

Lessons learned from one of New Zealand's most challenging civil engineering projects:  
rebuilding the earthquake damaged pipes, roads, bridges and retaining walls in the city of  
Christchurch 2011 - 2016.

## Guidelines for engaging with schools

**Story:** School Visits

**Theme:** Communications and Community

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A document for SCIRT's communications team which details how SCIRT should carry out school visits.

This document has been provided as an example of a tool that might be useful for other organisations undertaking complex disaster recovery or infrastructure rebuild programmes.

For more information about this document, visit [www.scirtlearninglegacy.org.nz](http://www.scirtlearninglegacy.org.nz)



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SCIRT is rebuilding the city's earthquake damaged roads, water, wastewater and stormwater pipes.

## GUIDELINES FOR ENGAGING WITH SCHOOLS

### Why SCIRT engages with schools

The objectives for engaging with schools are to:

- Advise who SCIRT is and why we need to do the work we are doing
- Communicate safety message to students about work site safety (the visit may also be an opportunity to inform teachers and parents)

### Principles of engaging with schools

Each team that visits a school is representing SCIRT.

Please ensure that consideration is given to:

- Clearly defined communication objectives
- Clear messaging and SCIRT branding
- Value for money, in terms of staff time, activities and giveaways

It is worth keeping in mind that it is a privilege for the SCIRT team to be invited into schools. In this role our behaviour can have a lot of influence on children, therefore positive, professional behaviour needs to be modelled. In schools we are interacting with a particularly vulnerable audience. All SCIRT staff visiting schools need to be vetted and briefed about being careful when interacting with children and mindful of children's personal space.

### When SCIRT engages with schools – preparing a Communication Control Plan

When designing their Communication Control Plan, each delivery team will decide which engagement techniques are most appropriate for the project. This may include a school visit.

SCIRT's engagement with schools will be either proactive or reactive:

- Proactive engagement - Engaging with schools proactively is where delivery teams approach the school as part of their Communication Control Plans (because the school is directly impacted by SCIRT work sites).

- Reactive engagement - SCIRT may also be approached by a school outside of the construction area requesting the team to visit. This is reactive engagement and would need careful consideration as to the value of the team visiting that school and techniques used.

There are a number of engagement techniques that can be used to work with school children. Some of these options are outlined in Appendix 1. A range of engagement activities can be used in each session – these are listed in Appendix 2.

### How SCIRT engages with schools – preparing a Schools Engagement Plan

A Schools Engagement Plan will be created for each school visit. This will include the selected engagement techniques and activities. This will ensure that all team members are clear about the objective for engaging with the school, the format and structure of the sessions. It also provides justification as to why the technique and tools used for engagement were chosen. This will provide a good record of what has been done and why.

Forms are available to assist with preparing for the school visit:

- Schools Engagement Plan template (Appendix 3)
- Feedback form template (Appendix 4)
- Model release form template (Appendix 5)

When determining the engagement strategy it is worth considering options for repeated visits to the schools as follow up and reinforcement of the message. For example we may visit and follow up with a competition winner and a 10 minute briefing. Alternatively prior to the visit, the teacher could provide an introduction about SCIRT's work and seek questions from the class. These could be answered when SCIRT are undertake their briefing.

## Peer Review of a Schools Engagement Plan

The peer review process with the delivery team and the IAT must be followed prior to all school visits. The peer review is important to ensure that the schools programme is delivered consistently around the city by the four delivery teams. It is also important that we track what schools have been visited and what each visit consisted of.

The peer review table below appears on the schools engagement plan and must be filled in prior to engaging with schools.

	Delivery Team Peer Review	IAT Peer reviewed by
Schools engagement plan prior to discussion with school	Reviewed by _____	IAT Review _____
	Signed: _____	Signed: _____
	Date: _____	Date: _____

## Implementation of a Schools Engagement Plan

It is important that there are adequate staff members for the number of students at each session. The delivery teams will identify the staff resource needed for each visit. Members of the Integrated Alliance Team (IAT) are available to assist with school visits, if required.

