

Public Submissions Report

Report prepared by Academic Consulting Ltd on behalf of the

Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority (CERA)

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 **academic**consulting

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Introduction

The Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority (CERA) conducted a public consultation process that sought a range of inputs, including online and written submissions.

People were invited to complete a submission responding to the following questions:

- What is your vision for the recovery of greater Christchurch?
- What are the priorities for recovery in the next year? Two years? Five years?
- How can everyone work together towards recovery?

Contributions could be submitted by post (with a pre-printed form that folded into a freepost mailer) or online, using the same pre-printed format of the three questions.

There were 90 written submissions and 729 online submissions. Handwritten submissions were typed up and entered alongside the electronic submissions for analysis by a team of experienced qualitative researchers. Submissions were analysed in terms of each question, plus according to CERA's five-category Recovery Strategy framework: Community Wellbeing, Culture and Heritage, Built Environment, Economy, and Natural Environment.

The three sections of this report focus on the three questions. Each section begins with the question and the accompanying prompts on the pre-formatted submission form. Thus, the "Vision" question prompts people to consider what was "great before" and should be brought back, while the "Priorities" question lists the "worst affected communities" as a priority. People's submissions more or less focus on the areas suggested. Each section has some overview comments, and summary bullet points of the data according to the five categories of the Recovery Strategy, including verbatim phrases from submissions.

There were no clear differences between the content of answers given in the 90 handwritten submissions, as opposed to the 729 online responses submitted through the CERA website. Many handwritten submissions included an email address; therefore many of these submitters could have accessed an online format but chose not to. Some submitters identified themselves as members of community associations or organisations, but did not particularly specify that theirs was a "group" submission. Submissions were thus treated as individual responses of equivalent weight.

Analysis focused on highlighting the key ideas and suggestions that submitters made, including considering the contexts they referred to (e.g., how their stated personal circumstances might influence their choice of priorities). Statistical analysis was not appropriate, as this was not a representative population sample, but rather a range of people who were willing to respond to CERA's call for input. The aim of this kind of analysis is to explore and understand people's key concerns, rather than simply counting narrow survey responses.

This report summarises the public submissions. There is also a *Community Workshops Report* on the ideas generated at community workshops that were another part of the public consultation.

1 Vision for the Recovery of Greater Christchurch

Q. What is your vision for the recovery of greater Christchurch?

To continue the recovery and plan ahead it is essential to have a picture in mind of what greater Christchurch will be like. Tell us what you think the future will look like. What was great before that needs to be brought back? What should we leave behind or do better in the future? [full text from submission form]

- Above all, submissions highlighted the fact that this is an opportunity for there to *be* a vision: “How exciting to have a *clean palette*”. The planning phase of the recovery was seen as all-important to make the most of this opportunity.
- The rebuild presented an opportunity for effective planning across the region, whether in relation to transport and infrastructure, or in planning a sustainable, “green” future city. “A *no-brainer really, to use the opportunity to build sustainably from the outset*”.
- A focus on “Christchurch” as primarily meaning the CBD was evident in many submissions (for example, in relation to heritage buildings); but many also focused on “greater Christchurch”, particularly a “village hub” vision of largely self-sustaining neighbourhoods with their own community identity and facilities.
- The two sub-questions (*What was great before; What should we leave behind*) were mostly not directly answered, instead being woven into the overall vision; though some points were made:
 - *Great before*: Iconic Christchurch places – Arts Centre, Cathedral, sports grounds, AMI stadium, Hagley Park, Town Hall, Ballantynes, precincts (the lanes, boutique stores), Avon River, and Port Hills walkways.
 - *Leave behind*: Focus on how “*ugly*” the CBD had become pre-earthquake – High-rise buildings produced “*dark, sunless, windy corridors*”; dominance of grey concrete instead of green space; too many late-night bars and “*sleazy*” venues; “*tourist tram*” was expensive, as was parking. The earthquakes had added to the sense that high-rise concrete must be left behind, along with “*dangerous old buildings*”.
- Responses to the “Vision” question touched on all five categories of the Recovery Strategy. Built Environment (including the related issue of transport) and Culture and Heritage (in particular, heritage buildings) featured most strongly, followed by Community Wellbeing, Economy, and Natural Environment. Summaries are therefore in this order.

