



## When disaster strikes, who can you call?

Plan-b and TelstraClear have combined to provide fast relief for calamity-struck companies

**W**hen fire ripped through the Auckland building of URS, an international engineering consultancy, the company was forced to vacate its College Hill premises. To where?

They went to Plan-b – quite literally.

Plan-b is a business continuity specialist. When a call for help goes up from one of its customers, it needs to reassure them quickly and calmly that their world will soon be put right again.

“In times of stress customers are looking for a calm, experienced and knowledgeable partner to help them and we’re practised at it,” says Symon

Thurlow, Technical Director of the 12-year-old Albany-based company, which has customer emergency standby facilities in Albany and Mt Wellington (Auckland), Hamilton, Wellington and Christchurch.

“We are an insurance product that provides our customers with the peace of mind that even if the worst happens, they’ll still be able to operate, communicate with their customers and preserve their goodwill and reputation.”

### Fast service

Symon Thurlow says Plan-b has several

### KEY POINTS

- Plan-b provides business continuity services to over 500 organisations around New Zealand.
- TelstraClear forms a key part of Plan-b’s ‘nerve centre’ protection.
- Engineering company URS had key telco infrastructure replaced within four hours following a major fire – a turnaround typically unheard of in disaster recovery.



PHOTO BY: JESSIE CASSON

*“While the entire building wasn’t destroyed, two floors were severely damaged by fire, water and smoke, so they moved into a Plan-b recovery facility for about six weeks while they organised longer-term temporary accommodation. As for their nerve centre, they were back up and running in a matter of hours”.*

Symon Thurlow, Technical Director, Plan-b

“activations” like the URS one each year when an entire business has to relocate to a standby business recovery facility.

“While Plan-b is well rehearsed in recreating a customers’ entire nerve centre in rapid time, fortunately in the case of URS, some of the critical IT infrastructure was not damaged in the fire, which facilitated the rapid restoration of critical services at the Plan-b business recovery facility within a few hours.

By utilising most of their existing IT infrastructure, the biggest task was relocating people and connecting the data circuit and phones to Plan-b.”

The new circuit was provided by TelstraClear within four hours, says Symon Thurlow, a turnaround that’s almost unheard of.

A similarly rapid response was received when Plan-b opened its most recent business recovery facility in Christchurch, which TelstraClear connected to its fibre network within five days, when a three-week turnaround is more the norm.

### Nerve centres

Plan-b’s 500 plus customers rely on it for varying levels of protection of their organisation’s “nerve centres”. That can range from providing a full backup of office functions in the event of a major catastrophe, to rescuing the data from a failed computer server and quickly restoring functionality onto standby infrastructure at Plan-b.

“The nerve centre is what a business uses to communicate with its customers and suppliers, and every business has one. You need to be able to buy stuff from your suppliers and you need to be able to sell it and bill your customers.”

Depending on the severity of interruption to normal business, two things can happen. At the very least, competitors can be expected to start courting customers left without access to products or services.

At worst, experience suggests as many as three-quarters of organisations that suffer complete loss of business records fail within six months, Symon

Thurlow says.

If the calamity is of a scale that forces a customer out of their premises, Plan-b has facilities in Auckland, Hamilton, Wellington and Christchurch that they can move into, or they can relocate to one of two mobile business recovery units.

“While customers vary dramatically in size from large multinationals to typical New Zealand SMEs, most probably have 30 to 250 employees and five to 30 computer servers” Symon Thurlow says.

What they all have in common is a need to remain available to customers and suppliers in the event that their communications and computer systems are knocked out.

### One secure place

That might sound a simple requirement. But in the data communications world, speed of service provision is not necessarily that easy — it can take weeks to install a fibre-optic connection, for example.

The answer is to have the physical connection in place, and only switch on the service when it's needed. But Symon Thurlow says that calls for flexibility on the telecommunications provider's part, since they're being asked to provide a comprehensive infrastructure and be ready to jump when an emergency strikes.

It's not the usual service to find in a telco's product portfolio, but Symon Thurlow says TelstraClear has tailored its offerings to meet Plan-b's and their customers' needs in the course of a successful nine-year relationship.

“TelstraClear understands our unique requirements. We have lots of data circuits that are up all the time and we pretty much never use them. But when we do need them, we need them immediately.”

The key to Plan-b's happy relationship with the telco is attentive account management, Symon Thurlow says, and ready access to expert technical help provided by TelstraClear's Solution Specialist Tim Morris. Typically Plan-b will approach its Account Manager, Sarah Parsons, with a requirement, and she will come back with a customised solution.

“That beats being limited to what's in a telco's product suite. The end result is they're well tuned in to what our needs are.”

For its part, it means Plan-b is ready to hold the hand of any customer that finds itself in need of emergency help.

To discover how TelstraClear can provide the right solution for your business, simply call **0508 BUSINESS (287 463)** or visit **[www.telstraclear.co.nz](http://www.telstraclear.co.nz)**

## Plan-b

- New Zealand's largest dedicated business continuity specialist.
- Provides contingency services, including backup and replication, server recovery testing, access to standby infrastructure and facilities and crisis simulation exercises.
- Customers have access to tested and proven recovery expertise, a significant suite of standby infrastructure and emergency standby business recovery facilities located in Auckland, Hamilton, Wellington and Christchurch, in addition to two mobile business recovery units.



# Why TelstraClear?

Telecommunications is one of the world's fastest changing industries.

In New Zealand, TelstraClear has developed its own network and range of leading edge voice, data, internet and mobile solutions for New Zealand businesses. Many of the largest organisations in New Zealand rely on TelstraClear to provide their national and Trans-Tasman communication solutions. For these organisations, and many more, TelstraClear has shown it is adept at understanding the complexity of its customers' operations and designing relevant and reliable solutions. Our relationship with New Zealand businesses is based around four fundamental core offerings:

## 1 SERVICE

We understand and respect the needs of your business.

## 2 TECHNOLOGY

A complete range of services that are scalable to your business's changing needs, and organisational complexity.

## 3 TRUST

A company that you can rely on to deliver on the most challenging requirements

## 4 VALUE

Market Competitive solutions designed for your business.

When we combine these four elements we develop long term relationships with our customers. We can then ensure that our customers have the right products and plans to support their success with their own customers.

We also support the communities that support us. As part of our corporate social responsibility programme we work with children and young people, to help them develop the confidence they need to succeed and ensure a brighter future for all New Zealanders.

With TelstraClear, you are joining forces with one of the most dynamic communications companies in New Zealand that is backed by Australasia's largest and most progressive telecommunications company, Telstra Australia.

**We have the right technology, the right people and the right attitude.**