

Media Release

Exciting vision put forward for Waimakariri red zones

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The Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority (CERA) and Waimakariri District Council say the public has put forward an exciting vision of open spaces with a community focus for the Waimakariri red zones.

"People have told us that they want to see the natural environment restored so that community activities can take place and new community facilities can be developed. They would also like a place to remember the earthquakes and what happened to the land," says CERA Acting Chief Executive John Ombler.

Waimakariri District Mayor David Ayers has welcomed today's release of the summary of the public conversation on future use.

"Canvas was a valuable exercise for the District's red zones," Mr Ayers says.

"It's important that the end use of these areas reflects and encompasses what the community needs and the Canvas ideas have provided us with a good basis for drawing up some options. The summary of the community feedback will help us do this before going back to the community for their input."

The Canvas public engagement process ran for six weeks from 30 July to 12 September. Over this time, nearly 600 people contributed their vision, from which more than 2750 ideas and values were identified for the future use of the red zones in Waimakariri.

Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Minister Gerry Brownlee says the engagement has been a real success in encouraging public discussion about the future use of the land.

"The leadership of the Mayor and the Waimakariri District Council has also been crucial in getting the community involved in looking ahead to that future use," Mr Brownlee says.

Mr Ombler says recreation has emerged as the most popular theme from the public engagement, with contributions ranging from walkways to BMX parks to community gardens.

"This is strongly supported by requests to create natural reserves and restore native ecosystems. People are also interested in business and commercial opportunities such as markets, cafes, festivals and entertainment events," Mr Ombler says.

"We invited people to share what values they wanted reflected in the land as well as what activities people wanted for the red zones. The public has given us a strong indication of what they wish to see in those areas."

"This information will now be considered as part of the next steps in the future use process."

A total of one square kilometre of land has been red zoned in Kaiapoi and Pines/Kairaki Beaches. The areas were zoned red due to earthquake damage and potential for future

damage. Of the 1048 properties that were red zoned in the Waimakariri district, owners of just 37 properties have chosen not to accept a voluntary offer from the Crown.

The clearance of all Crown-owned properties in Pines and Kairaki Beaches is almost complete. The clearance of houses from Crown-owned properties in Kaiapoi will be completed by the end of May with the removal of any remaining structures, such as driveways and footpaths, before being grassed by the end of September next year.

CERA, Waimakariri District Council, Environment Canterbury and Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu will now work through a range of options to consider how the ideas from the public might be realised ahead of presenting these ideas to the public for further feedback in 2015.

Public engagement on the Christchurch red zones will happen at a later date.

Read the report here and contributions to the Canvas public engagement process can be found at canvasredzone.org.nz