

**Date:** 02 March 2012

**To:** Diocesan School Boards of Trustees

**From:** Mike Nolan

**Re:** Christchurch Earthquakes and the Diocesan 5-Year Property Programme (5YPP)

### **Current Situation**

The continuing series of earthquakes in Christchurch has provided the Bishop of Christchurch (as *Proprietor of all diocesan primary schools and secondary schools*) with a number of challenges; not the least of which are the substantial and unbudgeted costs that are not covered by insurance. These costs have to be met as they ensure all necessary property requirements are attended to in order to enable school communities to continue to receive Catholic education on their school site; or temporarily on another school's site.

Most of these works also fall into the category of essential and urgent work required to be undertaken by the Bishop to remove health and safety hazards which are an immediate danger to people at the school and, if not fixed, would force part or all of the school to close.

Uninsured costs include those costs over and above the level of increased costs of works and material damage insurance the Bishop was able to negotiate for diocesan sites & also City Council required strengthening work on buildings.

In the past two weeks, as you will be well aware, we have shutdown and undertaken temporary emergency strengthening work in 6 classroom blocks (at 6 schools in Christchurch) that were determined to be earthquake prone.

### **Current Process**

For the sake of clarity and in order to provide you with as much information as possible, I write with an explanation of the process we are following in this detailed engineering evaluation (DEE) phase we are currently engaged in.

The Diocese is, as required by CERA, undertaking DEES of all its school buildings (*and its churches and parish buildings*).

The Diocese has engaged Opus International Consultants to undertake this work which started before Christmas.

This work began with a desktop evaluation exercise on building types.

Following the desktop evaluation, those building types that might potentially cause most concern are then systematically inspected, measured and evaluated on-site by structural engineers. Any buildings that are, after further engineering modelling and analysis, deemed to be earthquake prone will be closed immediately and remedial actions undertaken as soon as possible. This process is presently underway and the first round of remedial actions will be completed within the next week.

This detailed engineering evaluation exercise will take time to complete but please be assured that the buildings most at risk (in greater Christchurch) are being tackled first.

The aim of this process is to ensure the seismic capacity of all diocesan school buildings (in every district of the Diocese) is as near as practicable to 67% of the new build standard.

## **Funding**

The Bishop has resolved to remedy this situation of having to incur such substantial unbudgeted, and yet to be finalised and quantified, property costs and having to undertake all necessary seismic capacity work by **placing a one-year moratorium on his current 5YPP.**

**In other words, the urgent works that are arising from the DEE process are replacing the previously planned 5YPP programme of works.**

That said, the Bishop has agreed to fund:

- the costs associated with all diocesan schools that are invited into all future SNUP programmes; and
- the Financial Assistance Scheme (FAS) recommencing on 1 July 2012.

Please note that if a capital project is currently underway at a school it will continue to completion.

**The safety of students and staff is the Bishop's priority.**

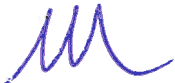
**It is for this reason the Bishop has implemented his 5YPP moratorium decision.**

The Bishop is conscious that any change may be seen as disappointing and trusts you will understand the necessity of this 5YPP moratorium.

**The extent of the moratorium will be reviewed as detailed information becomes available and might be reduced or extended as the case may be.**

Whilst this decision results from the continuing series of earthquakes in Christchurch its strengthening focus will extend to all school buildings across the Diocese.

Kind regards



Mike Nolan

**PS Would all Principals be so kind as to ensure this information is provided to your school's Board of Trustees ... thanks (in anticipation).**