

Media Release

Construction begins on Bus Interchange

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Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Minister Gerry Brownlee says the successful contractors for Christchurch's new Bus Interchange will take control of the site today.

A joint venture between Australian company Thiess and Christchurch's Southbase has been appointed to build the \$53 million facility on a 14,000sqm block bounded by Sol Square, Tuam, Colombo and Lichfield streets.

"In keeping with the desire to create an accessible, safe, inner-city core, this Bus Interchange will be a welcoming and attractive place for people of all ages and physical abilities," Mr Brownlee says.

"The impressive building will define Colombo Street and create a landmark that encourages people to meet.

"Key features include airport-style lounges that will keep passengers completely separate from the bus circulation area, retail outlets, a café and dedicated waiting zones.

"It has been developed with a variety of transport modes in mind, with secure bicycle storage facilities, easy access to taxi ranks on Colombo Street and regional bus bays immediately outside on Lichfield Street.

"Close proximity to the South Frame and a dedicated Tuam Street cycle lane – along with priority being given to cyclists along Colombo Street – will ensure the Bus Interchange will be the starting point for access and use of the central city by very large numbers of people.

"Its location means almost any point in the new CBD will be no more than a five minute walk.

"And with an inner-city speed limit of 30km an hour, walking or cycling to work after arriving into the city by bus is going to be a much more attractive prospect.

"We are taking every opportunity to encourage more people to live, work and play in the CBD, and this facility will ensure the transport component of that aim is the very best experience it can be.

"We want to encourage more people to use buses and are doing this by creating services and a facility with future generations in mind," Mr Brownlee says.

The Bus Interchange will be the central anchor point of Environment Canterbury's proposed hubs and spokes model for public transport. The model includes five high-frequency core services that run across town every 10 to 15 minutes, all of which pass through the new interchange.

ECan's public transport vision also includes new super stops on Manchester Street and at Christchurch Hospital, bus priority on Riccarton Road and suburban hubs at Papanui and Riccarton.

With the land now cleared Christchurch residents can expect a relatively swift build, Mr Brownlee says.

"Construction will start on the foundations next month, with the structure becoming visible by October 2014 and the facility operational by winter 2015."