



Christchurch Earthquake

A powerful 7.1 magnitude quake rocked Christchurch at 4.35am on Saturday 4 September. While there is widespread damage, there were few reports of casualties.

Following the quake a state of emergency was declared which is likely to remain in place until Tuesday.

Much of the central city is cordoned off while search and rescue teams assess damage to buildings and infrastructure.

Canterbury residents are advised to boil water for at least three minutes before drinking it, including any water collected from tankers. Engineers have so far found 26 major breaks in the Christchurch sewerage system.

Some residents were still without power or water today although most services had been restored.

Three welfare centres have been set up at Linwood High School, Addington Raceway and Burnside High School. Food, water, accommodation and other help are provided.

All schools in Christchurch, Selwyn district and Kaiapoi have been closed until Wednesday. Supermarkets are open, except in Kaiapoi and Rolleston.

Lyttelton Port has suffered "tens of millions of dollars" of damage from the quake but remains able to handle the unloading of any supplies that needed to be shipped in.



Hectic weekend for KiwiRail to restore South Island rail services

This photo taken at the 3km mark on the Midland Line shows in very graphic terms the impact of Saturday morning's earthquake. LE Dick Heanga, who was working at the time of the quake, managed to stop just 30 metres short of this buckle – read more about his lucky escape on page 2.

Saturday's earthquake in Christchurch created a hectic weekend for KiwiRail staff but two and a half days after the quake, rail services in the region have almost been restored.

KiwiRail staff were working on a recovery plan and keeping customers informed virtually before the dust from the quake had settled early on Saturday morning.

Chief Executive Jim Quinn praised the speed and effectiveness of the response.

"It's been a true team effort and it's a tribute to everyone that by Sunday night we were close to being back in business again," he said.

"The focus was on those in the front line and they responded magnificently. But it's also important to recognise the contribution of the 'back room' people like the Network Train Control Centre and all the people who came in to advise or communicate with stakeholders."

When the earthquake struck, all trains stopped while Network staff started checking track and structures and worked to rescue stranded Locomotive Engineers and secure trains.

The message that came back from inspections was that a four kilometre section of damaged track and formation in the Kaiapoi area, north of Christchurch, along with damaged piers on a bridge in the same area, was the biggest headache.

There was also damaged track between Rolleston and Darfield plus the huge job of checking to see what effect,

it any, the jolt may have had on structures like bridges and tunnels.

As Saturday wore on, there was also the problem of frequent aftershocks – some almost as violent as the original.

By Saturday night, the Main South Line was open again with a 40 kph line speed restriction and 25 kph over bridges between Christchurch and Ashburton.

The Main North Line north of Rangiora was open again and Freight had come up with a plan to road bridge freight from Rangiora to Christchurch until the damaged formation and bridge around the Kaiapoi area could be repaired. This morning it was confirmed the line should be able to reopen tomorrow.

The Midland Line was cleared west of Oтира on Sunday afternoon. An empty coal train left Christchurch with two structures inspectors on board early this morning to check the bridges and viaducts between Christchurch and Oтира.

Early indications were good and provided they get the thumbs up, coal trains will be running again before the end of the day and a west-bound milk train destined for Hokitika will resume its journey.

TranzAlpine and TranzCoastal services were affected with coaches replacing trains yesterday and today. TranzAlpine journeys will be able to resume on the Midland Line tomorrow – running an hour longer because of speed restrictions. TranzCoastal journeys are expected to resume on Wednesday.

A weekend to remember and a response to be proud of

It's been a weekend to remember and one that KiwiRail staff can be proud of the contribution they've made.

There is only one word to describe the response of our people to Saturday morning's massive Christchurch earthquake – stunning.

Staff from all parts of the business pitched in and helped get the Christchurch network up and running again. Freight has kept the customers informed and recovered stranded locos with the help of Mechanical.

Network staff have done a terrific job of getting track restored. Interislander has been pulling together extra sailings.

It's been a true team effort and it's a tribute to everyone that by Sunday night we were close to being back in business again.

I want to make special mention of the people from the Christchurch area itself who worked so hard when their thoughts must have been on their own homes and families.

I also want to make sure the contribution of the many "back room" people is not overlooked. Dozens of people worked behind the scenes to co-ordinate, and advise and keep our customers and stakeholders informed.

QUINN "EXPRESSED"

I know there will be many people at work today feeling the physical or emotional effects of the weekend. As the adrenaline rush subsides, be aware of the effects of fatigue – both on yourself and your work mates.

I was in Christchurch yesterday and I saw the scale of the damage for myself. While you get a

sense from television and radio of what it's like, it's nothing like being there.

Visiting Kaiapoi with its oozing streets brought home to me the power of the earthquake and the effect it has on people in a way that pictures couldn't.

It also helped me appreciate the quality and energy of our response in very difficult circumstances.

I know the work we've done this weekend won't be lost on our customers. Well done to everybody involved.

And thanks for this live demonstration of the commitment, dedication and pride for the customer that is the *KiwiRail Way*.

Jim Quinn, Chief Executive

Jumping Locomotives

Someone must be watching over me, says veteran LE Dick Haenga who survived shaken but unhurt after driving two light locos close to the epi-centre of the Canterbury earthquake, when it struck on Saturday morning.

Not only did Dick manage to remain in his seat when the two DXE locos he was returning to Rolleston were bounced by the force of the quake, but he managed to pull up just metres short of the massive track buckle that would certainly have derailed the locos.

Next day Network field engineer Zac Pritchard, who led the team to repair the damage, said he couldn't believe the LE's luck when he saw the two locos stopped just short of the damage.

