

Media Release

Equipment supply confirmed for world-class family playground

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A 10m-high climbing tower, double flying fox and a 4m-wide slide will be features of a new inner city family playground in Christchurch unlike anything seen in New Zealand before.

Playground equipment supplier PlayRope has been contracted by the Christchurch Central Development Unit (CCDU) to supply \$2 million worth of the highest quality equipment for the Margaret Mahy Family Playground. The first elements of the playground are expected to open to the public by Easter next year.

The playground will take up about one hectare of a 2.5ha block bounded by the Avon River, and Manchester, Madras and Armagh streets, and will include a café and amenities block.

"The cost of developing this whole block is \$20m, including site preparation, diversion of services, land remediation, decontamination, improvements to Armagh Street and significant earthworks," says CCDU director Warwick Isaacs.

"There has been some confusion about the cost of the playground itself, which works out to be about \$3 million for the playground equipment and surfaces. Considering the size of the playground, this is good value for money when you consider what it costs to establish a playground from scratch."

"The reason we are creating a family playground on such a scale is that we want this to be a real destination in its own right for children and their families from Christchurch and further afield. There are children growing up post-quake without any connection to our central city, and we want to attract them and their families back to see what is on offer. A playground of this scale also helps bring people together."

Mr Isaacs says the playground design will draw heavily on Canterbury themes such as the Canterbury Plains, coast, and wetlands, with water-play being a key feature of the playground.

The ideas of local children were gathered through the Amazing Place competition, and the stories of prominent authors Margaret Mahy and Elsie Locke, and those of Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu, are also drawn on in the design. The CCDU's design team has worked with PlayRope on specifically designed equipment required for the playground.

"Of course the safety of the playground users is paramount in the design and planning of the playground," Mr Isaacs says.

PlayRope managing director Graeme Gilson says his firm is excited by the opportunity to be involved with a project on this scale.

"The playground will contain some of the largest and most exciting playground structures ever to be manufactured by our supply partners," Mr Gilson says.

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"What most excites us is the opportunity to be involved with a team that is delivering a truly world class play space that will delight the children of greater Christchurch and bring a sense of pride to the local community."