

Ashburton Community Link Centre

The Hon Jo Goodhew
Regional Commissioner for Social Development – Michelle Mitchell
Special Guests
Ladies and Gentlemen

This is a special day for social services in Ashburton and I'm delighted that the Ashburton Community Link is one of the first visible actions coming out of the Ashburton District Social Wellbeing Strategy which was launched earlier this year.

The Community Link is about –

- Making access to information and services as easy as possible
- Creating a place where community groups, public sector agencies and non government organisations work together to support people in need
- Co-ordinating support around people in a seamless and holistic way

This Community Link is one of the first tangible actions of the Social Wellbeing Strategy highlighting Community Social Services. It was during the snow of June 2006 that this area of social agency responsiveness came under immense pressure.

With the encouragement of Tim Barnett, the Ashburton Social Wellbeing Forum was initiated with a wonderful response from agencies whether government or local, all of whom have continued to participate to further put theory into practice.

The Forum has been a valuable exercise in getting everyone talking and understanding, and more importantly, responding to issues relevant to Ashburton.

This strategy could not have been developed without a genuine desire by all involved to seek a better way forward and the end result certainly promotes social wellbeing within our community.

As a result, local social service providers are able to work more closely with the services operating from the centre which is a huge positive for our district.

The Community Link Centre is already proving to be a valuable asset in helping to make this happen and especially relevant in the Ashburton context is the ability to assist the over 65 population.

The arrival of this centre in Ashburton is extremely timely given the current global financial crisis. This Community Link Centre will ensure that those who need help are assisted in a timely fashion.

Council looks forward to continuing to work with the Ministry of Social Development and in particular the Work and Income staff here in the Ashburton office, and I acknowledge the valuable assistance that the non government organisations provide through partnering with the Ministry in this centre.

We all need to continue to develop the relationships that are necessary for a healthy and vibrant community.

It is now my pleasure to invite guests to partake of refreshments available and to meet and network with Community Link partners present this afternoon. But before we do that it is perhaps more important that I invite Tim Russell to provide a Karakia / Blessing.