



General manager Raymond Eberhard on the Hohepa grounds after the quake.



Hohepa residents are back getting their hands dirty in the garden at the Halswell farm after being evicted in the wake of Canterbury's earthquake.

# Homecoming bittersweet for Hohepa residents

By PHILIPPA WILLIAMS

**HALSWELL'S** HOHEPA residents returned home last week, following their eviction from the premises after the Canterbury quake.

But the occasion was bittersweet, as the village's central building faces demolition due to

damage it sustained in the quake.

The Halswell farm site caters for up to 20 residents with intellectual disabilities, plus another 20 people for day care services. The residents stay in their own houses on-site.

The structure to be demolished is the wood-work building, where

most of the day services were held.

Two new fault lines run directly underneath the structure and during the earthquake, two parts of the building separated and shifted more than 20cm.

"I don't know what it is like underneath, it probably looks something like porridge," general manager Raymond Eberhard said.

The building, the newest in the village, was constructed as a result of a huge fundraising effort of more than \$660,000.

The oldest structure at the site, called Sloss house, also sustained significant damage, with the quake causing it to shift off its piles.

Mr Eberhard said he hoped Sloss house could be repaired and then relocated on the site.

The residents stayed in a motel after the earthquake because there was no bridge at the farm entrance and an abundance of water and sand on the site, said Tasman Cottage House co-ordinator Judy Ricketts.

Hazards were fenced off before residents returned.

"All staff and resi-

dents were really chilled out at the motels afterwards. Residents enjoyed a holiday-like atmosphere," she said. "I did hear some residents wanting to know if we could get room service and a cooked breakfast. A good try!"

Hohepa resident Lynn said she did not know how she had managed to stay upright during the quake.

"I ran through broken glass and dishes coming out of cupboards, then I sat with someone else until the shaking had stopped," she said. "I am back at the farm and the shaking is still going on."

Resident Denise said she got up and made her bed when the earthquake started before going to Sloss House in the hopes she would be safe there.

"I feel good about being back at the farm. The farm looks different."

Nick and Andrew from the Van Asch House said they were scared when they woke up to their bedroom shaking, but they stayed in bed. "We were reassured that we were safe. We are happy to be back in our own rooms again."