

07 September 2010

Rt Hon Dr Lockwood Smith
The Speaker
House of Representatives
Parliament Buildings
WELLINGTON

Dear Mr Speaker

I am writing to you following the destructive earthquake which hit the Canterbury region in the early hours of Saturday morning 04 September and the subsequent series of significant after shocks.

There is no doubt that this has been one of the most significant natural disasters to strike this country for many decades. That there has been no loss of life and little serious injury so far has been nothing less than miraculous and something for which we are all deeply thankful.

But the trauma that has been the inevitable accompaniment remains, along with massive, widespread physical damage to both the Canterbury infrastructure and to the domestic circumstances of many thousands of people. This trauma and damage will be with us for weeks, months and even years. This has been recognised by the initial decisions of Cabinet to provide assistance to the people of the Canterbury region.

It is also a matter which I believe merits an opportunity for debate in the House and this letter is to seek, in terms of Standing Order 380, that the House should conduct such a debate as a matter of urgent public importance.

As you will know there are criteria governing such a request for a debate under this Standing Order and these would seem to fully apply. This is clearly a matter of recent occurrence i.e. the earthquake struck early on Saturday morning 04 September and the Cabinet made its initial decisions yesterday afternoon.

The decision involves the administrative and ministerial responsibility of the Government in that the Cabinet has agreed to establish a special Committee on Canterbury Reconstruction, to allocate funding to the Mayoral Fund and make funding available for emergency work on the region's roading infrastructure.



Finally, the destruction caused by the earthquake to the Canterbury region and the need to mobilise the resources of the nation to assist the people of the region to rebuild their houses and restore the economy is a matter of major significance and requires therefore the immediate attention of the House.

I welcome your response to this request in the hope that it will be a positive one.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J Anderton', written in a cursive style.

Jim Anderton
MP for Wigram
Leader of the Progressive Party