

**11 September 2009**

## **Civil Defence exercise to practice real situation**

On Friday 18 September the Buller Civil Defence will be conducting an exercise in conjunction with the West Coast Regional Council as part of a Regional Exercise.

The scenario for this exercise is an earthquake occurring on the Alpine Fault SW of Whataroa, measuring 8.2 on the Richter scale at 2.35am.

During the day of the 18<sup>th</sup> the Buller District Council offices in Westport and Reefton will be short staffed as many employees will be taking part in this exercise so that if and when the real thing happens then those people involved in controlling Civil Defence situations will be trained effectively and able to help the community in the most efficient manner possible.

In Westport there will be a Welfare Centre at the Solid Energy Centre. The purpose of a welfare team is to take care of personal needs of individuals, for example sorting food and/or accommodation. We need volunteers to come down to the welfare centre on the day from 10am – 12pm and from 12pm – 2pm, these volunteers will be “victims” of the disaster and will present a situation the welfare team for the team to resolve. Anyone who wishes to take place in this can pick up a role play form from Buller District Council reception on Brougham Street to get some ideas of what situation they can present with.

“Civil Defence is an important service to have in a community and it is great to be able to practice different types of events so that when the real thing happens we are more prepared. Council appreciates the patience of the community when these exercises are being held as some council staff may not be available and is sure that everyone understands that it is for the greater good of our entire community” says Buller District Council Chief executive, Gary Murphy.

The West Coast Shake out is an awareness exercise which is encouraging people to Stop, Drop and Hold at 10.10am on the 18<sup>th</sup> September. This is not the same as Buller’s Civil Defence exercise but is related. The West Coast Shake out is about creating an awareness of reality that an earthquake of the Alpine fault could happen at any time and we all need to be prepared.

**ENDS**



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