

Media Release

Residential Advisory Service going live

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Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Minister Gerry Brownlee says the Residential Advisory Service available from tomorrow to all property owners having difficulty with insurance and other repair or rebuilding challenges will play an important role in recovery.

"We know some people are struggling through complex issues and we believe the Residential Advisory Service is the best way to navigate their way through them and achieve positive resolution," Mr Brownlee says.

"This service has been designed using real case studies and consulted on extensively with community groups, insurers and the legal fraternity to deliver results.

"It will work by linking residents with the correct people for their particular issue, ensuring those needing help are given detailed, specific advice and guidance by independent advisors."

Mr Brownlee says he expects some cases will be simpler than others, but the service will offer everything from straightforward advice on exactly who residents need to speak to, to independently facilitated multi-party meetings.

"We don't need to reinvent the wheel and cut across the options that already exist through the office of the Insurance and Savings Ombudsman, legal and organisation-specific resolution services.

"But the Residential Advisory Service will play a key role in helping people find their way through their issues.

"Obviously a key party in this process is the insurers – both EQC and private insurance companies.

"Insurers have helped design the service, and are helping resource the service, and I hope all insurers understand the importance of properly and positively engaging in the process of resolving property owners' issues.

"Because this event unfolded over a long period it's understandable that complex issues have arisen, especially around liability, but insurers need to be solutions focused and have a heightened awareness of the physical and mental harm caused by delays.

"Frankly, some Cantabrians have gone too long living in uncomfortable, and in some cases unhealthy houses, and it's time to put that right as quickly as possible," Mr Brownlee says.

The Residential Advisory Service will be available from tomorrow at 8am. Call centre staff will immediately begin setting up appointments with independent advisors. Meetings will be held in various locations across Canterbury to make access as easy as possible for residents. More information can be found at www.advisory.org.nz

Questions and answers

This announcement was originally published on cera.govt.nz and beehive.govt.nz

What's the free calling number?

0800 777 299

What hours will the call centre operate?

8am to 5pm

When will meetings with independent advisors begin occurring?

Cases will be triaged by the call centre and placed with advisors based on the specific nature of issues, with the first advisor/property owner meetings beginning on Monday 20 May.

Where will meetings take place?

The Residential Advisory Service has secured space in 15 locations around greater Christchurch so meetings can occur in convenient places for property owners.

Who are the independent advisors?

They're professional people working in the field in greater Christchurch across the areas of engineering, building, geo-technical expertise, real estate and insurance.