



CLARENCE HOUSE

It has been more than forty years since I first visited New Zealand, and over those many years I have come to know Christchurch and the Canterbury region as treasures of the country's natural and built environment.

It was, therefore, with rising horror that my wife and I watched the unfolding scenes of devastation that so disfigured this beautiful city and the pain and desolation of those who lost family, friends and colleagues. I can well imagine how the suffering continues to this day for all those who mourn and as you seek to rebuild your lives in the face of this great tragedy. I know that my eldest son was deeply moved by the experiences of those he met who have been so personally and painfully touched by these horrific events.

At the same time, I know that, as a year has passed, the best of the New Zealand peoples' characteristics have come to the fore. The spirit of determination, of courage and of good humour that so characterizes the people of New Zealand will, I am sure, have held you steady as you go about the slow process of rebuilding your city and your lives. You will know better than me how the bonds of family and friendship and of trials borne together make for strong and resilient communities.

My wife joins me in extending our continuing and heartfelt condolences to those whose grief may in time ease, but will never fully pass. To those who rebuild day by day, looking to the future with hope, we can only offer you our warmest encouragement and our admiration.

HRH The Prince of Wales