

EMERGENCY HAVEN



Emergency Haven was set up in 2009 to give people from out of town, who are discharged from Wairau Hospital, Blenheim in the middle of the night, a place to stay. The service is mainly for people who live in rural and remote areas at least 30 kilometres or further from Blenheim, excluding Havelock and Picton.

Emergency Haven was organised by Glen Eatwell, Marlborough Sounds (then President of the Kenepuru Branch Rural Women New Zealand) with the full support and help of the Kenepuru Branch RWNZ.

The idea was born during Glen's personal experience with visiting out of town friends who had been discharged from the emergency department Wairau Hospital at 1 am and couldn't find any accommodation in Blenheim.

Motels are not keen to open their door after 11pm. Driving home in a stressed state late at night and faced with a 2½ to 3-hour trip over narrow winding unlit roads (some unsealed) is simply not safe. Glen realised that other rural people have faced the same or even worse problems with trips of up to 4 hours and some who can only reach their homes by boat.

Glen approached the Wairau Hospital authorities, Church of England, Organisations like The Lions in Blenheim and private addresses around the Wairau Hospital about the need for certain emergency accommodation. They came to an agreement and the result is that there are now several people in and around Blenheim, within reasonable short distance from Wairau Hospital, who have volunteered to open their houses to people needing a place to stay for the night. Wairau Hospital agreed to provide the addresses of those volunteers to the discharged patient. The volunteers are called from the Hospital's Emergency Department to make arrangements for the discharged patient (and partner) and they make their way there.

Volunteers are vetted and there is no payment involved. All these people are retired farmers and ex-nurses and are more than happy to be woken up at any time to help people.

With the hospital's agreement this service has now been extended to the surgical out-patients department for rural people not wanting or able to go home the night before their operation.

Overall the service has been well received especially from people who have accepted the use of Emergency Haven.

Emergency Haven is an ongoing and important service which contributes to the health and wellbeing of the Rural Communities around Blenheim and in the Sounds.

Contact person Emergency Haven:

Irma van der Linden

Ph: 03-5734662

E-mail: habitation@orcon.net.nz

Emergency Haven is under the umbrella of the Kenepuru Branch of RWNZ

