasty way to wake up. The stress shows in the statistics. Heart attacks are way up from the average, as are: domestic violence figures, increased tranquillizer use; drug abuse, cigarette, and booze consumption, are all increasing alarmingly. The mentally ill are very vulnerable as are the elderly and disabled.

We do not like to complain because so many other people in the world are so much worse off. We are very conscious that if one has to get through a disaster, New Zealand is a great place to do it. But to be blunt, it's hard. Four families have already left our group for more settled environments. The unpredictable but constantly expected aftershocks are hard to live with. The sight of such enormous destruction is depressing. The pervasive uncertainty about jobs, schools, mortgages, reconstruction and insurance is debilitating.

How much can a house take? Pick it up and shake it, and then over 8 months, thump it with a big fist 7,000 times. Places that are now habitable are slowly become uninhabitable. Daily, we watch the cracks getting bigger in our Subud Hall.

None of us were hurt although there were some close calls. So far it seems that only one family has lost their house completely, another home may be repairable but is still unsafe to occupy. Several homes have been so badly damaged that the owners will have to move out for weeks or months while the repairs are being made. It is conceivable that some repairs will take years to happen. And in the meantime, although they can still be occupied, many houses are a mess. Living in them might more

appropriately be called, 'residential camping.' Most of us got power water and sewerage after three weeks. Several members have had to shift out of damaged rental properties. One member is staying on the Subud property and we have plans to take in more when people need to relocate while their houses are being repaired.

The Subud property still looks lovely. We were fortunate not to have the liquefaction that has devastated so much of the city, but all three of our buildings: the Subud House, the Grand Hall, and the New Hall; have each been damaged. The process of reporting and official evaluation of the damage is unfinished and still on-going (along with the aftershocks). We have had repeated visits by insurance assessors, builders, and estimators, but still – since September – we have not yet had a structural engineer do the final 'Assessment of All Assessments' which will tell us which buildings are safe to use, what is repairable, and what is beyond repair. I have been assured this inspection will happen in three weeks. The coping mechanism has obviously been overwhelmed.

Main damage to Subud Christchurch property

The +100 year old Subud house is a wreck. It is still standing and we are still using it, but trying to fix it will be like trying to reinforce a soufflé. Some of the pilings are shot, and the foundations are cracked, and cracking.

The Grand Hall is a sturdy wooden structure. Huge poles form the foundations and rise up through the floor to support the network of rafters under the roof high above. The poles are both a structural necessity and an aesthetic feature. Many of them are badly split and for the moment are wrapped with nylon straps. The assessors have indicated that the danger is not that the hall will collapse, but that one or more of the deeply cracked poles could shatter during an aftershock - to our peril.

The worst damage to the New Hall is focussed on the front wall and runs from the broken, floor height windows, up through the walls to the huge window frames at the top of the walls extending to the roofline. Most of the internal wall panelling has cracked along the joins, but in the front wall, the panels have actually been torn across. Above those damaged walls, the big window frames at the top have been distorted and some of the huge panes of glass fallen out. The heat pumps were knocked off their bases and both hot water cylinders destroyed.

We have already spent \$13,000.00 of group funds just to repair damage so that the property can be used for latihan, is warm, secure, has working toilets and showers, and a fridge. Added to that amount will be the \$2,500 excess that will have to be paid on our insurance cover. Hopefully, many of those expenses will be recoverable.

How much money have we been given to date?

We were first given money by our own National Committee. It was quickly followed by generous donations from SDI, from the WSA, from France, Australia, and groups, and individuals. This is how the numbers look now, but please keep in mind (with apologies

to our National Treasurer, and our Group Treasurer) that these figures I have pinched from them are only a *narrative* of income and spending, not proper accounting. Also, because of the insecurity about insurance payments, some items show up in both: my versions of the group's expenses, and the separate earthquake relief expenses. Uncertainty is a big part of the situation.