Please select the team carefully, ensuring that SCIRT is well represented. Consider including a variety of ethnicity and gender in the team visiting the school.

## Briefing session and key messages

It is important that all team members are clear about the objective for the school visit, the format and structure of the sessions. A briefing session can greatly assist with this. Some key SCIRT key messages are included in Appendix 6.

## Collateral and other resources

To ensure that the resources are available for use when delivery teams need them, please advise the IAT Communication Assistant as soon as you know when you will require school resources. Your dates will then be included on the Communication Team Calendar.

A full list of collateral is included in Appendix 7. However this list is changing frequently so please contact the IAT Communication Assistant for the latest list of collateral.

All collateral that is issued is SCIRT branded not branded by individual contractor logos.

## Photos

Taking photos during a school visit is a great opportunity for publicising what we are doing. It is the responsibility of the Delivery Team undertaking the school visit to obtain all parent and school approvals required for publication of photos.

When taking photos, please consider compliance with safety standards and temporary traffic management practices.

## Media

If a member of SCIRT is contacted by a journalist, politely advise them that you are not a media spokesperson and refer them to:

[Amanda Healy](#) or  
[Council Media Phone 027 241 0277](#)

Advise the Communication and Stakeholder Manager when contacted by the media.

## Evaluating a Schools Engagement Plan

Our goal is to provide best practice communication. We also have a commitment to developing our people, in order to do this it is important that for every school we actively seek feedback with a view to checking out performance, identifying what worked well and how we need to improve. There are three ways to obtain feedback and these are outlined below:

1. Children – have three coloured sticks that represent that, green (they enjoyed themselves), orange (it was ok) and red (they didn't enjoy it). They then put their choice in a bowl before they leave.
2. Teachers/ Principal - A feedback form has been developed (refer Appendix 4). The intention of the form is either to be discussed verbally with the school or left with the school to be picked up at a later date. The form is to then be put on the project file, Circulated to IAT Communication Coordinator – Strategic Projects and Communication and Stakeholder Relations Manager.
3. Self-evaluation – this is included on the feedback form mentioned in 2 above.

All feedback is to be shared with the IAT, logged on Salesforce and fed back to wider team.

## Amendments to these guidelines

These guidelines are able to alter and change as the team gets feedback on school visits. For any suggested amendments to these guidelines please advise Communication Coordinator, Strategic projects.

## Appendix 1 – Engagement Techniques

Engagement Techniques for schools Considerations when formulating engagement plan											
	Techniques	Purpose of tool	Suggested age group	Session duration	Venue at school	Input required from school	Staff resource from SCIRT team	Number of children that technique can reach	Time/Cost	Value/Effectiveness	Limitation
A	Classroom session	Directly inform a class of children about the works	Can be tailored for all ages.	30mins -1 hour	A classroom, this is a familiar and controlled space for learning.	Classroom space, teacher with class	2-3 staff	10-40	Medium time/ medium cost	With a small number of children, ability to engage children in activities.	Targets only one classroom of children.
B	Briefing at an assembly	To reach a large number of children quickly. Could be used as a 'hook' for another tool. Parents could also be invited to attend.	Can access a range of ages at once	10-20 minutes	Standing room and room for flag or something visual (minimal space)	Space required at assembly or syndicate gathering	2 staff	>60 Whole school	Low time/ low cost	Present to a large number of children and potentially the whole school.	Activities for the children to become part of are limited. Attention may wane quickly.
C	Static/ interactive display	Similar to a drop in session for a number of children to have individual contact with the team. Can also capture parents.	Need to ensure that there were interests for a wide range of ages.	1-6 hours	The School Hall or use gazebo in an outdoor space. May need to be a large space. Need to consider crowd control in this space.	Space to set up and commitment to bring children to the team	At least 3 staff – depends on scale	>60 Whole school	High time/ high cost	Allows classes of students to peruse as it suits the class.	Session may have less structure.
D	Lesson plan for teachers (to be developed)	To allow the teachers to communicate the messages to the students	Can be tailored for all ages.	Nil	Nil	High input from teachers and commitment to deliver messages themselves	1 staff to deliver material	Whole school	Low time/ low cost	No input from team and a large number of children can receive message.	There is no control on how the session is delivered as we do not present.
E	Teach the teachers/ PTA or Board of Trustees	To allow the teachers to communicate the messages to the students	All ages	2 hours	Space in the staff room	High input from teachers and commitment to deliver messages themselves	2 staff	Whole school	Low time/ low cost	Little input from team and a large number of children can receive message	There is no control on how the session is delivered as we do not present.
F	Site visit	To get children to understand what is happening on site and what are some specific safety requirements of the site.	All ages	1 hour	Nil	Assist in picking the children to attend.	One teacher to accompany group	<20	Medium time/ medium cost	Very engaging experience.	Only a small number of children have this experience.
G	Kids teach kids (to be developed)										

