

Media Release

Fish, eels, punts return to cleaner Avon River

Release Date: 30 March 2015

Associate Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Minister Nicky Wagner today welcomed the completion of more than a year's worth of cleaning and rehabilitation of the Ōtākaro/Avon River.

"The in-river works, which finished this week, mean fish are flourishing, water is flowing faster and the riverbed is cleaner," Ms Wagner says.

"The work has also had an immediate tourism benefit, as deepening the riverbed in some areas has allowed Christchurch's iconic punts to extend their river route and travel upstream even at low water levels during summer.

"The work to improve the health of the waterway and re-establish habitats has been a major feat, with almost 10,000 tonnes of liquefaction sand and silt being removed.

"Crews also cleaned 15,000 square metres of gravel beds, rescued more than 1,500 fish and planted 9,630 plants along a 2.9km stretch of the river.

"Experts tell us they have already seen evidence of increased trout spawning, fish diversity and an improvement with the in-stream habitat at various locations along the river.

"We also have reports that just days after building the specially-created eel boulder holes, scientists found a large long-fin eel had taken up residence in one of them.



Children stand on one of the newly created fresh plains to watch the wildlife. Photo © EOS Ecology www.eosecology.co.nz

"This much healthier river will be an even more beautiful attraction bringing people back to Christchurch to stroll along the promenade and enjoy the vibrancy of the central city," Ms Wagner says.

The work was conducted as part of Te Papa Ōtākaro/Avon River Precinct, one of the Government's Anchor Projects. More details can be found here:

<http://ccdu.govt.nz/projects-and-precincts/te-papa-otakaro-avon-river-precinct>

Read the original media release on the Beehive website.

Related story: Threatened native species flourishing in river 26 September 2014