

Thank you for the opportunity to address you today.

# NZ Symposium on DRR: Benchmarking the Sendai Framework



**Good News. You're More Prepared than you Think**

Presented by:  
Hon Lianne Dalziel, Mayor of Christchurch

Christchurch City Council 

My contribution is intended to help join the dots between the different sessions this morning and what we will hear this afternoon.

I usually have a theme for my presentations – a quote from someone like Rahm Emmanuel, when he was the Chief of Staff at the White House – now the Mayor of Chicago:

*Rahm Emanuel  
Ex White House Chief of Staff*

***“You never let a serious crisis go to waste.***

***And what I mean by that: it's an opportunity to do things you think you could not do before.”***

Christchurch  
City Council 

"You never let a serious crisis go to waste...it's an opportunity to do things you think you could not do before".

You could apply the Naomi Klein Shock Doctrine interpretation to this statement, and yes that is something to be alert to, because there are those who would take advantage of the shock of a disaster to push through agendas that would otherwise be untenable.

But for me there is a powerful sense of optimism in this statement as well – **it's an opportunity to do things you think you could not do before.**"

## A City in Transition



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This is the sense of 'anything's possible'. In Christchurch there is now Life in Vacant Spaces – literally – Gapfiller, Greening the Rubble, Festival of Transitional Architecture – even our Re:Start Mall and the Cardboard Cathedral. These are the things that the New York Times and Lonely Planet write about when they exhort people to come to Christchurch.

The sense of innovation, creativity, humour, wit, imagination and flair – these are the traits that will be forever embedded in our city's DNA.

However all of this was possible before the earthquakes – but there was nothing to disrupt the natural order of things – nothing to disrupt the status quo.

And now we must seize the opportunity that our experience offers. To do things we never thought we could before.

But that's not what I'm going to talk about today.

Today my theme is from the San Francisco Civil Defence website SF72, which says:

San Francisco's hub for  
emergency preparedness

*Good News. You're More  
Prepared than you Think*

<http://www.sf72.org/home>

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This is a great message for a Civil Defence website. I came across it in the book written by the Chair of the Rockefeller Foundation, Judith Rodin, called the Resilience Dividend. I mention this because Christchurch and now Wellington have become part of the 100 Resilient Cities Network pioneered by the Rockefeller Foundation.

And the reasons why the Foundation chose resilience as its centennial challenge and why the focus is on cities as opposed to countries are captured in a book that inspires us to understand that resilience means so much more than returning to the way things were before a disruptive event occurred. It introduces us to the notion that communities can thrive in the face of adversity.

Judith Rodin  
*the Resilience Dividend*

*“There is no ultimate or end state of resilience. But, by working together to build resilience to the greatest degree possible, we can reduce our reliance on crisis as a driver of change and, instead, deliberately take the future into our own hands – for the well-being of our families, our communities, our cities, and indeed, the planet we all share.”*

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Judith Rodin ends the book with this powerful statement:

"There is no ultimate or end state of resilience. But, by working together to build resilience to the greatest degree possible, we can reduce our reliance on crisis as a driver of change and, instead, deliberately take the future into our own hands – for the well-being of our families, our communities, our cities, and indeed, the planet we all share."

You will note the focus on families, communities and cities. This to me is the reason why a framework that is government to government, unless it is translated to a meaningful tool at the city and town level, will never achieve its goals. There were senior people who had never heard of the Hyogo Framework for Action or the concept of disaster risk reduction despite being fully involved in the Christchurch recovery. How could we adopt the Sendai framework if we don't make it meaningful at the city level?

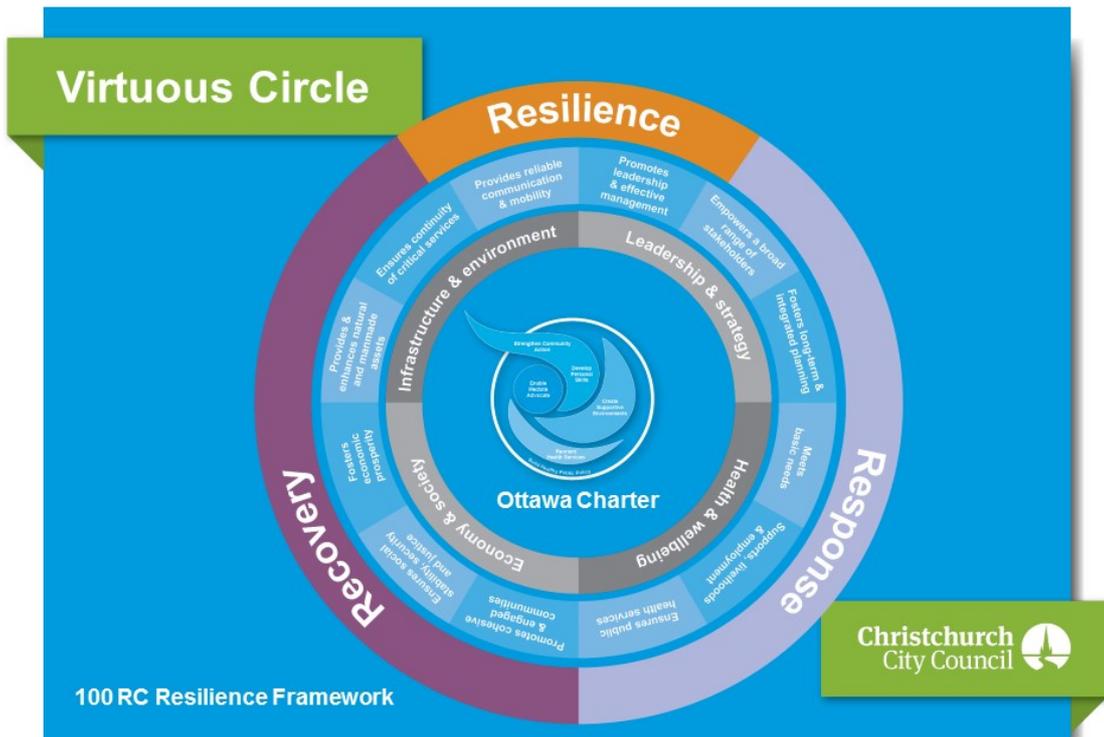
So why do I theme my presentation "Good News. You're more prepared than you think"?

