



PHOTOGRAPHER / **Joseph Johnson**

CBD

WORKERS GET

SHOUTED

**“I COULDN’T GET UP AND LEAVE. THIS IS MY HOME,”
SAYS SCOTT FAIRBAIRN. “I WANTED TO STAY HERE AND DO MY BIT.”**

The Canterbury builder has been involved in the Christchurch rebuild since the early hours following the February 2011 earthquake. Scott and his workmates from Whyte Construction initially worked around the clock building temporary shelters outside the Pyne Gould building for emergency services staff.

“I wasn’t a witness to the casualties, but it was like being in a war zone. We were taken there under police escort. It was pretty difficult to make sense of it all in the first few weeks. We were working seven days a week, 14 to 16 hour days. It was really challenging”

Since then, his working weeks have returned to five days and he’s regaining some balance on the work/life front. It’s helped too that the work itself has changed, from replacing chimneys and making emergency repairs to spending more time on new-builds.

Scott’s quick to point out that he was one of the lucky ones. “I got off very lightly with only one crack in the concrete path outside our house in Prebbleton. We had up to 18 people living in our three bedroom house for

about seven weeks. Mostly workmates, some friends and family.”

He confesses that working alongside homeowners as they’ve faced long waits for answers about whether their homes can be salvaged has been draining. He says builders are often stuck in the middle when homeowners are unhappy about decisions made by the authorities. On the flipside, it’s very satisfying when things get back on the up.

“The best part of my job is seeing people happy to be back in their homes after so long. Being able to move home means their lives are finally getting back to normal. I know then I’ve done my bit.”

Since the Christchurch earthquakes thousands of construction, hospital and emergency service staff have worked tirelessly to clear and rebuild the CBD.

Their hard work was acknowledged when around 250 workers were shouted to a few drinks and some tucker from a few grateful local businesses in ‘The Strip’, a part of the city formerly known for its bars and restaurants.

The very best gourmet sausages were supplied by Peter Timbs Meats, plenty of cold beer by Speights Ale House and Coupland’s Bakeries pitched in with 200 loaves of fresh bread. ANZ, who planned the event, erected tents, a stage and hired BBQs, a sound system, tables and seating.

Graeme Moody, ANZ regional manager, says the bank wanted to do something to say thanks. “We could think of no better way to show how incredibly appreciative we were than getting people together for an afternoon off to share some food and a few beers.”

Scott says he felt honoured to have been part of the CBD shout.

“It was a really nice way for heaps of people involved in the clean-up and rebuild to feel appreciated for contributing in whichever way we have.”

Dan Saunders, co-owner of Russell Lily Construction, agrees. “It was quite surreal standing in the old Strip. There was a really good turnout of all sorts of people and it gave us a chance to hear some stories and share experiences over a glass of ale and a BBQ. One positive thing that’s come from the earthquake is that now we all have something in common. The shared experience has definitely brought everyone closer together,” he says.

