

Media Release

Performing Arts Precinct designation partially lifted

Release Date: 22 April 2014

Christchurch City Council's decision to spend \$127.5 million fixing the Town Hall means not all the land currently designated for the city's Performing Arts Precinct is required, Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Minister Gerry Brownlee says.

"In fairness to private property owners I have signed off lifting the designation on 1.07 hectares of land that was originally earmarked for purchase by the Crown for the Performing Arts Precinct."

The owners of nine properties in this northern part of the originally proposed precinct area will receive formal notification of the lifting of the designation. A letter will also be sent to Christchurch City Council's chief executive, directing the council to change the district plan to reflect the decision.

Mr Brownlee says lifting the designation on the north block of the precinct will allow property owners to proceed with their own development plans.

While the designation covering the remaining part of the Performing Arts Precinct is still in place, Mr Brownlee says further consideration is needed regarding development options for the block south of Armagh Street.

"When the design team planned the new CBD it looked at ways to use space in a co-ordinated way.

"Using the redeveloped Isaac Theatre Royal as an anchor around which to co-locate the Court Theatre, a facility for the Christchurch Symphony Orchestra, and the Music Centre of Christchurch was a well-considered and logical approach, not the least because it would have provided a critical mass of regular traffic to support business activity in the precinct.

"This of course would be right next door to the Convention Centre Precinct, which is envisaged to have mixed used development including hotel accommodation," Mr Brownlee says.

"However, what couldn't be factored in at that time, or later when the cost sharing agreement was signed, was the council's decision to repair the Town Hall.

"The Christchurch Central Development Unit has in recent weeks been engaging with the precinct's stakeholders on what this change means for them and what the possible next steps are.

"With leadership from CCDU, support from Christchurch City Council, and positive engagement with the Court Theatre, Symphony Orchestra and the Music Centre, realising the vision of the precinct in some form may still occur," Mr Brownlee says.