

# Media Release

## Govt agrees to Chch council plan review request

Release Date: 10 July 2014

Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Minister Gerry Brownlee and Environment Minister Amy Adams today announced the Government has agreed to a request by the Christchurch City Council for an accelerated district plan review process.

At present, Christchurch has two district plans – the Christchurch City Plan and the Banks Peninsula District Plan. Both plans were developed in the 1990s and have been amended incrementally since then.

However, the district plans were never designed to cope with the amount of repair and rebuild necessary to recover from the earthquakes.

Given the potential for the usual district plan review process to take up to 10 years, Christchurch City Council was concerned the existing planning regime would lead to delays in rebuilding activity.

"The Government agrees with the Christchurch City Council that a standard plan-making process will take too much time, given the urgent need in Christchurch to get a new district plan in place," Ms Adams says.

"In order to be equipped to deal with the wider earthquake recovery, the Christchurch City Council needs an up-to-date and effective district plan, which enables land use development and positive investment decisions."

Mr Brownlee says an up-to-date and effective plan will provide certainty during the rebuild in Christchurch and beyond.

"A faster review process will remove unnecessary regulatory impediments and delays and will help ensure that the rebuild of Christchurch can progress as quickly as possible," he says.

"The district plan will support the growth and rebuild of Christchurch, including the estimated \$4 billion of infrastructure repair and significant residential development of more than 130,000 properties.

"Christchurch's economy is too important to New Zealand to wait for up to a decade for the plan to be implemented."

The district plan review will include opportunities for the people of Christchurch to have their say. The process has been designed to encourage constructive and positive discussions in the early stages of the review.

The district plan review will be progressed by an Order in Council through the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Act.

Ministers will appoint an independent hearings panel later this year to consider submissions and make final decisions on the plan.

However, to allow the scheduling and planning of the hearings process, the Government has decided to appoint Sir John Hansen as chairperson of the hearings panel immediately.

Appointing the chairperson now will avoid delays once the remainder of the panel is appointed, the Ministers say.

Sir John is a former high court judge and will bring a wealth of legal experience and knowledge of Christchurch to the role.

The plan review process limits appeals on decisions made by the hearings panel to High Court appeals on points of law only.

"We want to encourage constructive public engagement in the submissions process and the hearings process, rather than slow progress with costly legal battles in the Environment Court," Ms Adams says.

Decisions on the replacement District Plan will be done in stages. The first stage will focus on priority matters with decisions in early 2015, while the next stages will deal with more general matters, with final decisions by March 2016.

For more information on the Christchurch District Plan review go to:  
[www.legislation.govt.nz/regulation/public/2014/0228/latest/DLM6190883.html?src=qs](http://www.legislation.govt.nz/regulation/public/2014/0228/latest/DLM6190883.html?src=qs)