



TWO MINUTES WITH...

Builders at Worcester Street's Club Tower this week polished their rescue skills on a dummy suspended from the eighth floor. Hawkins Construction's project manager Paul Youngman told KATIE WYLIE about the drill.

The dummy takes the fall

Paul, how are things going?

Better than some projects within the town limits.

I guess the weather hasn't come to your party lately.

The weather has been problematic but we're just trying to deal with it as best we can.

How many floors is the tower?

Eleven floors. Just the roof and walls to go now.

That's high enough to have a word with the weatherman direct, isn't it?

I'm afraid I need to get up a few more rungs before God and I are on speaking terms.

And how many men are working on site?

We're probably running around 60 or 70 a day.

So was it just the one dummy on site this week?

There were a lot of dummies on site but there's only one we threw out of the building.

Just as well. What were you doing?

It's New Zealand Safety Week at the moment and we just got Site Safe audited so we thought we'd do an in-house rescue exercise just to see how we would react. It was in a timely manner.

Kind of crucial if you're hanging by a harness eight floors up.

You only have about a seven-minute span in those harnesses before the blood is cut off to the legs or whatever, so it's quite important that you get them down quickly. It's not the height of the fall that kills you, it's the sudden stop.

Poor dummy. Did he have a name?

Nicholas, they call him. Normally he's not dressed but he was that day.

So what happened to Nudie Nick?

At midday we huffed him out the window. His theoretical work partner then found him, sounded the alarm, we evacuated the building. Then the two boys got harnessed up, they went up in a man cage and got this man down and got him back on the ground.

Did you say a man cage?

It's a cage that takes two men. The man cage allows you to work from that height and is suspended from the crane.

Doesn't it take women?

Well, it would if you came to site but normally we just have blokes. I don't know where Nicholas would be if you were up in that cage.

Still dangling probably. Did staff think the drill was the real deal?

We didn't let the whole site know but one or two key people did. It was just a way for us to test some of our theoretical ideas. If you had an earthquake you might have guys buried under various things at various floors and you might have to work out which one's the most serious, who needs a bit of attention first, who's just hollering 'cause his Mum ain't close.

Talking about needing attention, how was Nick after his mid-air antics?

We reckon we got him down within the seven minutes. Theoretically he should have still had some circulation going somewhere.

And able to walk away from it all, legs intact. Good stuff.



Weekend Press
Saturday 6/9/2008
Page: 17
Section: Perspective
Region: Christchurch
Type: Metro
Size: 414.15 sq.cms.
Published: -----S-

Index: 1.5
Brief: LATITUDEW
Page 2 of 2



Rescue drill: Hawkins Construction foreman Paul Youngman and a colleague rescue Nicholas the dummy during a safety exercise. Photo: Dean Kozanic