



**GOOD PRACTICE:** Enrolled nurse Shona Hollinshead (left) and student nurse Livia Schischka dropped, covered and held in Te Kuiti Hospital's composite ward nurses' station yesterday.

# NKC gets behind massive ShakeOut

BY **ROBBIE KAY & EMMA POTTINGER**

MORE than 3300 North King Country residents took part in New Zealand's first national earthquake drill yesterday morning.

At 9.26 am precisely, building alarms and business emergency wardens signalled the start of 'ShakeOut', the 'drop, cover and hold' exercise involving more than 1.3 million people in workplaces and schools throughout the country.

In Civil Defence terms, the North King Country is part of the Waikato Valley Emergency Operating Area, in which more than 62,000 people registered for the drill - 1436 in Otorohanga, and 1905 in Te Kuiti.

As the Civil Defence 'sting' sounded, 3039 North King Country students and staff from 21 schools and six preschools dropped to their knees and crawled under their desks and tables.

Ngutunui Enviro School principal Michelle Thurlow says it's important for students to know what to do in an

emergency and how to keep themselves safe.

"We regularly practise our emergency drills so our students will act safely, appropriately and not panic in a crisis.

"Participating in yesterday's 'ShakeOut' was a great way to reinforce our safety practices."

Centennial Park teacher Hera Ves-seur also believes it's important for students to be prepared.

"They need to be aware of the necessary safety procedures for when an earthquake occurs, as these have been occurring more frequently throughout NZ."

Kawhia Primary School principal Leanne Apiti agrees.

"We have been very impressed with how serious children took this exercise and what they have learnt from watching the ShakeOut video."

Te Kuiti Primary School principal Ken Miller says the most severe Canterbury Earthquake (February 22, 2011) should act as a reminder to everyone that a big shake can happen anywhere, at any time.

TO P19

**ON CUE:** Waitomo District Council's community facilities manager Johan Cullis practiced what he preached when the emergency siren sounded.



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# NKC gets behind massive shakeout

**FROM P3**

“We have the opportunity to learn from the experiences of Christchurch and the need therefore to be prepared in the event of a major earthquake.”

He says the exercise highlighted areas for improvement.

“Some of our school buildings, which were previously unused, had students and staff in them yesterday and they didn’t hear the alarm.”

“It was a great learning tool, but we hope we never have to put it into practice.”

**STAFF JOIN IN**

Waitomo District Council community facilities manager Johan Cullis says 40 staff took part in the drill which was followed by evacuation of the council’s Queen St building.

“Council wasn’t involved in this exercise as CD HQ for the district, but as a responsible employer ensuring the safety of our people and making sure they know what to do in an earthquake,” says Mr Cullis.

“Of course, if this was a real emergency situation, in our role as the CD nerve centre we would deal with local events as we needed to and, depending on our capacity at the time.

“For example if our building was destroyed we would relocate our emergency centre to another nominated centre such as Otorohanga, Te Awamutu or even Hamilton.”

Te Kuiti Hospital manager Thia Priestley had people observing how staff reacted when the hospital’s internal CD siren sounded.

“Many staff were out because of the large area we service, but about 40 people plus patients took part,” says Ms Priestley.

“I had also informed disabled patients of what was happening although they weren’t involved and our nursing staff are trained in what they need to do regarding patient safety in a real emergency.”

“In the first instance this Civil Defence exercise was about looking after yourself because you can’t move far away from where you are when the siren sounds.”

Eight people did the ‘ShakeOut’ drill at Te Kuiti’s WINZ office, also testing their business continuity plan which ensures the business will be able to get up and running again following a disaster.

“We assume we will be on our own and without power for the first 48 hours,” says manager Helen Brown.

“And we have all the processes in place including a Civil Defence box with manual sheets, pencils, contact information and a manual that is updated annually.

“It’s not a matter of dropping to the ground and saying ‘we’ve done it’ – we need to know we can get up again and carry on.”

The Lines Company senior customer contact officer Louisa Last says 50 Te Kuiti staff tested their natural disaster preparedness.

“The thing for us is to be disaster-ready and we all believe we need to practice ‘drop, cover and hold’, just as we practice our fire drill.

“We’ve had a lot of discussion over the past two weeks and have plans in place for critical services such as emergency faults mobile phones.

“The people in the control room are likely to be in the hot seat in the case of a natural disaster when we could be dealing with downed power lines and we have planned for that. Afterwards we’re had a debrief to analyse what happened and what we can do better.”

Other registered businesses and organisations that took part in the ‘ShakeOut’ included Kawhia Volunteer Fire Brigade, Otorohanga businesses FarmRight and Tyre Boss, Otorohanga District Council, Otorohanga Support House, Te Kuiti Community House, Te Kuiti Medical Centre and Te Reo Irirangi o Maniapoto.

**FAULT BELT**

CD emergency management officer Chris Hattingh says the Waikato’s south eastern region includes part of the

Taupo Fault Belt, one of the most seismically active parts of NZ.

“The area between Ohakune and Rotorua is the most vulnerable part of the region because it contains many active north-east fault lines.”

Small earthquakes can occur on a daily basis, and earthquake swarms occur every few years.

The largest earthquake to strike the North King Country was at Korakonui at 5.57pm on December 5, 1976.

The epicenter was 12km deep with a magnitude of 5.1 and was felt in most places west of the Waikato River.

Minor damage occurred from Hamilton to Te Kuiti, but the most damage occurred near Korakonui, where several houses lost chimneys and suffered other significant damage.



**WARD WARDENS:** Te Kuiti Hospital manager Thia Priestley (left) and administration support person Suzanne Hammond were on hand to ensure staff were safe.



**GOT IT COVERED:** Ngutunui Enviro School students Jorgia Howard (left), Lucas Dowty and Emily Crake ‘dropped’ under their desks when the civil defence ‘sting’ sounded yesterday morning. PHOTO SUPPLIED



**DRILL DOWN:** Te Kuiti Hospital biochemistry laboratory manager Mahdu Nahna (left) and scientist Jemin Joseph agreed it was good to have the emergency drill so they know what to do in a real situation.