"The 50 kg rail – the heaviest we use on the network – had clearly been buckled into an S-bend by such enormous force we were amazed to see the loco upright and on the track."

Two days later, Dick is very matter of fact about his experience.

He was driving two light locos coupled together, returning a disabled one to Rolleston, when the loco reared so high the headlights stopped shining on the track in front of him.

"At first I thought I was derailling, but it felt far too violent for that, and when I looked out of the window I was still on the tracks."

Colleague Fred Keys, who was heading out to Rolleston with the relief loco to meet Dick, had a similar experience and quickly radioed to Dick. Both then pulled up as fast as they could - in Dick's case less than 30 metres from the track buckle.

Two colleagues came out in a car to collect the shaken pair and help them secure the locos before heading back into Christchurch.

Zac Pritchard and his team were on site the next day to survey the damage.

He says he has seen plenty of buckled rail in his time from heat, but never anything like this before. "The force was so great the metal was flaking, and the ground beneath it was soft and mushy, rather than firmly compacted."

Track repairs were completed early yesterday and the disabled locos retrieved and brought back into Christchurch.

The Midland line was reopened west of Cass late yesterday, and an empty coal service sent west from Christchurch early this morning to check bridges and structures before clearing that section of track for services.

KiwiRail moves water into thirsty city

KiwiRail may have an important role in bringing fresh water to earthquake stricken Christchurch.

A train moved almost 300,000 litres of fresh water in Fonterra tanks to Christchurch yesterday. That contribution was acknowledged as extremely helpful by local civil defence which is becoming increasingly concerned at the shortage of fresh water in the city.

The train is on stand-by to go back to Temuka to refill and bring in more supplies.

"It's a practical contribution we can make to Christchurch's emergency response and we will be looking for other ways that rail can be used to support the region's recovery," KiwiRail Chief Executive Jim Quinn said.

"We are grateful to Fonterra for making the tanks available for the shipment."

Civil Defence has estimated that 15 percent of Christchurch people currently do not have access to fresh water and supplies are in high demand.

Repairing the damage

Network staff and contractors are continuing to pull out the stops to get the Main North Line reopened at Kaiapoi as quickly as possible, says Southern Regional Manager Todd Moyle.

Saturday's earthquake caused extensive damage to about 4 kilometres of track in the hard-hit Kaiapoi area including damage to abutments of one bridge.

Todd says all Network staff responded to the challenge – both in the field and in the back rooms to get the track and structures checked and reopened as quickly as possible.

“It was amazing to see our guys attending to the railway even though their own homes had been damaged,” Todd said.

“And our contractors, Downer EDI have been awesome. They managed to assemble about eight 20 tonne diggers and trucks, so we could get work underway on Saturday night, even though we are not their only clients and there was a lot of demand.”



Network staff adjusting track near Kaiapoi using a mini tamper on Sunday.



Bronwyn Woodham and Todd Moyle inspect the damage at a level crossing in Kaiapoi.



Damage to the road at the approach to a level crossing.

Interislander Steps up Sailings

Interislander has answered the call and put on extra capacity to cater for supplies and support heading south to quake hit Christchurch.

With a hold up in rail crossing the Cook Strait there was some space on the rail deck of the Arahura and Aratere, but with more requests for vehicles, Aratere ran an additional late Sunday night / early Monday morning return sailing.

Arahura played host to a convoy of NZ Army vehicles on Sunday morning. Specialist search teams were taken over on Saturday. Among vehicles carrying support and supplies on Sunday was a truck load of portaloos.

Big task ahead for KiwiRail to keep supplies rolling south



The road - rail exchange at Rangiora, from where KiwiRail has arranged a road bridge into central Christchurch until the line can be re-opened tomorrow.

KiwiRail will have a big job ahead keeping up the flow of supplies to earthquake stricken central Canterbury, Freight General Manager Operations, Aaron Temperton says.

Aaron and his staff worked during the weekend to keep customers informed about the damage to the network and timetable for getting trains running again.

“As the weekend went on, the thing that struck me was the sheer size of the task ahead of us,” Aaron said. “Many warehouses in Christchurch have been damaged so the supply chain in coming weeks will become much more dependent on goods being brought in as they’re needed.

“KiwiRail is going to be an important factor in keeping supermarket shelves stocked.”

He says Freight is planning additional services from Auckland to Christchurch with the first programmed for today.



Above: Dropped tracks south of Bridge 18 which use to be straight and level.
Below: The 'ramp' up to the bridge again showing just how much tracks dropped in the earthquake.



Damage to Bridge 18 on the Main North Line, shows the force of the quake on rail structures.



Brodie Neville, Leading Hand and Acting Structures Inspector, cutting the boltwork on the failed Number 1 end of Bridge 18 yesterday.



Counselling service on stand-by for those suffering stress

Staff who need help as a result of Saturday's Christchurch earthquake should not hesitate to contact KiwiRail's counselling service provided by EAP Services, says National Health and Safety Manager Paul Anderson.

"We know that the homes of at least six Christchurch staff have been significantly damaged and others will be dealing with minor damage," Paul said.

"Managers will be working with them to help where possible. But there is a wider issue for all staff who have worked on the earthquake recovery programme.

"After the first couple of days of adrenaline-charged intense work, fatigue sets in. It's very important that we all recognise these signs in ourselves and in our workmates.

"EAP Services is a free service and its there to help our employees and their families deal with stress or problems generally. They have staff manning their national 0800 number 24 hours a day and on Saturday morning they implemented their emergency support response plan.

"Their number is 0800 327 669. If you have trouble contacting them their management team are on standby for calls. Talk to your manager and seek help in making contact," said Paul.