



## **Ko te tamaiti te pūtake o te kaupapa (The child - the heart of the matter)**

The Boards of Trustees of Lyttelton West School and Lyttelton Main School have committed to:

- Work together to facilitate a smooth merge
- Communicate regularly with their parent communities
- Keep the child at the heart of the matter
- Commit to the continuation of learning for their children

Please find attached our response to your interim proposal to merge Lyttelton West School with Lyttelton Main School on 27 January 2014.

This proposal has required further consultations, meetings, surveys and debates. We have sought to gather the concerns expressed by our community and provide recommendations that would mitigate their very real concerns. We would like to acknowledge that our community has expressed a range of emotions to this interim proposal, ranging from sadness to excitement.

We believe that the timeframe is a challenging one given our set of circumstances. However, whatever the outcome of the proposal to merge, both boards and the community will work constructively and collaboratively to ensure the best outcome for our children.

**Nā mātou noa, nā**

**Waiho te toipito, kāua I te toiroa.**

**Let us stay close together, not far apart.**



**Response to the Proposal that Lyttelton Main and Lyttelton West Merge  
on January 27 2014**

	Concerns	Recommendations
<b>Board</b>		
Election process	Difficult to attract people to stand for the Board in the May elections if there is a possibility that they will only be in the role for a few months.	BOTs from both schools elected in the May elections remain in place until 27 January 2014.
Roles	Members of the LWS board who are also on the Establishment Board would have responsibility for the governance of both existing schools until 27 January 2014 <b>and</b> be contributing to the establishment of the new school.	The role of the establishment board should be solely to focus on the new merged school. That the establishment board would co-opt defunct board members to effectively govern Main until 27 January 2014.
Training and support	<p>New group of people working together on a crucial project making decisions which are not going to be easy.</p> <p>The Establishment Board will be involved in developing a modern learning environment but with limited knowledge of what this looks like.</p>	<p>Support and training should be available to the Establishment Board and should be face to face and not online. Remuneration should be provided to the Establishment Board for the time involved.</p> <p>Opportunities for Boards to visit new school builds and talk to decision makers</p> <p>Establishment Boards are given a budget to employ experts in specialist areas as and when required</p>
Composition	The Establishment Board should have equal representation from the two schools.	<p>That three members from each Board be appointed to the Establishment Board on recommendations from existing boards</p> <p>That an independent Chair be appointed based on recommendations from the Establishment Board and existing boards. Preferably an impartial person from within the Lyttelton community.</p>
<b>Build/Property</b>		
Land acquisition	That Lyttelton Main School site for a build is not large enough to provide adequately for 250 children and all the amenities that would be expected.	A firm written commitment is made to the purchase of adjacent land and that the cost of purchase would not be included in the money available for the merger and the build
Geo tech	The geotechnical surveys of this site and the gaol wall have not been	The engineer responsible for the site survey and a local engineer lead

	<p>completed. There are significant numbers of the community who do not believe that the wall is safe.</p> <p>That the cost of repair to the wall will impact on the money available for the school build</p>	<p>a community meeting and discuss their findings, in particular, the safety of the gaol wall. The full survey needs to be completed as soon as possible.</p> <p>Reassurance in writing from the MOE that this will not be the case.</p>
Input into design	That the design process will not include input from the community	A design process should be developed that includes consultation with the Lyttelton Community
Components	That the new build to include those things that are identified during consultation as important to this community	<p>Expectation that consideration is given to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enviroschool ethos</li> <li>• Technology provision</li> <li>• Performing arts spaces</li> <li>• Outdoor learning spaces</li> <li>• High quality playground design</li> <li>• Using the buildings to mitigate the limitations of the topography of the site</li> <li>• Design to honour the history of the two schools</li> <li>• Alternatives to a large gaol wall dividing school land should be considered, so that we are able to access all areas of the school without leaving the school grounds</li> </ul>

## Sites

Organisation	Concerns about how school will be organised on three sites with some families anticipating having children spread over all three. Also, the time spent travelling between sites for staff and children could detract from teaching and learning opportunities, and may create extra stress for parents	Expectation that school organisation remains as it is, with the two campuses retaining the status quo for 2014 to allow a more managed transition.
Timeframe	<p>That the new school will remain on three sites for several years</p> <p>That preschool parents are able to talk to their children about the school they will be attending</p>	<p>Certainty in the rebuild process with clear milestone dates during the design and build process</p> <p>A managed merge process over the time of the build will allow pre school parents greater surety for their children in regards to their school placement</p>
Transport of children to school	That fewer children will have the opportunity to be active in their travel to school (walk, bike, scooter,	That influence is used to improve safety for children crossing Norwich Quay (State Highway 74) which is



