

Australian technology company helps Christchurch rebuild

When the city of Christchurch – New Zealand’s second largest urban area and the economic hub of its South Island – was struck by a 6.3 magnitude earthquake in February 2011, it changed the landscape of the city forever and left its 376,000 population contemplating its future. More than six months on, Australian-based technology company QSR International’s innovative qualitative data analysis software NVivo 9 has helped make sure that the people of Christchurch have been able to have a say in the way their city is to be rebuilt. Following the earthquake, Christchurch City Council embarked on a public engagement campaign called Share an Idea aimed at maximizing the community’s involvement in redeveloping a sustainable and friendly central city. Suggestions from members of the public have been received in all forms, including comments on shareanidea.org.nz, as well as sticky notes, video clips, questionnaires, children’s art, video clips and telephone messages – in total, over 100,000 ideas were received. In order to evaluate these suggestions, Christchurch City Council engaged research services agency Academic Consulting Ltd which used NVivo 9 software alongside Council’s own researchers to analyse the public’s ideas. With the help of NVivo 9, Christchurch City Council was able to look at the data collected from the public and develop recommendations based on insight into what the community wanted. This information was then passed onto the planners designing the new city centre, ensuring that members of the public had a very real input into how their city is rebuilt. The analysis showed that things such as low rise, sustainable building that look good and function well, more green spaces in Cathedral Square and less concrete are all important considerations for the people who call Christchurch their home. Despite being one of the largest public consultation projects ever undertaken in the world, Patrick O’Neill, a lead Christchurch City Council researcher on the project, said that QSR’s NVivo technology made it a much simpler process. “The analysis of initial public ideas of what in normal times would be a two year scale project, took just eight weeks.” He commented, “NVivo 9 made it possible for us to look at the data in ways that simply would not have worked manually. For example, using the visualization tools such as word trees and tag clouds we were able to get a quick impression of the most important topics and give the planners immediate insight into the public’s ideas.” John Owen, CEO of QSR International, also commented, “We are extremely proud that our software is able to play some part in contributing to Christchurch’s ongoing recovery from such an overwhelming disaster. We look forward to seeing the Central City become a vibrant hub once more and a place that is a true reflection of its community.”

ENDS-About Christchurch City Council As the second largest Council in New Zealand, Christchurch City Council is responsible for ensuring that its 368,900 residents are well governed and provided for. Find out more at <http://www.ccc.govt.nz/>

About Academic Consulting Ltd Academic Consulting was formed in 1999 by Lyn Lavery, after she identified a clear demand for research consultancy and software training, amongst academic researchers and students. She initially set up the company whilst completing her PhD in Educational Psychology. While offering training and consulting services, Lyn identified a potential need for the provision of various research services such as transcription, data entry, document formatting, and data analysis. Since then, the company has seen a huge growth, and there are now approximately 10 full and part-time staff working at the company’s new office in Newmarket. Academic Consulting now offers a wide range of services relating to all stages of the research process. These services are utilised by academic researchers, postgraduate students, government departments, and corporate institutions. Find out more at <http://www.academic-consulting.co.nz/>

About Patrick O’Neill Since completion of Share an Idea, Patrick O’Neill has moved to Lincoln University’s AERU (Christchurch) as a Senior Researcher. AERU specializes in sustainable well-being social and economic research for New Zealand and overseas government departments, international agencies and private companies. Find out more at: <http://www.lincoln.ac.nz/aeru>

About QSR International QSR has offices in the UK, the USA and Australia. The company’s NVivo software helps users to access, organize and analyze unstructured information in material like documents, pictures, audio, video, spreadsheets and database tables. Over 500,000 people use the software, spanning more than 150 countries. Users come from virtually every field – from policy development and health, to academia, and program evaluation. QSR’s latest software package, NVivo 9, was released in October 2010. Built for team research, QSR’s NVivo Server 9 software lets users analyze and manage NVivo 9 projects centrally so that a team can work together on the same project at the same time. Find out more at www.qsrinternational.com

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