

Quake damage forces Hohepa evacuation

By PHILIPPA WILLIAMS

HALSWELL'S HOHEPA village may have been badly damaged by the Canterbury earthquake, but it is hoped the residents will be able to eventually return to the site.

The Halswell farm site caters for up to 20 residents with intellectual disabilities — plus another 20 for day care services.

But the entire village is now vacated. A structural engineer is due to assess the site early this week.

The residents and their carers are staying at a motel in Riccarton until they know the future of their home.

Some of the residents have lived at the village since they were children.

The group is travelling to Hohepa's other site, in Barrington St, for day services.

General manager Raymond Eberhard said one of the six houses at the farm had moved off its piles, while others were riddled with cracks.

It is expected that the newest building, for which more than

\$660,000 was raised through charities and public funding, will be condemned, he said.

"It's the saddest loss of all. It's where we hold all our day care services. But the fault lines have gone right underneath it and who knows what the ground is like now," Mr Eberhard said.

The oldest building, where the volunteers stayed, was another that probably could not be saved, he said.

Mr Eberhard said he was trying to get water and sewerage operating so residents could move back into the houses that were repairable.

"I want them back as soon as possible, but I was trying to get some fencing to cut off the areas that have been damaged and there is none left in the South Island."

Hazards such as raised concrete in pathways needed to be securely off limits.