	skateboard) as there will be a greater distance to travel, and also the crossing of Norwich Quay (State Highway 74). If older siblings are attending a different site, they will be unable to support younger siblings in traveling to school independently	frequented by large numbers of trucks etc. That appropriate agencies are involved in organising and managing safe routes to the new school
<b>Personnel</b>		
Staffing	Concerns staffing of merged school will be less than current staffing of two schools leading to loss of valued staff, and larger class sizes. Initial figures (MOE) show a loss of two teaching positions.	Expectation that the current staffing allocation for both schools is maintained so that the new school can run effectively and efficiently over the current sites from 27 January 2014.
Staff	Identified need for specific pedagogical professional development for staff to teach effectively in modern learning environments (MLEs) from 2014	Budgeting commitments to ensure teachers have access to effective professional development learning to encourage pedagogical changes identified for successful MLEs
Leadership	That the appointment of a single new principal who may not understand the needs, concerns, background of, or know, the Lyttelton community may result in significant uncertainty and too much change for children, parents and staff. The job will be too big to be done effectively.	Initiative to appoint co-principals who know the Lyttelton community and both schools well. This will alleviate concerns and anxieties of staff, children and parents, and are well placed to lead an effective transition into a new school. This is seen as an interim appointment until the schools is established on a single site
<b>School Culture</b>		
Vision	That there will be a short time for the establishment board to engage with the community to develop a vision for the new school, decide on an appropriate name and develop a logo	Allow the establishment board to concentrate solely on the new school and have no responsibilities for either of the merging schools.
Charter, Strategic Aims	As the timeframe is short, it will be difficult for the establishment board to develop a charter and strategic aims that accurately reflect the new school	Allow the establishment board to concentrate solely on the new school and have no responsibilities for either of the merging schools.
Development of school spirit, values	Regardless of the organisation of the new school over the three sites, there will be difficulties in bringing the school together to develop a strong and consistent culture. Staff will rarely be together over the course of the week, and when they are, the focus will be on professional learning. While many children know each other outside school there will be little opportunity for whole school interaction	Appointment of co-principals is key to development of the initial school culture. Leadership is critical, and both campuses would function more effectively if there were to be two leaders of equal status based on the two principle sites as this would ensure an equal voice for all involved. The modelling of collaboration and shared problem solving would be an effective approach to bring the new school community together.



Morale	The co-principals (or principal) will have the pressure of managing and leading staff (and have the responsibility for the welfare of children and parents) during the years of uncertainty and change. Board members will also experience stress and workload issues during the merger process.	That funding is made available to boost the morale of staff, children, parents and Board members over the time the new school is built and established. That funding is available to provide release time for teachers who suffer undue stress associated with the proposed merger.
<b>MOE Cluster Initiative</b>		
School cluster groups	That post merger we will be required to join an established cluster while developing a new school and all that goes with that	That the new Lyttelton school remains in a single cell cluster while the vision, charter, strategic aims etc are formulated and established

Received  
28/03/13



**Te Kura Ōhinehau ki te Uru**  
*Charting a course for the future*  
41 Voelas Road  
Lyttelton 8028

Kathryn Palmer  
Regional Manager Acting (Southern)  
Ministry of Education  
PO Box 1666  
Wellington

27 March 2013

Lyttelton West School's submission on the proposed merger of our school with Lyttelton Main School on their site, effective 27 January 2013

Since the announcement of the proposed merger on 13 September 2012, we have worked with the board of Lyttelton Main School to respond to the Ministry regarding its initial proposal and now interim decision. While we have agreed on some common ground in our joint response, partly due to our different positions in the merger, the communities of the two schools have responded in different ways. Our primary consideration is to ensure our submission accurately reflects the views of our school community. Consequently, our submission includes this letter and the following three attached documents:

1. Student voice;
2. Results of a survey conducted by the Board of Trustees of Lyttelton West School regarding the proposal;
3. A submission compiled by parents of children attending Lyttelton West School.

Based on submissions received from our parent community, the Board of Trustees of Lyttelton West School does not accept the merger as proposed by Hon Hekia Parata in her letter to schools delivered on 19 February 2013.

The reasons given in the Ministry report dated 18 February 2013 for the proposed merger were:

1. "Both [schools] have low rolls and are operating well below peak roll capacity resulting in an over-supply of primary school age provision in the area."



2. "The Ministry considers Lyttelton does not have a sufficiently large enough school age population to support two primary schools. As Lyttelton is an isolated community, learners from surrounding catchment areas are unlikely to attend a Lyttelton school. "
3. "The Lyttelton Main School site was preferred as the continuing site because of constraints associated with the Lyttelton West School site, including underground tunnels, which will limit future development."
4. "The Lyttelton Learning Community Cluster of schools is comprised of the two schools proposed to merge."