1.1 Built Environment

- **Overall vision** of a safe, sustainable, well-designed city for the future: “*Clean, green and attractive*”
- **Low-rise, ‘quake-safe’ buildings** specifically for the CBD to promote a sense of safety/security. “*A low-rise city consistent with all the landscape and weather/wind, sunlight and shade*” vs. tilt-slab wind tunnels of past
- **Future-proof** vs. earthquakes, but also vs. sea-level rise, peak oil, digital future, population growth, ageing etc.
- **Sustainable** building materials and practices: “*World class examples of green technology*” e.g., solar orientation and heating, energy efficient, water management, use of wood
- **Design** of buildings should be planned, coherent, beautiful: “*Put people and aesthetics first*”. Includes good urban design standards in suburbs
- **CBD** should be consolidated/smaller – more mixed use, residential/retail – “*a complete walk and shop area*”, entertainment hub
- **Precincts** popular: Historic/heritage, fashion/boutique shopping; squares and plazas to encourage people to gather; including in Sydenham/suburbs, not just CBD
- **More green in the red**: Use of red-zone land for green spaces, sports/recreation, “*open, park-like spaces*”

1.1.1 Transport

- **Transport** highlighted as an important aspect of the future built environment
- Vision of a “**resilient, urban infrastructure**”; this is a chance to plan roading and transport systems according to a modern city’s needs; “*everyone is able to get around easily and logically*”
- Efficient, affordable, easy-to-use **public transport**, including trams, trains, and buses, both around the CBD and linking with the suburbs and region, “*not city-centric*”
- **Reduce cars** in CBD; develop park-and-ride facilities; encourage people onto public transport
- Emphasise **cycling**: Enhance cycle network, more cycle lanes, more cycle-safe environment; vision of “*a smart, healthy, cycling city*”
- **Pedestrian**-friendly CBD: Walkways/boulevards/cycleways more connected throughout city

1.2 Culture and Heritage

- Mixed views on the extent to which **heritage buildings** should be restored, ranging across three positions:
 - Can't be saved if can't be made safe: *"unstable and destructive"*, *"waste of money"*, Cathedral *"a dinosaur"*
 - Preserve now – restore later; keep facades; use ruins; don't just demolish [fewer took this 'middle' position]
 - Some **must** be restored e.g., Cathedrals, Provincial Chambers; *"This is part of our soul"*; tourism; identity
- **Arts Centre** greatly missed – as heritage precinct and for range of arts activities, markets, theatre, Dux de Lux, entertainment etc., that occurred there
- Restore and enhance the great **arts scene**; coherent long-ranging arts policy/planning; including decisions regarding venues like the Town Hall
- Vision of improved **sports/recreational facilities**, multi-purpose, meeting needs of families to top athletes – new QEII, AMI
- Earthquake **memorials** mentioned here ranging from memorial walls and sculptures, safe ruins of Cathedral, or 'living' memorials – tree parks, Kobe-type lights
- **"Garden City"** identity either treasured or to be enhanced *"truly green Garden City"* i.e., environmental sustainability
- Some vision of an opportunity for **new** culture and heritage: *"For too long it was a Kiwi city pretending to be an English city"*

1.3 Community Wellbeing

- Vision of a **"people-oriented city"** – opportunity to work and play in locations easily accessed from home, whether by walking, cycling, public transport
- **"Celebrate what's local"** – villages, community hubs. Maintain *"village-like communities and camaraderie"*, even when relocating
- **Suburbs** to be *"vibrant communities where young and old are valued and respected and cared for"*
- Submissions from community organisations stressed the opportunity to address poverty, inequality and **health issues** in rebuild, e.g., smoke-free city, good sun-protection, disability access, fewer gambling sites
- Improved community **safety** and assurance reflected in the call for low-rise, earthquake-safe buildings, and the need to avoid rebuilding on unstable land
- **Child/youth** vision: *"A place to raise my children"*; recreational facilities for young people

