



Coping Through The Quakes

Many of our clients have been through some challenging situations over the last ten months coping with the ongoing trauma of the Christchurch earthquakes. One such person is Karl Clements.



Karl works as a Trolley Collection person at Pak 'n Save Northlands and has been doing the job for four and a half years.

On the morning of Saturday September 4 he was scheduled to be at his job but the 7.1 quake earlier that day had been very unsettling. Karl was at first reluctant to return to work at all but after talking it through and some reassurance from his Mum, Kathy and his supervisor Dave Hill he was back almost immediately. Dave said he would keep a personal eye on the safety of Karl and the Trolley team and Kathy

replied that Dave's own life would be on the line if he didn't. Kathy and Karl's family home had sustained some damage and routines were starting to be disrupted. None of this however could prepare Karl or his Mum for the ongoing stress that was about to hit themselves and many others across the city.

On the 22 February, the day of the devastating 6.3 quake, Karl was up in the staff room when it struck. It took a long time for him to calm down and he was crying when he spoke to his Mum on the phone. Due to the chaotic situation on the roads that night a staff member helped out by giving Karl a lift home, but they could only get to a point several kilometres from Karl's grandmother's house and he had to cover the remaining distance on foot. Later that evening he was finally back with Kathy. But then the phone rang. It was the rest home where Kathy works letting her know the home had no power and they were really desperate for help. There was no other option but for Karl to go with her to the job. Karl chose to sleep the night on the floor of the nurse's office so he could stay close to where his Mum was working her 11pm – 7am shift and carrying out her caregiving tasks by torchlight.

Despite all this disruption Karl was back at his Trolley job at Pak 'n Save on the very next day. This was a critical time in the aftermath due to fears around shortages of drinkable water and there was a great need for as many supermarkets as possible to stay open (especially since so many had been shut by the quake). The days following the disaster were slow and difficult. Because there were limited bus services Kathy had to make double trips for Karl to get to his job and then at the end of the day Karl would have to travel to her worksite and then wait for her in order to get a lift home.

Dealing with earthquake damage was an ongoing problem and Kathy said that at times she just felt like packing up and leaving: 'if I hadn't had a mortgage I probably would have just walked out and left Christchurch. But I just can't do that. This is where my commitments are.'

And then, very recently on 13 June 2011, just when things might have been starting to improve Christchurch is hit by another double whammy of severe aftershocks. At the time of the first shock of 5.7 Karl had just come out of the car park building at Northlands and was feeling particularly edgy, because he is aware that some of the parking buildings collapsed during earlier quakes in the central city. When the second even bigger earthquake hit he was driving in the back area near Farmers on a motorised vehicle for towing the trolleys (called a Pandex). He thought he'd struck a huge bump in the tar seal as the cart started to pitch all over the place. The whole scene was very unnerving with even buildings swaying and moving due to the impacts. After the shocks subsided a customer could see that Karl was very unhappy and suggested he sit for a while on the bonnet of her car. Since then it's been another period of disruption and having to adapt to the feeling that it's all not quite over yet.

Despite these unsettling months Karl has continued working steadily in his job. Also through this time his skills, driving the towing vehicle, handling the trolleys and relating to customers have all continued developing. Often people underestimate the degree of stress and skill involved in keeping the trolleys flowing steadily back into the supermarket. However we all appreciate being able to get the essentials we need, especially during times of crisis.

Good luck Karl and Kathy, Kia Kaha, Christchurch and Catapult appreciate your work!

- Brent Trethewey, Consultant

Malcolm Mackay

It is with much sadness that I announce the passing away of friend and work colleague, Malcolm Mackay, on 17 June 2011.



Malcolm worked at Catapult from 2006 as a Job Coach and Employment Consultant.

Malcolm's empathy and honesty earned him a high level of respect, not only from his work mates but his client and employer contacts as well.

Malcolm is sadly missed.

- Kevin Blogg, Director

Catapult Update Post Quakes

The People of Christchurch have, in the past eight months, experienced history in the earthquakes which have ravaged our City. There are many sad stories, stories of injuries, loss of life, pets, homes and our city's heritage.

Catapult has had its own challenges, not nearly as severe as some, but certainly at a level which inconvenienced both staff and people we work with.



Earthquakes were the last consideration when we took a lease on the historic City Mall offices. They had been fully refurbished and strengthened prior to our moving in in 2005, and sustained surprisingly little damage in the September earthquake, or little that could be seen. However Boxing Day was a different matter entirely.

On arriving at the office to check for damage soon after the earthquake, I was presented with security gates which were cordoning off what appeared to be a severely damaged area.

Above: Catapult offices were situated in the Whitcoulls building on the first floor prior to Boxing Day. Right., a building next to our offices in city mall coming down.

We immediately secured temporary offices in IBIS House, in Hereford Street, and identified new permanent offices in Kilmore Street. February 22 certainly changed all of that. IBIS house was red stickered and in the red zone, as was our proposed new office suite in Kilmore Street.

The damage that was done to the commercial business sector was reinforced by both the obvious lack of office space, and the inflated prices required for what was available. Fortunately we were offered a business unit at the eastern end of Kilmore Street, small, but somewhere to locate ourselves nevertheless. Subsequently we could continue delivering most of our services with little disruption.

The loss of our furniture was not such a problem as the loss of our information. Fortunately we had a robust backup system for our computers, but diaries, letters and other information was lost.

Very few employment casualties have been experienced. We had an excellent employment relationship with St Martins New World, and although the staff we were supporting there were put out of work, they have been assured of their positions once the new building is complete.

I have had some extraordinary experiences over the past few months, of strength, resilience, bravery and generosity. This not only makes me feel positive about the recovery and redevelopment of Christchurch, I am feeling a certain level of positive anticipation in what shape our city will take. As long as our various communities and the people of Christchurch are involved in the process, which I am sure they will be, then we surely will have, once again, a wonderful City to live in.

- Kevin Blogg, Director



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