

Media Release

Changes to speed up urban planning in Christchurch

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The Government has made changes to the Canterbury Regional Policy Statement to provide certainty to enable local authorities and developers to make land available for post earthquake residential development, Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Minister Gerry Brownlee announced today.

"The region's planning framework has to accommodate the extraordinary set of circumstances we face in Canterbury following the series of earthquakes over the last 13 months," Mr Brownlee said.

"It has to provide for the needs of families who have to relocate homes and rebuild their lives following the red zoning of their properties due to severe land damage incurred by the earthquakes.

"The Regional Policy Statement is the key document. It was in the process of being updated prior to the series of earthquakes that began in September last year. Appeals are currently being considered by the Environment Court.

"The Government believes that process needs to be sped up and modified to accommodate the events of the past 13 months," Mr Brownlee said.

Mr Brownlee said the changes involve revoking Proposed Change 1 to the Canterbury Regional Policy Statement and inserting a new chapter 12A.

The new chapter 12A incorporated into the Canterbury Regional Policy Statement:

- identifies areas available for urban development
- specifies residential densities
- makes provision for businesses
- requires local authorities to provide for sequencing of developments, and
- provides for form, design and development plans to enable integrated management

"The changes will require more intensive use of land within existing urban areas and provide for greenfield developments. They will accommodate both the population relocation forced by the earthquakes and population growth as the pace of rebuilding and development quickens."

Mr Brownlee said the changes to the Regional Policy Statement take effect from Monday (17 October 2011) when the public notice will be published.

"The new approach will consolidate and intensify growth in certain areas to reduce reliance on road transport while identifying environmental challenges, including risks such as liquefaction and rockfall," he said.

"The changes announced today have been made using the powers available in the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Act 2011. They are an interim measure intended to allow rapid adaptation to the new and demanding circumstances the region faces.

"The changes will provide certainty about the over-arching planning requirements. The urban limits set out in the changes will be reviewed as part of the proposed Land, Building and Infrastructure Recovery Plan to be developed by the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority (CERA)."

Today's announcement follows an announcement earlier this month the Government was making a one-off exemption to the Christchurch International Airport noise contour so as to free up more land in Kaiapoi for residential development.

"It is also part of the wider work underway to address housing supply matters across the greater Christchurch area," Mr Brownlee said.

Related information

- [Public notice: Canterbury Regional Policy Statement - Chapter 12A](#) (17 October 2011)
- [Canterbury Regional Policy Statement: Chapter 12A](#)
- Read the full [Canterbury Regional Policy Statement](#) on the Environment Canterbury website.