

## STATEMENT OF NAOMI ANNE MAGEE

1. My full name is Naomi Anne Magee. I live in Christchurch.
2. I work for Fairfax New Zealand as a credit controller, and have been with them for almost three years.
3. Up until 22 February 2011 I worked in the Press Building at 32 Cathedral Square.
4. The credit hub where the credit controllers were based was on the third (top) floor of the centre section of the building.
5. The cafeteria was at the northern end of the third floor.
6. The payroll staff were based in the north western corner of the third floor.
7. Prior to the 4 September 2010 earthquake I had no concerns about the Press Building. In fact I loved being in it, I thought it was beautiful old building and had plenty of space.


### **After the 4 September 2010 earthquake**

8. I remember that we went back to work either a week or two after 4 September 2010.
9. Once I went back into the building I could see why there had been a delay in going back to work. In the cafeteria there were several huge bolts in the northern wall. You could also see light coming through the brickwork. We were able to use the cafeteria but I did have the feeling that less people were going in there than before the earthquake.
10. The payroll section in the north western corner of the building was completely off limits at this time.

11. After the September earthquake I was a little bit concerned about the building but other than the damage and repair work I have noted there was nothing else that seemed to be wrong with the building.
12. I did feel the aftershocks which were happening at this time, probably because we were at the top of the building. Some of us started to go under our desks during a couple of the bigger aftershocks. But while I felt nervous, I still felt fine being in the building. There was no noticeable cracking at this time.

### **The Boxing Day earthquake**

13. I was due to go back to work the week after Boxing Day but after the aftershock there was a delay in the building re-opening.
14. I then went on holiday so it was later in January when I went back into the building.
15. I clearly remember my first day back in the building in 2011. All the way up the stairs from the first floor up there were hessian panels draped on either side of the stairway held up by wooden batons. This was not there before Christmas.
16. From my desk which was close to the eastern wall of the building I could see two areas of cracking which really concerned me.
17. The first was around the doorway which took you from the main stairwell at the southern end of the building into our office area. There was cracking right around the door frame which started off low down on either side of the door and then went up and around the door. This was obvious cracking and you could see it from some distance away.
18. There was another area of cracking at the door on the northern end of our office. This was an internal wall. Beyond that wall was a stairwell and then the cafeteria was at the northern end of the building. This was diagonal cracking from the top left hand corner of the door to the ceiling. I knew enough about cracks by this time to know that this was significant. You could see it from my desk which was quite a distance away. It was a point of discussion in the office.

19. I still remember that on that first day I was quite astonished that we were in the building and remember thinking "how can we be in here?".
20. Other damage that I remember was in the woman's toilets on our floor on the eastern side of the building, closer to the cafeteria end. The doors didn't shut properly and there were windows that were boarded up.
21. I remember talking with my colleagues, Adrienne (Ady) Lindsay, Stacey Herbert and Liam about the building. Something that we discussed was moving Ady and Stacey away from a large floor to ceiling beam. It seemed to us that if that was going to come down it was going to fall towards where Stacey sat.
22. We felt unsafe in that building and I ~~used to~~  hear Ady on the phone talking to people saying that she didn't feel safe in there.
23. I did see engineers in the building because they were wearing jackets with the names of their firms on them. I did see them look at the diagonal crack that I have referred to at the northern end of the building.
24. We would get emails from management after most of the reasonable sized aftershocks saying that the building had been checked out and was safe, but I remember on some occasions I would only see the engineer after the email had been sent out. I think on at least one occasion we were sent the engineer's report by email.
25. Looking back I wonder now if I would have been feeling different about staying in the building if we weren't scheduled to move to new premises behind our existing building in March 2011. Everyone was looking forward to the move and at the time of the 22 February 2011, we were packing up our belongings getting ready to go.

### **22 February 2011**

26. On the morning of 22 February 2011 I remember talking to a colleague in Oamaru. We talked about the building and I told her that it was only two weeks

until the move and that I was glad to be going because I felt we shouldn't be in the building.

27. When the earthquake hit I was at my desk. I was standing up just about to go for lunch. I remember hearing the rumble and then thought "this is bad I better get under my desk". I must have been knocked out because when I came around I was under my desk facing around the other way and on my elbows and knees. A piece of wall or a piece of roof had hit me in the back and must have thrown me under my desk. It was pitch black and I couldn't breathe but luckily a short time later during an aftershock part of the wall fell away further down and I could see some light and get some air through the split in my desk.
28. I understand eleven of us were trapped in the Press Building, three in the rear cafeteria area and the rest in my office. I was rescued from the Press Building after five hours.
29. After the main shake there were a number of significant aftershocks. I remember how much the building wobbled around in those later aftershocks on 22 February and it is amazing to me that the building didn't collapse given how much it was moving.
30. It was not until after 22 February that I learned that the building had been red stickered as a result of the post Boxing Day inspection.

Signed:   
Naomi Magee

Date:   
27 January 2012