In an email received 26 March, Senior Advisor , Regional Operations advised:

*"The statement 'both schools are operating under capacity' was based on October 2011 data when the schools roll was well below capacity. With this information indications were that both schools had space to take additional students (at Ministry property funding ratios). At the peak 2012 roll (October) Lyttelton West was operating at or slightly above capacity."*

While we strongly disagree with statement that the school roll was operating "well below capacity" in October 2011 (and are yet to receive any details of how this was calculated), at least she acknowledges that in 2012 the school is actually operating at or slightly above capacity. Therefore reason 1 above is not a valid reason for the proposed merge.

Reason 2 – We are unsure how big the Ministry considers a school population must be to be "sufficiently large enough" to accommodate two schools, so it is difficult to refute this reason. Lyttelton is not an "isolated community". It is the port of Christchurch and is connected by roads that enable travel to the centre of Christchurch by vehicle in 20 minutes. At present we have 18 students who travel from outside Lyttelton to attend our school.

Reason 3 – Tunnel gully erosion exists throughout Banks Peninsula and we believe they would not prevent the repair of Lyttelton West School. Our most recent classroom was completed in 2010 despite the presence of tunnel gullies. The method often cited by the Ministry of mitigating the tunnel gullies (filling with cement or grout) is an unrealistic and expensive approach. There are other solutions that would be more cost effect. In addition, a detailed geotech report is yet to be prepared for the Lyttelton Main site and therefore costs associated with the remediation of this site cannot be calculated by the Ministry.

Reason 4 - The Lyttelton Learning Community Cluster of schools was created by the Ministry at very nearly the same time as the proposed merger was released on 13 September 2012. Therefore, it cannot be used as a reason to justify the merger.

#### Timing of the merge

We note in your letter that you would like feedback on the proposed date of merger. Our parent community has indicated to us that it does not support the proposed date of merger and would like to see the date delayed until a new school is built.

Furthermore, we are concerned that if a date of 27 January 2014 is imposed, and our existing principal is appointed as the principal of the new merged school, that it would be likely an acting principal would be required in our school from the beginning of term 4 this year. While this may

result in a “tidy” start to 2014, it will result in a very messy end to 2013, in a year which has already been very unstable.

In a meeting with a Ministry advisor in February 2013, the advisor indicated the Ministry might consider a merge date during the school year, rather than at the beginning of term 1 when schools are under a lot of pressure and have a lot to do.

We welcome your reconsideration of the timing of the merge and your consideration of all other matters we have raised in our submission.

Heoi ano

Jillian Frater

Chairperson

On behalf of the Lyttelton West School Board of Trustees.





## **Student Voice in Regards to the Proposed Merger Of Lyttelton Main and Lyttelton West Schools**

Common themes came through from children regardless of their age or class level. The most common were:

- "It will be scary because it is a new school"
- "I want it because we can met new people and make new friends"
- "I will learn new things"
- "We will have further to go to school"

Some children expressed anxiety about loosing friends, or their teachers. Those concerned with friendships also expressed anxiety about meeting new children and making friends. Some were concerned about a smaller play area, and some were hopeful there would be a grassy area to play soccer on. There was a suggestion that there should be several smaller playgrounds instead of one big one. Many raised the possibility that they would have to wear a uniform. Others were pleased they would be with friends who are currently at Lyttelton Main. Some said their parents didn't want them to go to the Main site.

Some were concerned the school sites would be arranged according to year level. "If we were all split up, how would the younger children learn off our mistakes?" A few thought that the merge would take away the choice for Lyttelton children as to which school they went to, and some were concerned about the wall.

There were suggestions on what the classrooms could be like and how they might be arranged "The classrooms should all be in one space because if you had to send something to another class in class time it wouldn't take too long."

The themes from the students were summed up in the following statements. "I'm still thinking the merger is kind of scary but when I think about it I'm fine with it because it'll be cool to meet new people."

"If the schools merge I would like the schools to be calm and not a lot of fuss and confusions between the staff, kids and parents".

Results of a survey conducted by the Board of Trustees of Lyttelton West School regarding the proposal by the Minister of Education to merge the two schools in Lyttelton on the site of Lyttelton Main School – effective from 27 January 2014.

Question 1: Respondents were asked to indicate on a five point scale (*strongly disagree, disagree, no strong feelings either way, agree, strongly agree*) whether or not they agreed with the current proposal by the Minister of Education to merge the two Lyttelton Schools on the Lyttelton Main site effective 27 January 2014. The results were as follows:

Table 1: Do parents agree with the current proposal by the Minister of Education to merge the two Lyttelton Schools on the Lyttelton Main Site effective 27 January 2014.