1.4 Economy

- Vision that future economic success of region could be through being **world-class** in an activity or field, such as:
 - Eco-city unequalled in the world; *"True capital of green New Zealand"*
 - World-leading disaster/reconstruction centre of excellence
 - Tourism centre for unique natural environment, heritage, gateway to the South Island
 - World-class e-based education and business centre (dateline placement beneficial)
- Vision of **decentralised** economic activity: suburban and regional planning; outlying business parks; *"regeneration of greater Christchurch"*
- Some argue suburban development should be discouraged to focus on aiding **CBD recovery**: tax-free zone, *"exclusive economic zone"* for 10 years in CBD
- Facilitation of **insurance** payouts crucial
- Building national and international **sports facilities** in Christchurch would be good for economy

1.5 Natural Environment

- Vision that there should be *"many ways for people to **experience and enjoy** Christchurch's unique natural environment"*: including green walkways, cycleways, riverbank seating, estuary access, beach/harbour/marine recreation, Waimakariri cycling/walking tracks, Port Hills
- Return earthquake-damaged land to **native wetlands**
- Incorporate plenty of greenery/**green spaces** into the rebuild
- Vision of the **Avon River** cleaned up – was bad even before earthquakes

2 Priorities for Recovery

Q. What are the priorities for recovery in the next year? Two years? Five years?

So far the most urgent need has been making sure worst affected communities are safe and healthy and have financial and emotional support to get back on their feet. Understanding the damage sustained by individuals, families and businesses across the region has also been a top priority. Looking ahead it will be necessary to prioritise what needs to be done to complete the recovery. There is work to do in sport and recreation, education, business support, museums, galleries, roads, sewerage networks and public transport to name a few, but what do you think is most important to do first? What can be done in the short term to make life better, while we wait for long-term work to be completed? [full text from submission form]

- This section echoed the “Vision” section, with submitters sometimes completing the Vision question and then writing “See above” against the “Priorities” question.
- Built Environment was again the focus, with the overwhelming priority being people’s need for a safe place to live with all necessary infrastructure (especially sewerage) restored.
- Closely related priorities were restoring schools (Community Wellbeing) and jobs (Economy). There was a less explicit focus on Culture and Heritage and the Natural Environment, except in relation to key areas like sewerage (which would clean up waterways) and restoring spaces for sport and recreation.
- Timeframes were infrequently used, and where included, appeared somewhat optimistic (some examples are included in Built Environment and Economy, below). A few submitters pointed out that it is “vital to not create an expectation that everything will be righted quickly – 25- to 30-year timeframe more realistic”.
- There was some debate as to whether seeking “priorities” is useful, for all these areas are attended to by different people/sectors, so why can’t many of them progress at once? There were calls for an integrated plan, rather than a sense of competing priorities.
- Inevitably, personal circumstances could be seen to influence priorities. A plea to “restore the Huntsbury bus” or “fix my house at 66 X St” may be as important as general calls to “Fix the sewerage infrastructure”, but harder to capture in a public report. Most submitters focused on more “general” concerns, but did point out links between their priorities and own interests, e.g., a musician wanted the Town Hall organ restored; a young person not in the red zone wanted nightclubs restored.
- The examples of priorities listed in the question do, to some extent, act as prompts e.g., the phrase “business support”, as listed, was widely used, but primarily to mean job retention. Heritage buildings and sustainability strongly featured in the unprompted “Vision” question; they were not listed in the prompts for this question and appeared a lot less, whereas “sport and recreation”, as prompted, was commented on more.

2.1 Built Environment

- Top priority: **the places people live**. Action on immediate accommodation needs, plus decisions re zones, new subdivisions, and development of safe, warm, adequate housing for all
- A closely associated top priority: Reinstating the **infrastructure**, especially the sewerage, water, and road systems needed to support homes. “The first thing – make sure every single house in ChCh has fresh running water and a flushing toilet”
- **Public transport** to enable ease of movement around greater Christchurch; and chance to plan integrated roads/cycleways/public transport systems for longer term
- Emphasis on availability of **local schools**
- **Demolition** of unsafe buildings; temporary initiatives of Greening the Rubble, Gap Filler, trees, green spaces
- Good standards for **urban and housing design**: “Don’t leave it to the developers”; designs for modular suburban housing for builders to use; give Urban Design Panel “teeth”
- Get a “**temporary downtown**” running – makeshift buildings, markets, fairs, community events

