



MINISTRY OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Te Manatū Whakahiato Ora

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6 March 2012

Sir John Hansen
Convenor
Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Review Panel
c/- Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority
Private Bag 4999
CHRISTCHURCH 8140

Dear Sir John

Review of Canterbury Earthquake (Social Security Act) Order (No 2) 2010 Amendment Order 2012

I attach the draft Canterbury Earthquake (Social Security Act) Order (No 2) 2010 Amendment Order 2012, which provides that the amended definition of "premises", for the purposes of Accommodation Supplement, will remain in force for a further two years, until 31 March 2014. In accordance with section 73 of the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Act 2011 (the Recovery Act), all draft Orders in Council must be reviewed by the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Review Panel before they are recommended to the Governor General by the relevant Minister.

Accommodation Supplement is a form of targeted financial assistance available to people to help meet accommodation costs. In the case of homeowners, costs may include mortgage payments and local authority rates. It is available to both beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries.

"Premises" is defined in the Social Security Act 1964 as "the place that a person occupies as a home". As a result of the Canterbury earthquakes, this definition was extended by Order in Council, to include premises that a person occupied as a home at the time of the earthquakes, but cannot currently occupy because of damage from those earthquakes. This change meant that people whose homes were not habitable, but who continue to need to meet payments in relation to them, can still receive financial assistance.

The Order in Council that provides for this extended definition of "premises" expires on 31 March 2012. However, the time it is taking for rebuilding and rehousing to occur in Christchurch has meant that a number of people are still not able to occupy premises damaged by the earthquakes, and still need to meet mortgage payments and local authority rates.

The Government, therefore, proposes that the amendment to the definition be continued for a further two years, until 31 March 2014. The Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority was consulted on, and agreed with, this proposal.

If the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Review Panel has any feedback on the draft Order, this must be provided to me by 9 March 2012 (bede.hogan003@msd.govt.nz or 04 916 3226).

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'B. Hogan', with a small dot at the end.

Bede Hogan
Team Manager
Employment, Skills and Income Support