	Responses (%)	No. of respondents
Strongly disagree	66	21
Disagree	28	9
No strong feelings either way	0	0
Agree	6	2
Strongly agree	0	0

Question 2: If people strongly disagreed or disagreed with the proposal, the community was then asked to identify **three** principle reasons for your opposition to the interim proposal. Respondents were given a list of 14 reasons for opposing the merger as follows:

- Changed timeframe
- Potential loss of teaching and support staff
- The safety of the large wall currently supporting the historic steps at Lyttelton Main School
- Difficulties with transport to school
- The possible reorganisation of children between the two sites and the effect this will have on them.
- The lack of certainty that a new school will be built.
- The small size of the proposed site at Lyttelton Main School.
- The potential loss of families from Lyttelton schools



- Impact of a split site on the ability to develop a school culture and for the principal to effectively manage the school.
- Loss of our school
- Lack of time to consult over the establishment of the new school.
- Composition of the establishment board.
- The likely high workload of the existing board and the establishment board.
- Other (please specify)

The following three reasons ranked most highly for opposition to the interim proposal:

1. The likely high workload of the existing board and the establishment board
2. Composition of the establishment board
3. The potential loss of families from Lyttelton schools

Eleven people gave further reasons for their opposition to the proposal. Their reasons are summarised as follows:

- If a parent has three children to be collected at three sites at 3pm each day, this will mean they will have less connection with their children's teachers.
- Parking in Lyttelton township will be an issue.
- People in Lyttelton already have enough stress to deal with. People are already traumatised (6 responses).
- The Government is kicking us when we're already down - this is not the time for this upheaval - leave us alone!
- The Ministry of Education's deceit in justifying this proposed merger on the basis of the earthquakes annoys me the most.
- If "any space is a learning space" why do we need "modern learning environments?"
- Reneging on the time frames is dishonorable and is only being done to meet political timeframes NOT the needs of the children or community.
- The potential loss of Busy C's for before and after school care will add further stress to parents already struggling to cope.
- Build a new school - then merge.
- The time period to establish a new school is too short and should be at least 12 months (as it is usually in situations when the Government is not rushed by political agendas) (2 responses).  
Small schools such as Lyttelton West make children feel supported and safe and this enables children to thrive.
- A choice of school in the Lyttelton community is preferable for our children.

- The proposed merger offers no discernable pedagogical value, is unsettling for the children and their families (all of whom have already endured 30 months of uncertainty and disruption, with the prospect of this continuing well into the future), introduces potentially destructive forces to two established and functional school communities, and is likely to result in the loss of social capital in the village.

Question 3: Respondents were asked regardless of whether they agreed or disagreed with the proposal, to choose the three things they think are the most important to consider if the proposed merger (as stated by the Minister of Education in her interim decision) is to be successful.

They were given a list of 10 reasons for opposing the merger as follows:

- Classes remaining as they are until a new school is built
- The gradual reorganisation of classes over the next few years, prior to the new school being built.
- A well designed and built new school.
- The purchase by the Ministry of Education of additional land to expand the size of the site at Lyttelton Main School.
- The incorporation of an Early Childhood Centre of the new site.
- Additional funding to enable the retention of the same numbers of staff as we currently have until a new school is built.
- Prompt and effective repair of the retaining wall at Lyttelton Main School.
- Improvement of the environment or provision of groups to enable children to continue to walk, cycle, scooter or skateboard to school.
- Effective and mindful management to ensure the split school operates as one.
- The retention of the separate boards until 27 Jan 2013, (together with the Establishment Board which is legislated to remain in place until three months after the merger takes place).
- Other (please specify)



The outcome of the survey question was that the following three reasons ranked most highly:

1. The retention of the separate boards until 27 Jan 2013, (together with the Establishment Board which is legislated to remain in place until three months after the merger takes place)
2. Improvement of the environment or provision of groups to enable children to continue to walk, cycle, scooter or skateboard to school
3. Effective and mindful management to ensure the split school operates as one (followed closely by "The incorporation of an Early Childhood Centre of the new site")

Nine people provided additional comments to this question. These are summarised as follows:

- All of the above are important (except the inclusion of ECE on the site)(2 responses).
- We have an outstanding team of teachers who should be retained.
- The Lyttelton Main site is not safe and is not large enough to provide for all children and families.
- Lyttelton is unique geographically and therefore should not be 'lumped' in with other Christchurch schools. It is far more complex geotechnically (space constraints, retaining walls etc) which set it apart. This can't be ignored and should be taken into consideration.
- Consideration should be given to the suggestion that as new classrooms are built they should be occupied by older children as otherwise these children will have to go through all the upheaval with no benefit.