2.1.1 Examples of Timeframes

- 1st yr: Fix damaged utilities/sewerage; demolish; develop planning/design rules
- 2 yrs: Cleared sites → temp green spaces; separate cycle paths; fix buildings that are staying; plan design and redevelopment
- 5 yrs: Management of redevelopment and build
- 1st yr: Schools fixed/roads/sewers/sections ready to buy
- 2 yrs: Sports facilities
- 3 yrs: Central city rebuild

2.2 Community Wellbeing

- Prioritise the immediate personal **health and shelter** needs of the people most seriously affected
- Ensure **support** for “*simple daily things*” not just big plans e.g., finding flats, insurance battles – concern that people are falling through the cracks
- **Schools** a priority, so kids can return to normal routine; lack of high schools in East
- **Sense of community** (shared experience of hardship) post-earthquake should be developed and sustained; facilitate shared ideas across communities of how to mobilise and best manage issues that arise
- **Ask communities** re their priorities e.g., may be a supermarket or school, sports facilities or community centre – “*Support local neighbourhoods to support themselves*”
- Community events, social venues, even if temporary e.g., relocatable community centre with meeting rooms and library; community hubs and spaces for people to meet to **avoid potential isolation** as some people leave areas

2.3 Economy

- “Business support” listed as a high priority (after infrastructure) but this most commonly meant supporting business to **keep jobs**
- Preventing job loss and offering **employment opportunities** are crucial; give people hope, keep them in Christchurch
- **Insurance/financial support** also key. “*Insurance is the biggest hurdle to recovery*”. Need affordable legal and financial advice (home-owners and business-owners); government insurance cover in short-term; bring in more assessors
- **Skills development** and education needed; revitalise East with business and public sector jobs, “*don’t just write off*”
- Some suggestion regarding **immigration** of skilled tradespeople; need to support and “buddy” skilled migrant workers to settle well
- Some ideas to **incentivise business** to remain – low interest rates, rent guarantees, accelerated depreciation, reinsurance help, wi-fi

2.3.1 Examples of Timeframes

- Next yr: Business recovery, zone reclassification, 25-year city plan analysis and development
- 2 yrs: Assess success of securing business to commit to region; analysis of business/residential movements to plan roading
- 5 yrs: International business incentives via technology, architecture, rebates; educational/arts facilities promoted internationally
- Now: Get business up and running, and education, sewerage and health
- Next yr: Roading, public transport
- Yr 2: Museums, art galleries

2.4 Culture and Heritage

- Mixed views as to the relative priority of **sports/arts** venues compared to obvious priority of homes/infrastructure, ranging from:
 - Sports/recreation essential for physical and psychological health; or
 - Sports, “*being active*” more important than museums; or
 - Both sports and the arts important, “*lift the spirits*”
- Patch up sports-grounds and use pop-up performance spaces till new venues built – **temporary** recreation/entertainment hubs
- Should spread recreation venues more **equitably** in rebuild e.g., swimming pools

2.5 Natural Environment

- Fewer comments than other categories
- Cleaning up **waterways** is main priority (this is closely linked to the key priority of infrastructure/sewerage-system repair) – Avon/Heathcote Rivers, Estuary, Lyttelton and Banks Peninsula, local beaches
- Sort out the **waste system** to avoid further contamination of the waterways in future
- Restore **native planting** programmes in the interest of environmental sustainability
- Use the opportunity to create an **eco-friendly** city, better integration of natural environment with conservation and sustainability principles

3 Working Together Towards Recovery

Q. How can everyone work together towards recovery?

A key part of achieving a timely, effective recovery will be the close involvement of stakeholders in the planning and decision making of recovery activities. How can CERA make best use of existing networks and new ones created since the earthquakes, such as the Community Forum? What else can CERA do to ensure support and collaboration between the wider community, business, volunteers, government agencies, the non-governmental sector and CERA? [full text from submission form]