The Short Version

Subud Christchurch Emergency Relief Fund				
	Donations worldwide & local (NZ\$)		59,792.56	59,792.56
	Distributed to Local charities	10,000.00		49,792.56
	ChCh Members & EQ exp	15,023.00		34,769.56
04-Jun-11				<i>Bal</i> 34,769.56

The Long Version

Subud Christchurch Emergency Relief Fund				Expenditure	Donations	Balance
	Subud NZ National Committee			13,000.00		13,000.00
	Individuals			1,180.00		14,180.00
16-Mar-11	Susila Dharma International			8,965.64		23,145.64
23-Mar-11	Susila Dharma International			20,544.21		43,689.85
	Susila Dharma NZ AC			200.00		43,889.85
	Member donation			100.00		43,989.85
	Subud Australia			15,568.71		59,558.56
	Subud Auckland			134.00		59,692.56
	Member donation			100.00		59,792.56
	Christchurch City Mission	3,000.00				56,792.56
	Salvation Army	3,000.00				53,792.56
	Cholmondeley Childrens Home	3,000.00				50,792.56
	Heathcote Primary School	1,000.00				49,792.56
	Emergency Relief to Member	1,000.00				48,792.56
	Emergency Relief to Member	450.00				48,342.56
Sept Quake	EQ Bridging Loans to Members	8,771.15				39,571.41
Sept Quake	EQ Bridging Loans to Members repaid			8,771.15		48,342.56

	Electric Generator		899.00		47,443.56
	Wheelchair Hire		100.00		47,343.56
	Emergency Relief to Member		1,000.00		46,343.56
	Emergency Relief to Member		1,000.00		45,343.56
	Emergency Relief to Member		1,800.00		43,543.56
	Emergency Relief to Member		2,400.00		41,143.56
	Emergency Relief to Member		3,000.00		38,143.56
	Treetech remove tipping Redwood tree	*	569.25		37,574.31
	Treetech grind Redwood stump	*	304.75		37,269.56
	Set aside for insurance excess		2,500.00		34,769.56
04-Jun-11	Subud Christchurch Emergency Relief		<i>Out</i>	<i>In</i>	<i>Bal</i>
			33,794.15	68,563.71	34,769.56
	Disputed insurance claim	*			
	Subud Christchurch repairs & replacements Feb quake group funds				0.00
04-Mar-11	Aerofast - Subud Grand hall	<i>Paid</i>	120.75		-120.75
04-Mar-11	Temporary strapping internal split poles	<i>Paid</i>			-120.75
09-Mar-11	Aerofast - Subud Grand hall	<i>Paid</i>	55..20		-175.95
09-Mar-11	Temporary strapping internal split poles	<i>Paid</i>			-175.95
14-Mar-11	Aerofast - Subud Grand hall	<i>Paid</i>	75..90		-251.85
14-Mar-11	Temporary strapping internal split poles	<i>Paid</i>			-251.85
06-Mar-11	MH Plumbing	<i>Paid</i>			-251.85
06-Mar-11	Burst pipe header tank on SBD House	<i>Paid</i>	220.00		-471.85
11-Apr-11	Noel Leeming Ltd. Replace Subud house	<i>Paid</i>	1,369.00		-1,840.85
11-Apr-11	2 broken fridge + 2 broken heaters	<i>Paid</i>			-1,840.85
14-Apr-11	MH Plumbing	<i>Paid</i>	602.83		-2,443.68
14-Apr-11	Leak from Subud House old galv pipe	<i>Paid</i>			-2,443.68
04-Apr-11	MH Plumbing Subud house	<i>Paid</i>	2,490.79		-4,934.47
04-Apr-11	Replace HWC & fix leak under sink	<i>Paid</i>			-4,934.47
04-May-11	Electrodry clean carpet both halls	<i>Paid</i>	448.50		-5,382.97

04-May-11	Broken glass, plaster, rat poop	<i>Paid</i>		-5,382.97
05-Apr-11	Treetech remove Redwood tree tipping	<i>Paid</i>	569.25	-5,952.22
05-Apr-11	towards hall result Feb quake	<i>Paid</i>		-5,952.22
11-Apr-11	Mattlock Locksmith broken door & lock	<i>Paid</i>	125.00	-6,077.22
17-May-11	Treetech grind Redwood stump	<i>Paid</i>	304.75	-6,381.97
17-May-11	MH Plumbing replace 2 HWC new hall	<i>Paid</i>	5,305.62	-11,687.59
26-May-11	GAVIN NEAL ELECTRICIAL	<i>Paid</i>	754.47	-12,442.06
26-May-11	Remove fix & rehang ceiling heaters	<i>Paid</i>		-12,442.06
26-May-11	Remount & test damaged heat pumps	<i>Paid</i>		-12,442.06
26-May-11	Disconnect + Reconnect HWC House	<i>Paid</i>		-12,442.06
23-May-11	All Solutions Electrical Ltd. HWCX2	<i>Paid</i>	518.88	-12,960.94
23-May-11	Installation HWC New Hall	<i>Paid</i>		-12,960.94
September	Reseal hall windows	<i>Paid</i>	250.00	-13,210.94
	Estimate minimum replacement broken crockery		400.00	-13,610.94
04-Jun-11	Reclaimable Expenses (depending on insurance Co)			-13,610.94

How did we distribute your money to local charities?