The focus on preparedness in the Sendai Framework has been expanded as we will hear this afternoon to include 'build back better' in recovery, which includes community resilience, rehabilitation and reconstruction.

I often say that in the preparedness stage we are very good at preparing for the response and the immediate aftermath – Get Ready, Get Through includes planning to look after yourself and your loved ones for three days or more – but my experience is there is nothing to prepare us for what happens next - the medium to long term recovery.

What I found myself saying at Sendai though was that our experience showed that there were things happening before the earthquakes struck that made us much better prepared for the longer term recovery than we would have thought – we just didn't see it that way, because none of them had anything to do with disaster preparedness – or so we thought. And to be honest, until Sendai I hadn't really thought about it this way.

This is why I have become a champion of resilience and why I like the phrase – you're more prepared than you think.



This is one of the slides I presented at Sendai.

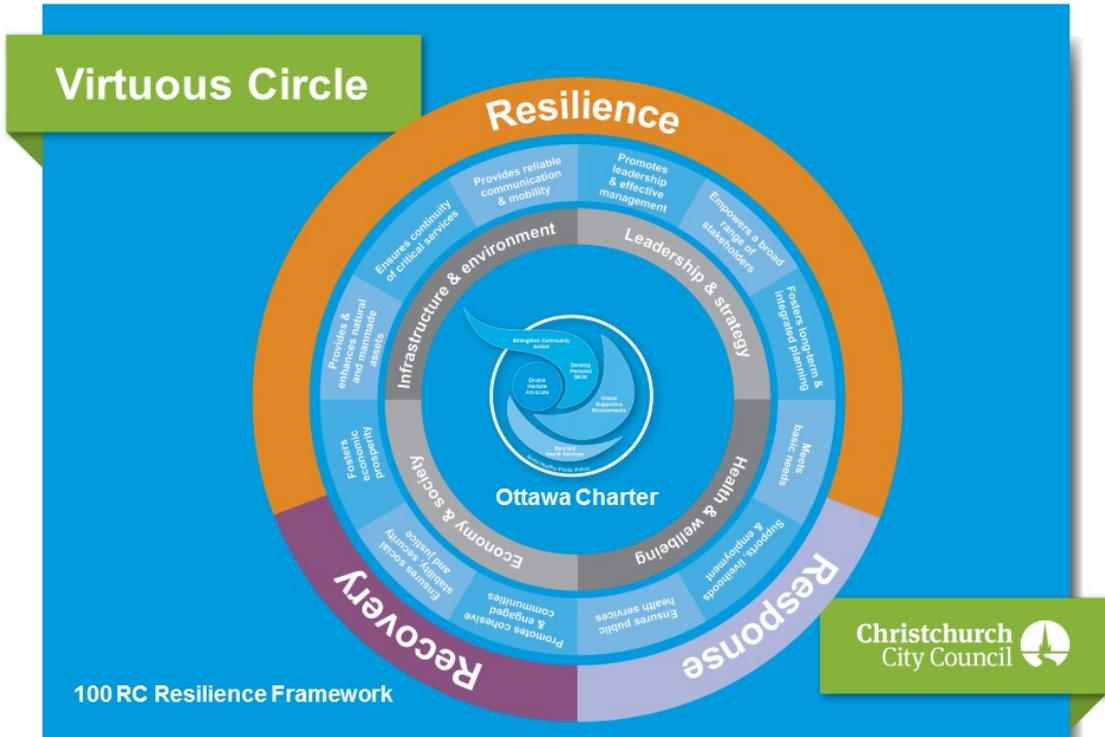
I describe the image as a virtuous circle - it connects response, recovery and resilience in a way that begins and ends with resilience.

In the centre of this picture you will see the image of the Ottawa Charter – enable, mediate, advocate – develop personal skills and strengthen community action – create supportive environments and reorient health services. As you can see it sits very neatly within the 100RC framework.