## Appendix 2 – Engagement Activities

Engagement Activities that can be used within techniques above							
	Activity	Tools required	Communication outcome	Length of activity	Cost/Time	Value	Limitation
	Set up at School	Display Banners SCIRT flag Gazebo if required 3x people Photo display board	N/A	1 hour		To be ready to engage with children at the time agreed with the School.	Timing of set up will depend on when SCIRT is able to access the area.
	Advertise in school newsletter	Advert	Inform the parents Include in newsletter: - who we are - safety message - contact information - invite parents to session	N/A	Low cost and time	Great way to capture parents and invite them to the session.	Relies on children taking it home unless distributed via e-mail.
Core activity	Introduction about SCIRT and the session/briefing	A question/interview session Script	Who SCIRT is What we do Be alert, be careful, bee safe	10 mins	Time for staff	Gives children an overview of the session and key messages.	Need to be engaging and short to keep attention of children.
	Under the road (to be developed)	Show a diagram of what services are under the road	Share the complexity of the programme of works and why SCIRT may be in their street more than once.	10 mins	Cost for diagram development and staff explanation.	Shows the complex task ahead of the team. A diagram can be taken home to share with parents.	May be more suitable for older children.
Core activity	Construction worker visit	Construction worker Q and A session	Specific work outside school Be safe	15 mins	Time for staff	Gives children the opportunity to talk directly to someone doing the work.	Need to be able to get a worker who is suitable and who has time to attend.
	Pipe Display/photos of sites	Photos Pipes	What we do	15 mins	One off cost for pipe	Shows children real life examples of our work and in a visual way.	
	Construction site set up – this could be done outside  Road signage, explain what the signs mean.	Trucks, Road cones, road signs, sandbags	How to keep safe around a work site – look out for signs	30 mins	One off cost for toy diggers and trucks and road signs.	Involves children in a hands on way, doing the activity helps with their understanding of our work.	Number of children to be able to do activity at once.
	Sheet piling display (to be developed)	Perspex display	Describe why high impact work such as sheet piling is important.	30 mins	One off cost for materials.	Explain high impact works in an engaging way.	Developing this activity may cost a lot of money.
	Dress the dummy in safety gear (this kit could be lent to the teachers for their lesson plans).	Dress the dummy in safety gear (this kit could be lent to the teachers for their lesson plans).	Dress the dummy in safety gear (this kit could be lent to the teachers for their lesson plans).	30 mins	One off cost for material. Time for staff.	A very interactive activity that helps students understand SCIRT safety practices.	This activity shares SCIRT safety practices but not how the children can keep safe.
	Pamphlet to take away  Giveaways	Pamphlet Stickers Magnets- be safe bee	Take home message – who we are, what we do, be safe. Accesses parents at home.	10 mins at end of session		Key messaging gets home to parents.	Maybe more appropriate for older children.
	Competition	Colouring competition (optional for age)	Opportunity to come back- reinforce messages as winner could get a site visit for example	20 mins – 10 mins to introduce and 10 mins to come back to school and announce	Printing cost and crayon cost	Great for younger children to get involved in a hands on activity.	Suitable for younger children only.
	Roadworks book	Roadworks book	Explains what contractors do in a fun interactive way.	15 mins	\$11 one off cost	Great for engaging young children with an interactive story and bright pictures.	Suitable for younger children in a classroom session.
	Thank you gift to school or classroom	SCIRT Be safe BEE sign	Opportunity to recognise the children's input within the session. Opportunity to come back- reinforces key messages. Makes SCIRT memorable.	10 mins to prepare and send to school	Cost of sign	Reminds the school of our visit and reinforces key safety message.	



