

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NEW ZEALAND MEMBER FIRM SURVIVES CATASTROPHIC EARTHQUAKE

IGAF Worldwide is grateful to report that our member firm in Christchurch, New Zealand, **Sothertons Christchurch**, survived yesterday's catastrophic 6.3 magnitude earthquake in Christchurch with no injuries or loss of life.

David Studholme, Principal of Sothertons Christchurch, reached Debra Helwig of IGAF Worldwide via his personal email on Tuesday to confirm that all of the firm's staff were evacuated from their office building immediately after the quake and are safe. However, the firm's offices will be closed for an indefinite period of time and its systems are nonfunctional, as the adjoining building collapsed through the roof of the Sothertons office during the quake.

"There has been a lot of property damage and a rising death toll in Christchurch," said Studholme in his email. "The aftershocks are continuing and this episode is much more devastating than the larger quake we suffered last September."

All the partners and staff of IGAF Worldwide are grateful that the staff of Sothertons Christchurch is safe, and we offer our sympathies and aid in recovering from the property damage that the firm and its staff have suffered. All of us send our prayers and good wishes to the firm as it regains its capacity to function and reaches out to family, friends, and clients who have been affected by the disaster.

The 6.3-magnitude quake struck Christchurch during the lunchtime rush on Tuesday, February 22. According to the New Zealand Herald, 38 people have lost their lives thus far, and many more are reported missing. The quake knocked out phone lines, including the city's emergency 111 service, and approximately 80 percent of the city has lost power and water service. Roads have cracked and water mains are broken, flooding some city streets. Christchurch Mayor Bob Parker confirmed that the city's central business district will be closed for a minimum of three days.

Southern New Zealand has been hit by a series of quakes since September 4, when a 7.1-magnitude earthquake struck the area. The September 4 earthquake struck around 4 a.m. and there were no deaths and minimal injuries from that quake. The current quake, though smaller in magnitude, was much shallower and more damaging, and aftershocks continue to shake the region. There have been at least 11 more quakes of magnitude 4 or higher in the Christchurch area since the 6.3 magnitude quake struck.

To continue following news about the disaster, visit the New Zealand Herald website at <http://www.nzherald.co.nz>.

For the foreseeable future, Sothertons Christchurch will be unavailable by normal contact means, and it is possible due to the state of emergency in the region that personal phone and email access for its staff and partners may be inconsistent. If you have an urgent need to contact Sothertons Christchurch or its staff for any reason, and are not able to get through, please contact IGAF Asia Pacific Chairman Robert Lissauer at rlis@sothertonsmelbourne.com.au or (+) 61-3-9820-6400.

If you have any questions about this announcement, or if you have news to share with other IGAF Worldwide member firms, contact Debra Helwig at dhelwig@igafworldwide.org or 678-417-7730, ext. 35.

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