

FROM CHRISTCHURCH & CANTERBURY TOURISM

Regional Positioning

Background

As a result of an earthquake in Christchurch on 22 February 2011, some parts of the city's landscape and landmarks have been damaged, demolished or are out of access for visitors. However, the damage is very localised to specific areas in the central and eastern parts of Christchurch, with other parts of the city almost totally unaffected.

Currently, Christchurch & Canterbury Tourism's key role is to provide honest and credible reporting on the situation in Christchurch and the region and to highlight the milestones of recovery.

Key Messages

The South Island of New Zealand

Christchurch and the wider Canterbury region continues to welcome visitors following the 22 February [Christchurch earthquake](#).

The South Island offers visitors unparalleled experiences and landscapes. Only 0.05% of the South Island's land area was affected by the earthquake. Outside the localized and cordoned areas of Christchurch's CBD and eastern suburbs, the core tourism infrastructure is undamaged.

There are absolutely no reasons for visitors to cancel or delay a holiday to New Zealand including the stunning South Island.

Christchurch International Airport – Gateway to the South Island

Christchurch International Airport remains the principal gateway to the South Island and was not affected by the February events. None of the accommodation or services around the airport area were damaged. Visitors flying into Christchurch will not be able to see physical damage to buildings and structures unless they drive to the city centre, located 20min away.

A substantial new passenger terminal which was near completion at the time of the February earthquake was opened to the public on 28 April 28. With large passenger lounges, extra seating, improved passenger flows and enhanced retail and cafe areas, the new terminal offers a first class contemporary airport experience.

Situation in the City & Status of Accommodation and Tourism Activities

Christchurch City is now in early stages of the rebuilding stage after the earthquake. While a small section of the city CBD remains cordoned off, most visitor activities in Christchurch are operating.

The visitor experience of Christchurch will be different from what it was prior to the earthquake because of the damage to many buildings of cultural and heritage significance. Christchurch is still however a viable tourism destination for independent travelers who commonly use the city as a gateway entry point to a province that has magnificent landscapes and an abundance of tourism activities.

Christchurch now has enough accommodation re-instated to host FIT travelers and small groups but will be unable to handle large conferences and conventions until more hotels can be re-instated or re-built.

Visitors are advised to pre book accommodation because of an accommodation shortage that has been exacerbated by the number of hotels located in the cordoned off area. Visitors therefore need to be flexible about accommodation choices and the current inventory status is listed below :

- Christchurch currently has 8 hotels, 10 Lodges and Apartments, 105 motels, 17 holiday parks, 15 backpacker lodges and 70 bed & breakfast in full operation. This totals 6,900 commercial beds.
- Outside the Christchurch City area there are 11,700 commercial beds also available in the Canterbury region that have not been impacted at all by earthquake activity.
- 26 visitor attractions and activities are currently operating within or from Christchurch City.

Regional Highlights – Outside of Christchurch, it's life as normal

There are many highlights to experience in the Canterbury region.

- The French-inspired settlement of Akaroa buzzing with seaside cafes, boutique shops and wildlife cruises (90 minute drive from Christchurch Airport)
- Be awe-struck by New Zealand's highest peak, glacial lakes, stargazing tours and iceberg cruises in the Mackenzie Country (3 hour drive from Christchurch Airport)
- Enjoy pampering and relaxation amongst the beautiful alpine vistas of Hanmer Springs (90 minute drive from Christchurch Airport)
- New Zealand's eco-tourism capital of Kaikoura will take you everywhere from whale watching to wilderness walks (2 hour drive from Christchurch Airport)