

Media Release

Port Hills clearances reaches important milestone

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The clearance of Crown-owned properties in the Port Hills has reached an important milestone with 100 houses now cleared from the red zone.

Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority acting Chief Executive John Ombler says it is a significant achievement considering the complexity and risk surrounding each demolition project in the Port Hills.

"This work has not been easy due to the compounding hazards and complex access issues in the area. The team has worked closely with insurers and their contractors, spending a large amount of time making sure that the demolition plans ensured the safety of workers and residents" says Mr Ombler.

The 100th house to be cleared was 8 Balmoral Lane. A further 54 houses are in the process of being demolished or relocated and planning is underway for the clearance of a further 109 houses.

As this work progresses, the final opportunity for eligible property owners to decide whether or not to accept the voluntary Crown offer in the Port Hills red zones is drawing near. After prior expiry date extensions, the offer expires on 27 February 2015 and settlement in these areas is required six weeks after a sale and purchase agreement is signed.

"Owners of 369 properties in the Port Hills red zones have settled with the Crown and have moved on," says Mr Ombler.

"It is important that property owners have sought legal advice and considered all of their options in making their decision. While I understand there have been a number of difficult issues to work through for some property owners, there will be no further extensions to the expiry date of the voluntary Crown offer."

Port Hills property owners are able to apply for case by case extensions to their settlement date, which is when the property needs to be vacant, up until a final settlement date of 30 June 2015 says Mr Ombler.

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"Property owners will need to meet specific criteria based on vulnerability and individual circumstances. If property owners intend to apply for a settlement extension, they will still need to submit a signed sale and purchase agreement by 27 February 2015 and their request for an extension by 31 March 2015."

Owners of vacant, commercial and uninsured properties in the Port Hills red zones are yet to receive a Crown offer.