

Christchurch City Council Long Term Plan 2018-2028

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NZRA requests an opportunity to speak to our submission at the Public Hearings in May.

Introduction

1. The New Zealand Recreation (NZRA) is a registered charity and the organisation responsible for providing leadership, advocacy and professional development opportunities for those involved in the broader recreation sector. We work at an agency, industry and professional level to build capability, develop partnerships, and equip individuals and organisations with the skills they need to deliver high quality recreation experiences that engage participants.
2. The New Zealand Recreation Association's membership includes recreation policy makers, territorial local authorities, voluntary organisations, regional sports trusts, outdoor recreation businesses, and others involved in the delivery of recreation in New Zealand.
3. Our role is to champion high-quality recreation for the benefit of New Zealand.
4. Our vision is that in 2020 New Zealand has a strong recreation industry that meets the needs of current and future participants, so that through recreation, New Zealanders are active, healthy, and connected
5. The New Zealand Recreation Association believes recreation is vital to New Zealand society. Recreation is not just about enjoyment. It is about being healthy, engaged and stimulated, having fun, and interacting with others, whether through outdoor recreation, community recreation, or aquatic and facility-based recreation.
6. Recreation is a major contributor to the physical and mental health of individuals, and to the resilience of our communities. 90% of New Zealanders believe being active keeps them physically fit and healthy, and helps relieve stress.

7. A thriving recreation industry can also help our nation prosper socially and economically. Sport and active recreation contributes \$4.9 billion or 2.3% to our annual GDP, and the sector employs more than 53,000 New Zealanders. The nation's recreation values and opportunities are fundamental to the nation's tourism industry. Approximately 50% of international visitors to New Zealand participate in one form of outdoor recreation or another.
8. Recreation is part of what it is to be a New Zealander. Many of us are members of clubs and groups that enjoy recreation for fun, health and social reasons. 84% of New Zealanders believe sport and physical activity bring people together and create a sense of belonging
9. For individuals, recreation contributes to physical and mental wellbeing and provides an opportunity to meet new people. People define themselves and their communities through their recreation opportunities. Recreation fosters community cohesion and resilience, and supports the integration of diverse ethnic and other social groups. 74% of New Zealanders agree that sport and physical activity help build vibrant and stimulating communities.
10. Investment in recreation generates tourism opportunities and supports regional development by encouraging skilled professionals and migrants to consider business options in and beyond the main centres, and in areas which offer quality lifestyle and family options.
11. Research shows that recreation makes a significant contribution to social resilience. It allows individuals to thrive, and to connect with each other. This, in turn, makes communities stronger. A society in which people are active and healthy is also more economically sound.
12. Physical inactivity is associated with loss of productivity, health costs, as well as associated costs such as pain and suffering. Healthier, happier individuals are more likely to do well in other areas of their lives, whether it is in social or professional situations. This has a positive flow-on effect for communities and society as a whole.
13. Greater understanding of these benefits and their downstream impacts, along with awareness of how laws and regulations can influence recreation delivery, are key to ensuring that New Zealand's recreation opportunities remain among the world's best.

Recreation in Christchurch

14. We acknowledge and thank Christchurch City Council as the major provider of our city's sport and recreation facilities. By investing in recreation, Christchurch City Council is helping to instil a lasting culture where active living matters. What Christchurch City Council does makes a real difference.
15. The Christchurch City Council has a critical part to play in ensuring people continue to enjoy quality recreation opportunities. These need to be available to everyone, regardless of age, fitness level or socio-economic background.
16. Council planning needs to adopt a long-term approach that takes into account factors such as urbanisation, population growth, an ageing population and the rise of tourism, to ensure recreation can continue to thrive amid change.

17. Research has found that in areas of activity decline, government and community-led interventions helped reverse the trend. When the infrastructure is in place (such as Aquatic facilities), people are more likely to be active.
18. Population growth and increased demographic diversity, has and will continue to place pressure on recreational infrastructure in Christchurch.
19. New facilities are experiencing pent-up demand. Exacerbating this, is the closure of some recreational facilities due to the earthquakes. This displacement effect places even more pressure into already stretched facilities.
20. NZRA submits that the Long Term Plan does not make adequate reference or provide adequate detail on planning for the “Red Zone” adjacent to the Avon River, in the Aranui/Dallington/Avondale area.
21. While we acknowledge that the majority of the land is currently held by Central Government, NZRA submits that the Long Term Plan would be the ideal opportunity to express an aspirational vision for the recreational use of the Red Zone.