As part of the survey respondents were also asked to provide any further comments regarding the Minister's interim decision to merge Lyttelton West School and Lyttelton Main School.

12 people chose to add the further comments. These are summarised as follows:

- Disagreement over the new time frame (6 responses). The Minister's decision fails to give certainty as it has advanced the process by two years which was not the wish of the school community.
- The merger should not occur while there are trucks driving demolition materials to the port and while the retaining wall at Lyttelton Main is deemed unsafe.

- There needs to be a definite site, timeline and budget for there to be educational benefits of the proposed changes. A merger should not occur until a new school is built. A merge in 2014 is simply changing the governance structure of the schools and operating over multiple sites.
- Ridiculous workload expected by the Ministry of members of the Board of Trustees, in particular the members of the Establishment Board. This will result in the loss of valuable, experienced Board members.
- Consultation a farce(1 response)
- People are bogged down living day-to-day due to the many ongoing effects of the earthquakes(4 responses).
- Losing our school adds to the loss many people in the community already feel as a result of the earthquakes (2 responses).
- The proposed merger will make it very difficult to organise after school care.

## **SUBMISSION COMPILED BY PARENTS OF CHILDREN ATTENDING LYTTTELTON WEST SCHOOL**

### **Proposed Merger of Lyttelton Main School (3423) and Lyttelton West School (3424)**

**21 March 2013**

---

#### **1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Lyttelton West School Community supports:

- Lyttelton children benefiting from a modern learning environment on a single school site in Lyttelton.
- a common sense approach to the merge, that allows the status quo for school children until a school site is ready to accommodate Lyttelton children.

A petition was circulated through the community and highlights the lack of community support for the Ministry of Education's proposed school merger of January 2014.

The Lyttelton West School Wellbeing Survey was undertaken and draws attention to the significant stresses and uncertainty that Lyttelton West School whanau are living with.

While Lyttelton West School whanau are still vulnerable, our key recommendations to the Ministry of Education regarding the proposed Lyttelton West and Lyttelton Main School merger are:

- Delay the merger until a new school is built.
  - Allow the children of Lyttelton West School to remain in a stable and independently governed school.
  - Provide appropriate support for the children and their families who are still recovering from the earthquakes, and dealing with high levels of uncertainty and anxiety.
- 

#### **2. BACKGROUND**

##### **February 2011, 6.3 earthquake, epicentre in Lyttelton**

In February 2011, Lyttelton was the epicentre of a catastrophic magnitude 6.3 earthquake. Key Lyttelton infrastructure lost as a result of the numerous Canterbury earthquakes and aftershocks include:

Recreational centre, swimming pool, supermarket, Plunket rooms, Out of School Care and Recreation (OSCAR), Information Centre, roads, hill walks, local theatres and community venues, family restaurants and all three churches.

International research highlights that it is the loss of resources, rather than the magnitude or frequency of the earthquakes and aftershocks, that most impact on post-earthquake stress levels (Freedy, 1994). Schools are acknowledged as a key resource in the recovery of quake-affected children.

In September 2012, the Ministry of Education announced its intention to merge or close 31 Christchurch schools. It was proposed Lyttelton West would merge with Lyttelton Main School on the current Lyttelton Main School site after an extensive rebuild to cater for both school rolls. The proposed merger was due to occur on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2016.

On 18<sup>th</sup> February 2013, Hon Hekia Parata, Minister of Education wrote to the parents and caregivers of Lyttelton West School outlining her intention to provide 'certainty' for Lyttelton parents and children by:



- Announcing a merger of Lyttelton West and Lyttelton Main schools to “take effect on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2014”, rather than 2016 as first presented.
- As well as stating, “This earlier merging date would provide certainty for both school communities although the merged schools would initially operate on a split-site basis”.
- The Minister also acknowledges in her letter that “I understand this will be a difficult and uncertain time for you and your child”.

---

### 3. WHANAU CONCERNS

The safety and wellbeing of our children are key concerns.

In particular, the following issues have been identified by whanau:

- The shorter timeframe is inadequate to allow a seamless transition.
- The operation of the school over multiple sites will exacerbate anxiety levels of already fragile children and whanau.
- The challenges of developing the Lyttelton Main site may result in the school operating over split sites for an extended period of time.

#### Psychological wellbeing

Schools establish a daily rhythm of routine which is essential to recovery, in an environment where other routines are no longer the same (Puinstein, et al, 1996; Williams et al, 2008; Margolin, et al, 2010; Gordon, 2013, etc). It is apparent, as part of the Lyttelton West Family Survey, that families view the merger of Lyttelton West with Lyttelton Main as another “loss” in line with all the other losses they have experienced, both personally and inside the Lyttelton community.