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## SCHOOL VISIT – ENGAGEMENT PLAN

**School identified in CCP:**      Y / N

**School to visit:** .....

**School contact details:** .....

**Age groups to visit:** .....                    **Date visit is planned:** .....

**Delivery team leading visit:** .....

**What is the project that is relevant to the school?**

**Technique chosen:**

**Reasons for choosing technique:**

**Staffing requirements:**

**Staffing requirements:**

**Other information:**

## Proposed Programme

Time	Activity	Resources	Communication Outcome

## Approval

	Delivery Team Peer Review	IAT Peer reviewed by
Schools engagement plan prior to discussion with school	Reviewed by:	IAT Review:
	Signed:  Date:	Signed:  Date:

**Feedback sought from schools (refer to feedback form)**

**Y / N**

## Appendix 4 – Feedback Form Template



SCIRT is rebuilding the city's earthquake damaged roads, water, wastewater and stormwater pipes.

## SCIRT SCHOOL VISIT FEEDBACK FORM

Thank you for the opportunity to visit your school to talk to your students about the work of the Stronger Christchurch Infrastructure Rebuild Team (SCIRT) and how they can keep safe around our work sites.

Your feedback is important to us and will help us to identify ways to improve our communication. We are seeking your feedback on the visit. We will pop back and pick up the form next week.

Please make an assessment about our visit:

	Assessment ( <i>tick rating</i> )			Comments
	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	
Prior to the visit there was enough information provided to the school and teachers				
During the visit, we effectively communicated who SCIRT is and what we do				
During the visit, we effectively communicated 'Be alert – Be careful – Bee safe'				
During the visit, we kept to planned timeframes				
The information was pitched at the right age group for the children involved				

	<b>Comments</b>
What worked well in this session?	
What didn't work so well in this session?	
How/ where can we make improvements?	
Would you recommend the visit to other schools?	Yes or No (please circle one) Please explain your reasons:

<b>Name of person providing feedback</b>	
<b>Role</b>	
<b>School</b>	
<b>Session</b>	
<b>Date of session</b>	

**Thank you for taking the time to give us feedback.**

**Your feedback will be shared with our team to assist with our continual improvement.**

**We appreciated the opportunity to visit your school and hope that the visit was of value to you.**

**Kind regards,**

**SCIRT TEAM**

**For SCIRT use only (do not send this part to the school)**

**Self-Evaluation**

	Assessment ( <i>tick rating</i> )			Comments
	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	
Prior to the visit there was enough information provided to the school and teachers				
During the visit, we effectively communicated who SCIRT is and what we do				
During the visit, we effectively communicated 'Be alert – Be careful – Bee safe'				
During the visit, we kept to planned timeframes				
The information was pitched at the right age group for the children involved				

	Comments
What worked well in this session?	
What didn't work so well in this session?	
How/ where can we make improvements?	
Would you recommend the visit to other schools?	Yes or No (please circle one) Please explain your reasons:

**Delivery Team: lessons learned**

<b>Follow up actions:</b>	<b>Person Responsible:</b>
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<b>Completed by:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
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<b>Circulated to:</b>	<b>Project file:</b>	<b>IAT Communication Coordinator – Strategic Projects</b>	<b>Communication Manager:</b>
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## **MODEL RELEASE FORM**

**Model's name:** ..... **Telephone:** .....

**Address:** .....

**Photographer:** ..... **Date:** .....

**Location:** .....

**Description:** .....

- *This photograph has been taken on behalf of SCIRT for use in ways including the following: publications, brochures, newsletters, books, leaflets and the Internet, etc.*
- *I hereby give SCIRT my permission for the images taken of me to be used for such purposes.*
- *I understand my details will not be disclosed without my permission.*