The inner wheel represents: health & wellbeing, society & economy, infrastructure & environment and leadership & strategy.

The outer layers identify the benefits of each of these and in so doing also capture the risks of the breakdown in any one of them.

"Health in all policies" is one of describing this, but in my view it's all about building resilience - before, during and after the event.



The greater the resilience – measured in a community sense by things like social capital – the more rapid the response and the quicker & more enduring the recovery, which itself builds resilience – it is a virtuous circle.

## San Francisco's hub for emergency preparedness

*“Actual emergencies look more like people coming together than cities falling apart”*

<http://www.sf72.org/home>

**Christchurch City Council**



are seen as part of the myriad aspects of life in the city – mutually reinforcing each other and able to be embraced by the local government sector and non-government organisations.



Pandemic-planning had been successfully utilised to contain a small outbreak of H1N1 in one of the areas that was hard hit by the earthquake – it is not by chance that there was no outbreak of food or water borne disease that could have affected vulnerable neighbourhoods without power for over a fortnight. All the messages learned were reinforced in the weeks after the earthquake. Note that the logo on the material was not from the health board, but the local authority. This was a health issue owned by the city and there is a message in that.



The strengthening of sub-stations and resilience planning undertaken by the publicly-owned lines company, Orion – an investment of \$6M protected over \$60M of asset and meant power was not off for potentially 3 months or more;

Planning – start with what’s there

Greater Christchurch Urban Development Strategy  
Together we're making a greater future

Christchurch City Council | Environment Canterbury Regional Council | Selwyn District Council | Waimakariri District Council | NZ Transport Agency | Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu

Christchurch City Council

Another example relates to the way local councils had worked collaboratively to develop a Greater Christchurch Urban Development Strategy (UDS) which identified areas for greenfields and brownfields development, including intensification through to 2041.

But it is in fact much more than a Land Use document and when you see the reference to resilience, good governance and leadership, it could have been used as the basis for what became the Greater Christchurch Recovery Strategy. That aside it did enable the Government to move quickly to implement a Land Use Recovery Plan. There is no way this could have been done this so quickly without the analysis having already been completed – analysis which included a major health impact study. Essentially we could fast-track local decisions that had already been made.



Te Runanga O Ngai Tahu's capacity to tap into a network of Maori runanga, service providers, Maori Wardens and health professionals meant affected areas could be supported effectively – I describe this as the untold story which offers a rich source of knowledge about community-led recovery;

- Local community networks ready and willing to be self-activated – examples like the Time Bank as part of Project Lyttelton; Aranui Community Trust (ACTIS) which highlighted the benefits of asset based community development – the role of faith-based organisations, resident associations, sports clubs – these are the basis of a community-led civil protection network.
- And then there were the emergent responses – CanCERN, a network designed to ensure that affected communities had a voice and the Student Volunteer Army, which utilised a capacity that wasn't recognised as an asset by the traditional response agencies.

## Learn & Share Lessons

- Local leadership required for DRR & building resilience;
- Engage communities to evaluate lessons learned;
- Expect the unexpected and prepare for that;
- Forget top-down solutions – see what’s going on through a post-disaster lens – use what’s already there;
- Go to where the people are and equip them to plan; and
- Whatever you do, don’t set up another committee – don’t try to do it all - enable communities to do things for themselves – that’s what builds resilience

To sum up:

- Local leadership is essential, as are strong community relationships - cities and towns need to lead on Disaster Risk Reduction and building resilience is where we begin.
- Communities must be involved in evaluating lessons learned. It is equally important that we learn from what we got right as well as what we got wrong;
- We need to expect the unexpected and prepare people for that;
- We need to forget conventional top-down solutions to pre-disaster preparedness for recovery – we need to understand what is already going on through a post-disaster lens – so that you can use what’s already there. I’ve highlighted some of our examples; they may give others a clue about what they should be looking for and potentially planning for if they see a gap;
- Always go to where the people are – don’t expect them to come to you – and make sure they are equipped with the best available evidence and expertise to assist them with planning. Remember that it’s the planning not the plan that really matters in the end; and
- Whatever you do, don’t set up another committee or decision-making framework that could undermine the competence of communities to lead their own recovery planning, which is something that builds resilience.

A personal postscript from me as a former politician and now Mayor is that the regulators need to think about why we have developed rules and regulations that are designed to protect individuals and communities – often in the wake of tragedy – and ask ourselves whether we have inadvertently stripped away some of our natural capacity to take responsibility for risk. Have we transferred risk from communities to governments leaving potentially leaving communities ill-prepared for when the rules just have to be ignored?

Taking this theme a step further, could we help build resilience by helping people better understand risk and transferring responsibilities back to communities ahead of such a situation?

I think of communities who want to fix their earthquake damaged jetties or local community facilities – they have resources in their communities – surely the Health & Safety in Employment Act wasn't designed to stop communities doing things they could otherwise do on their own properties if the asset wasn't publicly owned?

I didn't come here to start a debate on that issue. But it is worth thinking about. Doing things for communities – no matter how well-intentioned – may undermine the very characteristics we need communities to have if we are to achieve the goals of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.