Dr Rob Gordon, Clinical Psychologist, outlines the difference between academic research and the experience of clinicians working in communities post disaster. Local clinicians are aware of the actual disruptions to people’s lives, and note the long term consequences which peak two to three years after the disaster. Dr Gordon states that there is a tendency after disasters to neglect what previously added value and meaning to people’s lives – marriage, career, recreational pursuits, social networks, parenting. The loss of resources, as well as the effort and time people spend trying to fix the problems leads to “a degraded quality of life” (Gordon). All of these issues are clearly stated as (unprompted) frustrations of Lyttelton West whanau and identify that this community is still in the early phases of recovery.

The Ministry of Education’s proposal for significant educational restructure, two to three years after the earthquakes, do nothing to support an already fragile community and their children. A delayed merger, however, will allow parents/caregivers to focus on rebuilding their community, including their homes, and allow Lyttelton West School to return to providing its key support role to the community at this crucial time in the recovery.

#### Interim plans to operate over three sites

The Ministry of Education’s initial proposal did not mention that the merged school would initially operate over multiple sites. The original proposal was that the newly built school accommodating both rolls would be sited at the current Lyttelton Main School.

There has been significant feedback from whanau at both public community meetings and anecdotally that operating over three sites increases uncertainty. The concerns are:

- Where will our children be placed?
- Will we need to collect/drop off our children at different sites?
- Will the school still be operating over three sites in 10 years time?
- How does one principal and Board of Trustees effectively manage three sites while overseeing building a new school?
- If the Ministry of Education insists on changing its initial proposal, what else will it change?

These issues are particularly important given the majority of whanau have identified concerning levels of anxiety amongst their children. Being separated from their peers, friends or older student mentors may exacerbate anxiety issues.

#### **Developing the Lyttelton Main Site**

In the survey and community meetings (in response to the merge) whanau have voiced their concerns about the safety of the existing retaining walls and un-retained banks at Lyttelton Main School.

Stress levels post-disaster are affected by the risk or perceived threat to safety (Gordon). There is the worry that the proposed budget cannot stretch to meet the costs of the repair and rebuild of Lyttelton Main School and site. A longer process will ensure that any unknowns are addressed. A fast process does not equate to a good process.

The Ministry of Education's *Education Report* (18 January 2013a) acknowledges the Lyttelton Main School retaining walls require remediation or mitigation. Costs have the potential to radically change the revised indicative property costs used in the Ministry of Education Report (January 2013).

### **4. RESEARCH FINDINGS**

#### **4.1 Methodology**

##### **(A) Lyttelton Community Petition (Appendix A)**

During February-March 2013, a petition was undertaken. The petition was titled '*Objection to the interim proposal to merge Lyttelton West School and Lyttelton Main School with effect from 27 January 2014*'. Members from Lyttelton West community promoted the petition within the community, through word-of-mouth, including at key community events such as Saturday morning Farmers Market.

##### **(B) Lyttelton West School Family Wellbeing Survey (Appendix B)**

A Wellbeing Survey of the Lyttelton West School families was undertaken in February 2013, two years on from the February 2011 earthquake.

Every family (n=84), with children at Lyttelton West School (n=130) received a survey. Over half of the Lyttelton West School families responded (44 families: 52% response rate).

##### **(C) Consulted a Geotechnical Engineer**

The Lyttelton West community sought independent geotechnical advice from a Chartered Professional Engineer on the options put forward by the Ministry of Education.

#### **4.2 Results**

##### **(A) Lyttelton Community Petition**

In total, 284 members of the Lyttelton community signed the petition, which:

- (i) Objected to the interim proposal to merge Lyttelton West School and Lyttelton Main School, with effect from 27 January 2014. This date was seen as too soon by petitioners.
- (ii) Supported the merger to take place when a new school is built on one site which can accommodate all of the children in the community.

##### **(B) Lyttelton West School Family Wellbeing Survey**

A wide range of issues were identified by whanau of children attending Lyttelton West School, including the following:



**(i) Housing Issues**

- 100% of families reported their homes were damaged by the earthquakes.
- 84% of families are still living in earthquake damaged homes.
- 50% of these are structurally damaged.
- 30% of the families are going to lose or have lost their homes (demolished or red zoned).
- Exactly half (50%) have moved house at least once as a result of the earthquakes.
- 30% of families are still not living in their homes, as a result of the earthquakes.

**(ii) Financial Stress**

- 45% reported decreased income as a direct result of the earthquakes.
- 73% have used savings.
- 48% reported increased debt levels as a result of the earthquakes.
- 12% lost their jobs or businesses as a result of the earthquakes.

