



ANDREW CONSTANCE MP

Minister for Finance and Services

MEDIA RELEASE

25 September 2013

WORKCOVER NSW TO HELP REBUILD AFTER NEW ZEALAND EARTHQUAKES

Members of WorkCover's work health and safety operational team will travel to New Zealand to assist with the rebuild of the earthquake-shattered region of Canterbury as part of a 12-month program, Minister for Finance and Services Andrew Constance announced today.

"The New Zealand Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) has sought the assistance of WorkCover NSW in providing skilled construction inspectors to help focus industry attention on addressing hazards associated with the Canterbury region's rebuild," Minister Constance said.

"The area has suffered from three strong earthquakes since 4 September 2010, which has caused extensive loss of life and structural damage.

"The strongest earthquake, which measured as a magnitude 6.3 on the Richter scale, occurred on 22 February 2011 and was centred very close to the capital city of Christchurch. That earthquake was deemed the third costliest worldwide in terms of destruction to an established urban city.

"The Canterbury rebuild program is estimated to cost in excess of \$40 Billion and will require 20,000 workers – a mammoth task.

"The involvement of NSW in this important rebuild program ensures that the New Zealand MBIE has the support of the professional workplace health and safety expertise of WorkCover NSW inspectors. This initiative also represents an excellent opportunity for both jurisdictions to work closely together, learn from each other and continue to build on the cooperative relationship we have with our New Zealand counterparts.

“A Memorandum of Understanding between WorkCover and MBIE has also been developed that includes operational procedures covering risk assessment, cost recovery, training and up-skilling.

“New Zealand’s MBIE will fund the full cost recovery for two inspectors on rotation and resources during the 12 month program. The team will begin its New Zealand deployment in October.”