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Media Release: For immediate release



Centennial Pool back on the recovery agenda

The Minister of Canterbury Earthquake Recovery, Gerry Brownlee, is meeting with the Christchurch City Council tomorrow (Friday, 2/11/12) to discuss the future of Centennial Pool.

Save Centennial spokesperson Simone Pearson says “the restoration of Centennial will be great for the recovery and bring a much needed swimming facility back to the community in a short time frame.”

Dr. Alistair Humphrey, Canterbury Medical Officer of Health, this week acknowledged the importance of recreational facilities for health;

“There is good international evidence that the presence of a public recreational facility significantly improves physical activity in a population. Nowhere is this more important than in poorer communities such as those in the east of Christchurch. More physical activity means less cardiovascular disease and diabetes, which tragically cuts short the lives of Pacific and Maori people and costs the New Zealand taxpayer enormously. While health agencies strongly support the development of more health/sports facilities, such as the large metro facility planned for the South West of the city, this should not be done at the expense of the poorer parts of Christchurch, who are already struggling with an enormous burden of chronic disease. The Centennial Pool is likely to be East Christchurch’s only public swimming pool for many years to come, and every effort should be made to preserve it.” he said.

There are currently four public pools in the west of Christchurch including Graham Condon Pool, Pioneer, Jellie Park and Wharenui. Users of facilities in the west are experiencing overcrowding and this will not be alleviated until there are facilities accessible to those in the east of Christchurch.” says Simone Pearson.

Council commissioned engineer reports show Centennial can be repaired for less than \$2 million to a standard “as new”, after an insurance payout of \$7.2 million.

The City Council listened to the community and (subject to cost) resolved to fix the Centennial pool as a transitional city project. They have been waiting for a meeting with the Minister since August to discuss the future of the pool as the crown is seeking to own the land by the end of year for a children’s playground.

Save Centennial group is preparing concept plans which would incorporate a playground beside the pool. “We are very excited by the idea of a playground beside the pool to provide families with a 365 day attraction for ‘wet/dry play’ in the city centre.”

Christchurch Central MP, Nicky Wagner supports the Centennial campaign, “I agree that it would be wonderful to have it [Centennial] restored to use.”

The group notes the recent decision by Council to support the full restoration of the Town Hall and also notes that over \$35 million was spent on a temporary rugby stadium built in just 100 days. “The investment required to repair Centennial is small by comparison and would assist the recovery by bringing life back into the city centre in short order and assist the recovery by improving peoples physical and mental health.”

END

For further comment, please contact Simone R Pearson on 027 279 3000
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Background info: see ‘centennial fact sheet’ (attached) or visit www.savecentennial.org.nz