

Officer responsible City Manager	Author Julie Battersby and Dennis Morgan
Corporate Plan Output:	

The purpose of this report is to advise Councillors of the recommendations made by the Subcommittee elected to consider assistance for the Taiwan earthquake and victims of the unrest in East Timor.

BACKGROUND

At the September Council meeting, a subcommittee was appointed comprising Councillor Pat Harrow (Chairman), Councillors Carole Anderton, David Close and Ron Wright to consider ways in which the Christchurch City Council could help the victims caught up in these two areas. The subcommittee was requested to report back to the next meeting of the Strategy and Resources Committee.

The subcommittee has met on three occasions and sought information and advice from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, non-governmental organisations involved in the two regions and also the local Taiwanese community.

Councillors were notified by memorandum on 30 September of the subcommittee's decision to take immediate action in arranging a collection for East Timor concurrently with an appeal for assistance for Taiwan. Arrangements were put in place for the suburban delivery points to receive donations for a three-week period from 11 October to 29 October. The collections are being banked in separate accounts within the Christchurch City Council.

The appeal has been promoted through the media. Key organisations within the city have been asked to assist by making contact with member groups encouraging their support.

The subcommittee recommended to the Mayor that a letter of consolation be forwarded from the Mayor, Councillors and residents of Christchurch to the victims of the earthquake in Taiwan. Councillors had the opportunity to sign the letter before it was sent.

TAIWAN SITUATION

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade stresses that there is an immediate need for medical staff, doctors and nurses with appropriate training. Experience from Kobe suggests that it is too early in the reconstruction phase to consider sending civil defence staff. The subcommittee has suggested a secondary phase for support through encouraging local builders to consider volunteering their services to assist in the reconstruction phase in Taiwan.

The local Taiwanese Society has indicated a need for blankets, as winter is approaching in Taiwan and a blanket drive was agreed by the subcommittee as a future step.

EAST TIMOR SITUATION

Until security issues in East Timor are resolved support for the local people is being provided through United Nations organisations and non-governmental aid agencies.

A report on the situation at the end of September which was provided to the subcommittee is tabled.

The Government has announced that 300 refugees from East Timor will be given temporary sanctuary in New Zealand.

The appeal for donations is seen as the most effective way the city can assist at present.

FUTURE ACTION

The subcommittee is considering other fundraising projects for Christchurch and these will be promoted later this week.

The option of providing an opportunity for Civil Defence staff or engineer/builders from Christchurch to assist in Taiwan has been discussed with the Regional Controller of Civil Defence. This will be pursued by the subcommittee when the requirement for reconstruction assistance is more clear.

The water supply in both East Timor and Taiwan has been reported as a concern. Comment has been sought from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade to ascertain if Christchurch may be able to assist in establishing or restoring water supplies whilst providing valuable experience for persons who may be required to act here in emergencies.

Chairman's

Recommendation: That the information be received.