Events

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New Zealand: ibis Christchurch reopens as a powerful symbol

The ibis Christchurch in New Zealand recently reopened and is the first downtown hotel housing guests so far. It stands as a symbol of the city centre's gradual rebirth from the string of earthquakes that wrecked the hotel and city in 2010 and 2011.

The magnitude-6.3 earthquake that hit Christchurch, New Zealand's second-largest city, on 22 February 2011, killed 185 people and left colossal damage in its wake. The city centre was reduced to a cluster of collapsing buildings and rubble, mud and water oozing from broken pipes, and leaking sewerage.

As many as 15,000 quakes rock this shattered city every year. A particularly fierce one had indeed hit it in 2010. A hotel reopening in the city centre two years later is a powerful symbol there.

An all-new hotel

The ibis Christchurch – located in Hereford Street, just off Cathedral Square – has undergone major remedial work, including the renovation of all 155 rooms and an overhaul in its public areas. It has been upgraded to the city's latest architectural requirements and has emerged as the brand's flagship hotel in the area. The metamorphosis underway in downtown Christchurch will also benefit the hotel and guests: a new convention centre is being built nearby, along with a new mall with a very eloquent name: re:Start . This 'pop-up' shopping precinct is packed with designer boutiques and up-to-the-minute cafés, and is poised to become the city's new, throbbing heart.

A city being rebuilt

"*The 4th September re-launch date was selected because it represents the second anniversary of the first major quake to hit Christchurch, though it didn't have anywhere near the same impact as the subsequent February 2011 quake,"* explains **Tim Dearsley**, the hotel's General Manager. "*Christchurch tourism has suffered enormously because of the perception that the city was closed following the earthquake. This was never true. And we hope the re-opening of the ibis will highlight that the city centre is now accessible to travellers and that there is plenty to do in the city, including many of the old activities, as well as new and innovative tourism experiences*."

"*The re-opening will help accelerate the city's regeneration process. It will not only ease the critical shortage of accommodation and provide employment for local residents in Christchurch but it will allow significant progress to be made in reviving the city's central business district and tourism industry. The city has really needed the confidence boost of a major international hotel brand re-opening to re-boost its economy and to cater for domestic and overseas visitors,"* he adds.

After the ibis Christchurch, Accor's Novotel Christchurch hotel is scheduled to re-open in mid 2013.The ibis Christchurch in New Zealand recently reopened and is the first downtown hotel housing guests so far. It stands as a symbol of the city centre's gradual rebirth from the string of earthquakes that wrecked the hotel and city in 2010 and 2011.

To know more about ibis