**(iii) Impacts on Health**

- 60% of whanau reported children who display concerning behaviour which they attribute to the earthquakes. These include children not sleeping in their own beds, fear of being alone, bed wetting and increased anxiety.
- 30% reported their health has been affected as an outcome of the earthquakes (moderately/substantially).

**(iv) Loss of Support Networks**

- Two thirds (66%) reported that key support people have moved away as result of the earthquakes.

**(v) Loss of Community Infrastructure**

- 35% identified the loss of key Lyttelton infrastructure; for example OSCAR, Recreation Centre, Swimming Pool.
- 37% of respondents identified the loss of the school as a key frustration.

**(vi) Increased Levels of Stress**

- 35% of families mention the ongoing frustration of dealing with EQC/Fletchers/Insurance company, in line with the 'double blow effect' noted by Healthy Christchurch and Mental Health Foundation research.
- Respondents specify living with uncertainty, feeling powerless and having a lack of Control over their lives.

**(C) Advice from Geotech Engineer**

The Ministry of Education Report 18 January states:

*"possible remediation could include creation of a buffer zone, or full reconstruction of the wall," (para 67, 14).*

The Lyttelton West community sought independent geotechnical advice from a Chartered Professional Engineer on the options put forward by the Ministry of Education. The Engineer's comments are shown below in italics. However, until a full geotechnical investigation has been completed and a structural engineer has finalised a repair or reconstruction strategy for the walls, the costs of redevelopment of the Lyttelton Main site remain unknown.

**(i) Option - Buffer Zone for New Buildings**

Geotechnical advice received indicates *'a buffer zone for new buildings would need to be a minimum of the height of the existing walls or unsupported cut slopes'*. This could potentially restrict the usability of the site and compromise the ability to build a modern learning environment suitable for the combined roll.

**(ii) Option - Full Reconstruction of the Retaining Wall**



*'Current retaining wall designs cost approximately \$2,000-\$4,000 per linear meter for a wall with a height greater than 4 m. Total costs of this option will be significant if the wall required replacement or strengthening'.*

---

## **5. CONCLUSIONS**

The Lyttelton West School Community petition highlighted the lack of community support for the Ministry of Education's proposed school merger to be undertaken in January 2014.

The Lyttelton West Wellbeing Survey highlights Lyttelton West School families are confronting significant stresses and uncertainty which cannot be ignored.

Research emphasises the importance of schools as a place of stability for children and their families/caregivers in post-disaster environments. This is of significance to Lyttelton West whanau as there are few community resources remaining in Lyttelton as a direct result of the earthquakes and families have suffered significant losses.

These results also need to be considered in the context of the newly emerging research released both by the Mental Health Foundation and Healthy Christchurch, as well as information presented by Rob Gordon, an Australasian Clinical Psychologist specialising in post disaster trauma. It is acknowledged:

- A 'double blow' effect is now occurring for quake affected communities; the stress and anxiety caused by dealing with insurance, repairs and the agencies involved in the recovery, for many has proved more debilitating than the earthquakes. This has resulted in the sense that *'buildings are more important than people'*. (CDHB, 2013).
- Year three post-disaster (as is the case for the Lyttelton community now) is often regarded as the most difficult, due to many people living with uncertainty regarding their homes, jobs and their community infrastructure. The continued earthquakes means peoples' nerves are constantly on heightened alert (Gordon, R, 2013).

Rather than exacerbate instability for our children, the Lyttelton West School Community encourages a common sense approach, which supports the status quo for school children until a school site is ready to effectively accommodate all Lyttelton children.

---

## **6. RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Timeframe**

- Delay the merge until a new school is built.
- The timeframe is seen as insufficient, as it does not enable time for the proposed Lyttelton Main School site to be fully developed to successfully accommodate all children.

### **Child and Family Wellbeing**

- Allow the children of Lyttelton West School to remain in a stable and independently governed school, until the new school is built. An unknown period of ongoing instability, before the merger site is ready, will have a negative impact on the wellbeing of already fragile children and their families.
- Provide appropriate support for the children and their families who are still recovering from the earthquakes, and dealing with high levels of uncertainty and anxiety.

### **Planning and Co-ordination of the Proposed Merger**

- Support the relationships between the Establishment Board, Lyttelton West School Board of Trustees and the Lyttelton Main Board of Trustees, Principals, Staff and the Lyttelton community members, by promoting models of engagement that recognise the importance of consultation and collaboration.

#### **Geotechnical and Structural Engineering investigations**

- Ensure that appropriate investigations and cost analysis is undertaken of the proposed Lyttelton Main School merger site, to substantiate financial decision making for the best single school site for Lyttelton school children.