- This question was answered less often than the previous two questions.
- Many responses focused on empowering communities to be involved in the rebuild, and about how to source earthquake-related support (Community Wellbeing).
- Closely related was a call for regular communication by CERA and other relevant authorities (Consultation).
- Some responses focused on how individual needs (such as housing repair and rebuild) could be more effectively managed, for example by the insurance industry working better with homeowners (Built Environment).
- The question lists many types of stakeholders, but answers focused primarily on communities and individuals. There were occasional suggestions that CERA should “*build and capitalise on relationships*” with various groups such as the Christchurch City Council, Council of Social Services, the arts community, etc.
- There was a strong overall focus on debating the consultation process itself, which is thus presented as an additional category; most categories in the Recovery Strategy five-category framework were little commented on.

3.1 Consultation

- Desire to get things underway, take action. This aligned with the perception that nothing was as yet happening
- Conversely, some indicated a concern that things not be rushed, and time be taken to be sure things were done properly
- Similarly, many submissions recommended ongoing consultation, while others considered “*endless consultation*” to be “*pointless p.c. nonsense*”
- Some suggested imposing time limits on decision-reaching, and highlighted the role of strong, “*in-charge*” leadership in the decision-making process
- This consultation was appreciated by most, with some concerned that it was “*piecemeal and short-term*”
- Skilled facilitators could help consultation and collaboration processes, helping people understand realistic time-frames, financial planning etc.
- There is some distrust about aspects of the recovery process, and concerns about the misuse of funds— that the rebuild not be “*a gravy train*” for some (e.g., from unscrupulous builders to overpaid politicians and others in leadership roles). This is perhaps related to a perception of poor communication
- Caution that a “*tick the box*” consultation process may not result in sound outcomes that are representative. Call to consider the “*silent majority*” i.e., those who may not be part of the consultation process for many reasons, e.g., too busy coping day-to-day, marginalised

3.2 Community Wellbeing

- Widely expressed need to feel involved in rebuild process
- Greater transparency by authorities perceived to be critical as part of this involvement; varied assessments of EQC, CERA and other agencies in this regard
- Regular top-down communication about process/progress and available resources/support is wanted
- Ensure relevant information widely accessible, e.g., via workshops, online sources, radio, TV, public meetings, newsletter drops, and in user-friendly language
- Some concerns expressed about consultation process being hijacked by those most verbose
- Empower communities via collaboration (e.g., establishing community boards) and providing opportunities (e.g., posting jobs for volunteers) for involvement
- Acknowledge how working together has already occurred: Numerous examples of community volunteers (the farming community, students); music groups giving free performances; blossoming of the Farmers’ Markets
- Encourage inclusiveness and hence community buy-in by involving sub-groups such as youth, aged, Māori/tangata whenua, people with disabilities
- Lesser theme under this heading: Publicly celebrate participation (and significant milestones) to enhance sense of community and boost morale
- Some acknowledgment of the difficulty of CERA’s task: “*You have a hard job and I am sure you will all do what’s best for our lovely broken city*”

3.3 Built Environment

- Prioritise support for individuals requiring relocation/rebuilding assistance
- Smoother insurance processes, and payouts in a timely manner
- Remove damaged/partly damaged buildings
- Source international expertise from other earthquake-experienced cities/countries

3.4 Economy

- Utilise local and untapped labour (e.g., retired, unemployed)
- A few suggestions about appealing to expats to invest in the rebuild
- The earthquake is an opportunity to promote trade apprenticeships

3.5 Culture and Heritage

- Few comments in this category: Need to work together in relation to heritage buildings: Don't demolish too hastily, wait till sufficient funds are available
- Rebuilding heritage buildings to earthquake standards would be prohibitive for private owners; how to work with the control held by the Historic Places Trust

3.6 Natural Environment

- Very few comments; some concern as to whether CERA will work together with community: *"Nearly every resident in ChCh wants to see red zones converted to natural wetlands and parkland and recreational facilities yet CERA is saying it wants to reinstate as housing!! No-one wants to live there now – don't ask us to be involved and then ignore us"*