

Land Use Recovery Plan will provide certainty

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Environment Canterbury has announced the start of community consultation on the draft Land Use Recovery Plan for greater Christchurch.

Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Minister Gerry Brownlee gave Environment Canterbury responsibility for developing the plan.

Chair of Commissioners Dame Margaret Bazley told community leaders the plan aims to provide certainty regarding land use for residences and businesses and a framework for land use decision-making for years to come.

“Stakeholders and the wider community will have a number of opportunities to participate in developing this important plan for the future of Christchurch,” Dame Margaret said.

“The plan will help make sure new houses, businesses and community facilities are built in the best possible locations, with efficient connections and infrastructure.

“We need certainty for residents seeking new places to live, with easy access to schools, shops and workplaces; for businesses looking for new premises, with reliable access for freight and customers; for councils deciding where to provide new infrastructure and set priorities for repairs to damaged facilities, and for investors searching for opportunities to participate in the recovery.”

The Land Use Recovery Plan will provide an overview of the way greater Christchurch will recover and develop as a whole, while also maintaining and enhancing the best of individual communities.

Dame Margaret acknowledged the role of the strategic partners in developing the draft plan. The partners talked with key stakeholders in a series of workshops in late 2012. Contributions from the workshops are included in the consultation document. Follow-up workshops for stakeholders and the general public are being held as part of the consultation process.

Encouraging community leaders and others to “make three calls” about the plan to family, friends and colleagues, Dame Margaret said maximum participation is critical to its success.

“The partners welcome all ideas and possible solutions so we can be confident the plan will best reflect the needs of everyone in greater Christchurch.”

Following the consultation process, the draft recovery plan will be presented to Minister Brownlee by the middle of this year. Mr Brownlee will call for written comments before considering the draft plan.

For the timetable for April community workshops and other information on the Land Use Recovery Plan for greater Christchurch, go to www.developingchoices.org.nz. Written comments close on Monday 22 April.

The strategic partners are the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority, Environment Canterbury, Christchurch City Council, Selwyn District Council, Waimakariri District Council, Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu and the New Zealand Transport Agency.

Statements from the partners:

Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority Chief Executive Roger Sutton says CERA welcomes the release of the draft plan. "We encourage the community to have their say and will continue to work with Environment Canterbury and other strategic partners on finalising a draft document for the Minister's consideration in June," he said.

Tā Mark Solomon, Kaiwhakahaere Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu, says "Ngāi Tahu welcomes the collaborative nature of this plan and encourages whānau and the community to attend the consultation hui and to have a say."

Councillor Sue Wells, Christchurch City Council Planning Committee Chair, says the Land Use Recovery Plan is an important document, designed to assist in decision-making around land use and infrastructure investment in the short to medium term, post-earthquake. "Consultation on the draft Recovery Plan is an important first step and the Council is committed, along with other partners, to listening to what the community says in developing a strong document to go to the Minister."

Waimakariri Mayor David Ayers said: "With rapid changes in population post-earthquake, we need a plan to work to as new housing developments occur in places like Kaiapoi, Rangiora and Woodend."

"Selwyn District Council welcomes the release of the plan, which will help to provide certainty for our communities about future land use," says Selwyn Mayor Kelvin Coe. "This is particularly important in Selwyn as the fastest growing district in the region. We encourage local communities to read the plan and make a submission."

The NZ Transport Agency supports the Land Use Recovery Plan as a sound basis for recovery from the earthquakes, says NZTA Southern Regional Director Jim Harland. "It also provides a platform for investment in Canterbury's transport networks, including passenger transport and freight, which will assist with the rebuilding and future growth of Canterbury."