## REFERENCES

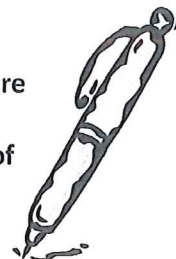
- Canterbury District Health Board. (2013). *All Right Campaign*. Christchurch: Community and Public Health, Canterbury District Health Board. Refer <http://www.healthychristchurch.org.nz/focus-areas/all-right-wellbeing-campaign.aspx>
- Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority (CERA). (2012). *Wellbeing Survey*. Christchurch: CERA.
- Freedy, J. R., Saladin, M. E., Kipatrack, D. G., Resnick, H.S., Saunders, B.E. Understanding acute psychological distress following natural disaster. *Journal of Traumatic Stress*. 1994, Volume 7, Issue 2, 257-273.
- Gordon, R. (February 2013). *Red Cross continues it is support for people of Christchurch*. Refer [www.scoop.co.nz](http://www.scoop.co.nz).
- La Greca, A. M., Sevin S, Sevin E. After the storm: A guide to help children cope with the psychological effects of a hurricane. 7-Dippity, Inc.; Miami: 2008. [November 11, 2008]. from [http://www.7-dippity.com/other/op\\_storm.html](http://www.7-dippity.com/other/op_storm.html).
- Ministry of Education. (January 2013a). *Education Report: Peroposed merger of Lyttelton Main School (3423) and Lyttelton West School (3424)*. Wellington: Ministry of Education.
- Ministry of Education. (January 2013b). *Outcomes of consultation on proposed school closures and mergers in Greater Christchurch*. Wellington: Ministry of Education.
- Prinstein MJ, La Greca AM, Vernberg EM, Silverman WK. Children's coping assistance: How parents, teachers, and friends help children cope after a natural disaster. *Journal of Clinical Child Psychology*. 1996;25:463–475.
- Williams R, Alexander DA, Bolsover D, Bakke FK. Children, resilience and disasters: Recent evidence that should influence a model of psychosocial care. *Current Opinion in Psychiatry*. 2008;21:338–344.[PubMed]
- Margolin, G., Ramos, M., and Guran, E. Earthquakes and children: the role of psychologists with families and communities. *Professions Psychology Research Press*. February, 2010, 41 (1): 1-9.





## LYTTELTON WEST SCHOOL FAMILY WELLBEING SURVEY

As a part of our next submission to the Ministry of Education, we are seeking information from our families about their personal circumstances after the earthquakes. While this information may be used as a part of our second submission over the proposed merger of schools, it is important while answering these questions to concentrate on the earthquakes and the subsequent effects of these on your family.



Please answer the questions below honestly and as objectively as is possible for you, and if any question is too uncomfortable to answer, leave this out. **Please return in a sealed envelope to the school by Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> March.**

Please be assured any information you include will remain confidential.

1. Has your family needed to move out of the place in which you were living as a result of the earthquakes?

Yes

No

2. How many times have you needed to move since the earthquakes? \_\_\_\_\_

3. Has your home been damaged during the earthquakes?

Yes (go to Q4)

No (go to Q6)

4. To what extent has your home been damaged?

Minor (cosmetic)

Major (structural repairs required)

My home is/or is to be demolished/  
or is red zoned

5. Is your home now repaired?

Yes

No

6. If you have needed to move out of your home as a result of the earthquakes, are you back there now?

Yes

For how long? \_\_\_\_\_

No

When do you expect to go back, if ever? \_\_\_\_\_

7. If you were working, did your work change because of the earthquakes?

Yes (go to Q8)

No (go to Q9)

8. In what ways did your work change? Please outline:

---

---

---

---

9. Has your income been affected as a direct result of the earthquakes?

Yes - Positively? Negatively? No (my income has remained the same)

10. Have you needed to spend personal savings as a result of the earthquake?

Yes

No





11. Have your levels of debt increased as a result of the earthquakes?

Yes

No

12. Have you had key support people move away as a result of the earthquakes? Eg friends, family

Yes

No

13. Have your children displayed any concerning behaviour which you attribute to the earthquakes?

Yes (please explain)

No

---

---

14. Have you, or your family members' health been affected as an outcome of the earthquakes?

Yes (go to Q15)

No (go to 16)

15. Mildly

(no medication required)

Moderately

(some medication required)

Substantially

(medication still required)

16. What positive outcomes have you noted as a result of the earthquakes?

---

---

---

---

---

---

17. What is the most frustrating thing/s for you and your family as a result of the earthquakes?

---

---

---

---

---

---

Sometimes it's great to be able to include personal stories. If you would like to tell more of your experience since the largest earthquakes, please write this in the space below, or leave your contact details and we may arrange an interview.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Name:

Contact number:

Please note again, this information will remain confidential.

We thank you sincerely for your time, and will keep you fully informed with the submission process and outcomes.

