

# Media Release

## Avon River restoration programme an exciting opportunity

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Intensive landscape enhancement that would normally take up to 20 years to complete will be undertaken in less than four years as part of the Te Papa Ōtākaro/Avon River Precinct development.

Work is about to commence on the next stage of the Precinct - one of the Anchor Projects led by the Christchurch Central Development Unit (CCDU). In the development of the Avon River Precinct, and public space in the adjoining North and East Frame, 1700 new, established trees will be planted, along with more than 100,000 exotic and native shrubs.

"Potentially there is 10 to 20 years of tree planting work ahead of us and the fact that we intend to do it in the next three to four years is something remarkable," says CCDU director Warwick Isaacs.

"The result will be a fantastic asset for the people of Christchurch."

The project team worked with Christchurch City Council to carry out a thorough assessment of about 750 trees within Te Papa Ōtākaro/Avon River Precinct and the North and East Frame to determine their health, likely lifespan and contribution to the fabric of the inner-city.

Of these, 183 trees have been identified for removal because they are decayed, structurally unsound or have poor growth.

"This project gives us the opportunity to look at the long-term life of the trees. If they have any disease or pose any risk to people we can take them out and replenish that stock," says Mr Isaacs.

"While we will retain the existing canopy of exotic trees that is so crucial to the Precinct, this will be interwoven with new exotic and native trees that will add to its character."

Earlier this year two mature trees near the Bridge of Remembrance were urgently removed as they were in such a decayed condition that any high winds would have put their large branches at risk of breaking.

The two willows in Victoria Square that will be removed next are also extensively decayed. The removal is expected to take 10 days.

Mr Isaacs says the Watermark section of the Avon River Precinct is a good example of what kinds of plants and trees will populate the river banks.

"Our aim is to accentuate the green, garden city look that Christchurch is known for. Adding 1700 new trees will ensure our river park is a beautiful and ecological asset to the new-look city."

The next round of plantings will be part of the Terraces development in the area between Cashel and Hereford streets.

Mr Isaacs says trees, especially grand landmark trees, are understandably treasured by the community. Great care has been taken in the planning of this river development to ensure the Avon River Precinct is a safe and rejuvenated space.

"Our plan is firmly aimed at the future, preserving the best of what we have as well as creating a new green living space that best highlights the jewel of our city, Ōtākaro/Avon River Precinct."

The Avon River Precinct is a \$96 million project and stretches the 3.2km from Christchurch Hospital to Fitzgerald Avenue bridge, enhancing the 30 metres of each side of the river.