**Signature:** ..... **Date:** .....

\* *If signed on behalf of model by guardian, please fill in the following:*

**Guardian's name:** .....

**Address (if different from above):** .....

**Telephone:** .....

## Appendix 6 – Key Messages

### Simplified Key Messages for Schools:

- Who is SCIRT and what do we do: SCIRT is working with a number of different companies, the Council and the Government to repair the sewer, water pipes and roads after the earthquakes.
- Safety: "Be alert – Be Careful and Bee safe"

### Background to Key Messages:

Topic	Messages
WHAT AND WHO IS SCIRT? WHAT IS AN ALLIANCE?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Stronger Christchurch Infrastructure Rebuild team is a partnership formed between Christchurch City Council (CCC), Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Agency (CERA), New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA), City Care, Downer, Fletcher Construction, Fulton Hogan, and MacDow for the rebuild of the city's earthquake damaged infrastructure.</li><li>• The Stronger Christchurch Rebuild project will be working closely with CERA, CCC and other agencies to align planning with other earthquake recovery efforts in the city to ensure an effective, timely and coordinated rebuilding and recovery effort for Christchurch.</li><li>• The Stronger Christchurch Infrastructure Rebuild Team (SCIRT) is repairing the city's roads, water supply and wastewater system following the September 2010 and February 2011 earthquakes and aftershocks.</li><li>• Alliance partnerships are a proven way of delivering the best results on major infrastructure projects, including bringing innovation and value for money. All organisations involved commit to working closely together to achieve the best outcome for the city.</li><li>• SCIRT contractors were appointed following the 4 September 2010 earthquake because they had a proven track record of working on Council projects, understood the city and its infrastructure and had the project and construction management capability to manage large-scale contract works.</li></ul>

## Key Message

- SCIRT is a partnership formed between CCC, CERA, NZTA, City Care, Downer, Fletcher Construction, Fulton Hogan and MacDow to undertake the city's earthquake damaged infrastructure. SCIRT will be working closely with CERA, the Government agency set up to co-ordinate and lead the ongoing earthquake recovery, and CCC, the owners of the city's horizontal infrastructure.

Topic	Messages
SAFETY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Safety is our number one priority. We have a culture of safety which means that we plan and undertake all activities to safeguard the safety of our communities, motorists and our workers.</li><li>• Safety is your responsibility too. Stay clear and stay alert – keep children and pets at a safe distance. Be on the lookout for changed traffic conditions and drive to the conditions. Stay within the speed limit.</li><li>• When travelling to your destination, always allow extra time in case you come across road works on route</li><li>• Our work crews are well trained and highly visible, but they are not bullet proof! Please be alert and follow instructions and temporary speed limits when driving through our work sites.</li></ul>

## Key Message

Safety is our number one priority. Safety is your responsibility too – Let's stay safe together!

Be alert – Be careful- Be safe!

## Appendix 7 - List of Collateral at IAT

Items
SCIRT - who we are brochures
Parking cone stressies
Hard hat stressies
Old version hard hat magnet
Bee magnet
Hard hat magnet
Contact cards
Pens - Fluoro
Pens - Eco
DLE brochure stand
Business card stand
Bee Safe Bee Stickers
3x6m gazebo 3x3m gazebo
A2 posters for display stands (who we are, safety and keeping in touch)
Old Factsheets
1
2
3
4
5
6
New Factsheets
1
2
3
4
5
6
Orange corflute sign - square work in progress
Orange corflute sign - works end
Orange corflute sign - please stop on request
Orange corflute sign - one lane
Orange corflute sign - stop
Orange corflute sign - merge
Orange corflute sign - traffic lights
Pull-up Banner - generic SCIRT info
Pull-up Banner - four delivery teams
Pull-up banner - three govt agencies
Pull-up banner - SCIRT mission statement
Teardrop banner and water base
Big road cones
Safety mannequins