We gave careful thought to your instructions, and also were following our own strong intention to help local charities. Initially, when money was pouring into Christchurch, it went to the big funds: The Red Cross, and The Mayor's Fund. We wanted something more street level and without too much administration. Calling around, Aisjah (Aisjah Addison, Christchurch Group Treasurer) found that the small local charities were starved of donations and in difficulty, not only because their usual income was being diverted to the big funds, but because of the quake the need for their services had exploded.

We chose the **Salvation Army** because they were out there immediately with hot soup, clothes, and cash for the victims.

The **City Mission** had already been helping the street people and the homeless, but when the quake came – the street people lost their streets and the homeless their shelters.

Cholmondeley Children's Home: core service is the provision of emergency and planned short term respite care for children aged 3 to 12 years, *whose families are experiencing significant stress or difficulties*. These issues include financial stress, mental health issues, severe illness, substance abuse and addiction, even death of one

parent/guardian. The average stay for a child is from several days to 2 weeks, including weekends. The service is primarily funded through community donations.

Our local **Heathcote School** was damaged but is still operating. Now, more than ever, the school tries to provide many things for the kids that are beyond budget. We thought they should have a little encouragement.

How are Christchurch members using our Emergency Relief Funds?

People have been displaced and, displaced or not, have lost their income. Sometimes, as well as paying the mortgage on a broken house, it is necessary to rent accommodation during the rebuilding. Or, if they had been renting, another bond may be necessary on the new property. The roads in our part of town are shocking, but everyone has to travel much greater distances to get groceries, go to work, or attend schools that are further away. They are doing split shifts in the schools that are left to take in the students from schools that have been destroyed or made unsafe.

The Earthquake Commission has promised to pay for work that urgently needs doing to make a house useful and secure. But the Commission has been so slow paying that some of the tradesmen who do the work are running on bank overdraft and laying off staff. When water was gushing out of the header tank pipes on the Subud House, I called several big firms who said they would put it on their list and call in three weeks. In the figures for group expenses you will note that many payments have been made to tradesmen. That's why they keep coming back. We pay cash now so that we are the ones waiting to be reimbursed (assuming the work is accepted by the EQC or the insurers). And this is one of the great services we are offering to members, bridging finance for repairs. Eventually they will be paid by their insurance or the Earthquake Commission and then they will repay our Emergency Relief Fund so the money can recirculate among us.

On the other hand, we distribute money immediately with no strings attached whenever it is needed. This means: groceries, rent, medical expenses, transportation, pet boarding, car repairs, and [respite breaks](#). The place is such a mess, and living conditions often so difficult or depressing, that one of the healthiest things people can do is simply get out of town for a few days. We are hoping there will be enough money left in the fund to help some of the families with children make it to the national Subud summer camp in January.

One member recently sent us a card saying, 'For weeks now I have been trying to work out how to say thank you in a way which really expresses my gratitude for your gift. The timing was superb - the effect on my circumstances amazing. All I can say is thank you from the bottom of my heart.'

Our committee is a small cog in the wheel of Subud in the world. On your behalf, we have received many thanks similar to the one quoted here. It is an honour to represent you.

How does it look for the future?

Bang, bang, bang, more aftershocks. The scientists predict in the forthcoming year that we have a 90% chance of a quake of magnitude 5 to 6, and a 23% chance of a quake from M6 to M7. Estimates for reconstruction run to 20 years, 15 billion dollars – and still counting.

We anticipated early on that our members would need on-going help as conditions for harm accumulated. The numbers presented earlier have already changed. So, we are very grateful to still have a good amount of funds in hand. It is impossible to predict what will happen, but it is inescapably clear that we have ring-side seats for a continuing seismic circus. That is the main point.

The old Irish prayer asks for protection from, 'Ghosties, and ghoulies, and long-legged beasties, and things that go bump in the night.' Amen to that, especially the bumps in the night. Thank you for helping us through this.

Maynard MacDonald
Chairman Subud Christchurch

NOTE: On June 13th, two additional earthquakes struck Christchurch, measuring magnitude 6 and 5.5. They destroyed some buildings and caused additional damage to others. The damaged clock tower collapsed before dismantlement work could be completed and there were widespread power outages.