
Otakaro Avon River Corridor Regeneration Plan Approved

On Friday 23 August, the Minister for Greater Christchurch Regeneration announced her approval of the Otakaro Avon River Corridor Regeneration Plan. The Plan was developed by Regenerate Christchurch under the Greater Christchurch Regeneration Act 2016. It outlines the vision and objectives for the future of the 600ha Otakaro Avon River Corridor (the former residential red zone), and directs the inclusion of an accompanying planning framework to enable the realisation of that Vision.

This area is significant in many ways for Christchurch/Otautahi. It has been and continues to be an area comprising sites and geographical features of cultural importance to Te Runanga o Ngai Tahu and Te Ngai Tuahuriri Runanga. The area also comprises various other sites of historical significance to Christchurch/Otautahi and is traversed by the Otakaro Avon River which is itself a key feature of the city's identity and urban framework. In developing this Plan Regenerate Christchurch has therefore sought to acknowledge the significance of this area to the wider Christchurch/Otautahi community, as well as working with the environmental constraints and opportunities that it provides.

The process has taken time and has not been without its challenges – the size and geographical constraints of the area, the various interests and feedback from stakeholders, community groups and members of the public, and the uncertainties particularly around future implementation have all been matters to carefully consider and address. The Plan's vision and objectives and the accompanying framework for the Area are broad. While they have strong focus areas (including ecology, recreation, economic opportunity and community connection), they also seek to recognise that the regeneration of this Area will take time, and that new ideas, new technology and new activities which are not currently contemplated should be allowed to take place. The vision and objectives therefore operate as a touchstone against which future decisions can be made – ensuring a clear aspiration for the area while still allowing flexibility to adjust to a changing future.

The approval of the Plan by the Minister (and the Ombudsman's recent finding as

to its legal and evidential rigour) is a significant endorsement of the work done by the Regenerate Christchurch team on this project. Greenwood Roche lawyers, [Lauren Semple](#) and [Rachel Murdoch](#) have been privileged to advise Regenerate Christchurch on the development of this Plan, the exercise of its powers under the Act in respect of this and other projects, and its general regeneration mandate. It is extremely satisfying to see the Plan become operative and attention now turn to its implementation.

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