

Media Release

Family playground due to open for Christmas holiday

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Work is underway to have one of the world's largest outdoor play areas – the Margaret Mahy Family Playground – open in Christchurch in time for the Christmas holidays.

Remediation work has begun on the site to ensure any hazardous material from previous land uses is fully dealt with before the playground is established.

Christchurch Central Development Unit Acting Director Baden Ewart says the playground is expected to be complete before Christmas and will provide an exciting adventure space for the whole family.

"It will include a mix of uniquely designed playground equipment, such as a 10m-high climbing tower, double flying fox and a 4m-wide slide. The playground will have access to a café, picnic areas and an amenities block, and will be a short walk from the Manchester Street bus super stop and the new Bus Interchange on Lichfield Street."

Mr Ewart says it was not a surprise to find small remnants of hazardous material on the playground site.

"We act prudently in dealing with material of this nature, as this is a place that will need to be an absolutely safe environment for families to use.

"Following technical advice, and conforming with national environmental standards, the most effective strategy to ensure the safety of the land is a combination of excavating and removing the soil and gravel where hazardous material is found, and burying it well below ground.

"As the playground is a prime city location, we want people and their families to enjoy it for many years to come, especially once construction of the adjacent East Frame Residential Precinct begins and more people start to move back into the city," Mr Ewart says.

The playground is about one hectare of a 2.5ha block bound by the Avon River, and Manchester, Madras and Armagh streets.

Development of the whole block will cost \$20 million – which includes site preparation, diversion of services, earthworks, paving and landscaping – of which about \$3 million is for the installation of playground equipment such as slides, flying foxes, climbing nets, towers, water play facilities, and playground surfacing.

A contract for main works on the playground is expected to be awarded next month.