Comments on key proposals

22. NZRA supports the prioritisation of work to complete Major Cycle Routes. Investment in cycling routes achieves the dual symbiotic benefit of easing traffic congestion and making it easier for residents to integrate healthy recreational activities into their day-to-day lives. We note that according to Sport NZ data, Cycling is the 3rd most popular form of Active Recreation among New Zealand Adults.
23. NZRA supports the prioritisation of work to maintain parks and riverbanks. NZRA is particularly supportive of increased investment in areas that people enjoy walking. We note that according to Sport NZ data, Walking is the most popular form of Active Recreation among New Zealand Adults. NZRA is also supportive of any riverbank maintenance initiative that makes it safer to recreate beside and on the water. We note that that according to Sport NZ data, Fishing is the 5th most popular form of Active Recreation among New Zealand Adults and Canoeing/Kayaking is undertaken by 8% of New Zealand Adults at least annually.
24. NZRA supports the funding of new facilities, particularly a new pool in Linwood / Woolston and a leisure centre in Hornby. NZRA submits that Christchurch City Council will need to do more to activate these recreational places and spaces. Rapid changes in demographics, participation trends and technology mean that a ‘build it and they will come’ approach doesn’t always work. Simply building infrastructure is not enough. Recreational assets need to be activated and programmed to make them more appealing and to break down barriers for the hard to reach areas of the community.
25. NZRA supports the funding of a Metro Sports Facility and Multi-use Arena, as a matter of urgency. NZRA notes with deep concern that many forms of recreation have been critically underserved with recreational infrastructure since the Canterbury Earthquakes and that the establishment of a Metro Sports Facility is many years overdue.

Transport

26. NZRA supports the expenditure of \$206m (total) on work to complete Major Cycle Routes.
27. The planning and pre-work done by the Christchurch City Council in the preliminary stages of these projects was comprehensive and robust. NZRA urges the Christchurch City Council to affirm its commitment to cycleways and remain resolute, in the face of some vocal opposition.
28. NZRA notes that the number of cyclists on the completed routes has exceeded expectations and encourages Christchurch City Council to take pride in that.
29. NZRA supports the Christchurch City Council proposal to spend more on the Transport Network. NZRA is particularly supportive of the proposed outcomes of reduced traffic congestion and increased use of active transport.

Community Facilities

30. NZRA supports the expenditure of \$234m on the Multi-use Arena and of \$123m on the Metro Sports Facility.
31. NZRA submits that the expenditure of \$10m on the New Brighton Hot Pools needs further study. The feasibility of this facility, in terms of both economics and participant uptake, is yet to be convincingly conveyed to the recreational community. NZRA suggests that a peer-review process is undertaken for this proposed facility, to ensure that recreational use is optimised.
32. NZRA supports the expenditure on \$21m on an Aquatic Facility on Linwood/Woolston.
33. NZRA supports the expenditure of \$24m on Stage 1 of the Nga Puna Wai sports hub.
34. NZRA supports the expenditure of \$25m on recreation and sports grounds renewals.
35. NZRA cautions Christchurch City Council of a predictable lag-effect of participant uptake in the utilisation of new recreational facilities. Many forms of recreation have suffered a loss of participant numbers and organisational capability since the Canterbury Earthquakes. NZRA urges Christchurch City Council to be patient with regard to how quickly and fully new facilities are utilised by different recreational groups.
36. NZRA encourages Christchurch City Council to proactively activate new recreational facilities. Rapid changes in demographics, participation trends and technology mean that a 'build it and they will come' approach doesn't always work. Recreational assets need to be activated and programmed to make them more appealing and to break down barriers for low-participation communities.
37. NZRA encourages Christchurch City Council to be wary of a recreational workforce shortage and capability gap. NZRA submits that there will be significant challenges in recruiting and retaining appropriately capable staff for the new recreational facilities. NZRA encourages Christchurch City Council to ensure there is sufficient operational resourcing and workforce development/capability to effectively activate recreation places and spaces.

Parks and Heritage

38. NZRA submits, in general terms, that the maintenance of parks and open spaces has suffered in Christchurch since the Canterbury Earthquakes. The reputation of Christchurch as the “Garden City” has diminished as a consequence.
39. NZRA supports the regeneration of the Port Hills. The Port Hills provides numerous accessible recreational opportunities for the residents of Christchurch. The planting and maintenance of Native trees and plants is commendable work. NZRA submits that the Long Term Plan should make specific reference to the Predator Free 2050 and outline the Councils contributions to that effort.
40. NZRA supports the Christchurch City Council proposal to spend more on Parks and Heritage. NZRA is particularly supportive of park upgrades, increased levels of service and work in the residential red zone.
41. NZRA is concerned that the proposed Operational Expenditure for Parks and Heritage is insufficient to maintain parks at a fit-for-purpose level.
42. NZRA encourages Christchurch City Council to undertake playability benchmarking for its Parks and pay particular heed to the detail of park -maintenance contract specifications.