

# DR ROB'S TIPS



In October, more than 300 people attended community forums in Kaiapoi and Brighton to listen to Dr Rob Gordon, a visiting Australian specialist in disaster psychology who has supported people affected by more than 30 disasters. One participant summed up the reaction of many when he said, “Things make a lot more sense now. Rob Gordon tells it like it is.”

Here are some of Dr Rob's tips for coping with the on-going effects of a disaster:

- 1.** A fast recovery is not necessarily a good recovery. Pace yourself and focus on things that give your life value and meaning eg. relationships, family, recreational activities, your health or your career.
- 2.** Take time to assess your energy levels. If you are feeling tired or stressed consider ways you can recharge your battery. Maybe you could get away for a weekend or take a walk, listen to music or, talk to friends – you decide how best to take care of yourself.
- 3.** Ensure you maintain control of your own recovery by identifying, and focusing, on the things you can control. It's ok to acknowledge things beyond your control but try not to focus on them.
- 4.** Ask yourself: “What am I not doing that I used to do? How do I maintain the quality of my life during this long and, at times, difficult recovery period?”
- 5.** Maintain your established daily or weekly routines, or, if necessary create temporary ones during the recovery period. Established routines protect us from uncertainty and constant change.
- 6.** Deal with small problems before they become bigger. Don't let things slip, or postpone them till after it is all 'back to normal'. Recovery means finding a new normal and it needs to include what is valuable and important to you.