

## Christchurch City Council Long Term Plan submission

April 2021

### Submitter details:

<b>Name of contact person:</b>	Sam Newton – Advocacy Manager
<b>Organisation name:</b>	New Zealand Recreation Association t/a <i>Recreation Aotearoa</i>
<b>Postal address:</b>	PO Box 11132, Manners Street, Wellington 6142
<b>Telephone number:</b>	027 723 9380
<b>Email:</b>	sam@nzrecreation.org.nz

## **Submission:**

### **Introduction**

1. The New Zealand Recreation t/a Recreation Aotearoa 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. Recreation Aotearoa'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 throughout New Zealand.
3. Our mission is enhancing wellbeing through recreation.
4. Recreation Aotearoa believes recreation is vital to New Zealand society. Recreation is not just about enjoyment, it is about being healthy, engaged, stimulated, and interacting with others, and this occurs via outdoor recreation, community recreation, parks, and aquatic and facility-based recreation centres.
5. Recreation is a major contributor to the physical and mental health of individuals, and to the resilience of our communities. 90 per cent of New Zealanders believe that by being active they are in turn maintaining a good level of health and fitness, and this helps to relieve stress.
6. 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.
7. 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.

8. 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 social groups such as diverse ethnic groups. 74% of New Zealanders agree that sport and physical activity help build vibrant and stimulating communities.
9. 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.
10. 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.
11. 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.
12. 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**

13. We acknowledge and thank Christchurch City Council as the major provider of our city's Play and Active Recreation facilities. By investing in recreation, Christchurch City Council is helping to instil a lasting culture where active living matters. The work of Christchurch City Council makes a real difference.
14. 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.

15. Council planning needs to adopt a long-term approach that considers factors such as urbanisation, population growth, an ageing population, and climate change, to ensure recreation can continue to thrive amid change.
16. 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 and parks, people are more likely to be active.
17. Population growth and increased demographic diversity has and will continue to place pressure on recreational infrastructure in Christchurch.
18. We support the investment by Christchurch City Council in walking and cycling routes. Investment in Active Transport infrastructure 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.
19. It is the view of Recreation Aotearoa that the Christchurch City Council LTP of 2018 contained many good outcomes for the Recreation sector. We were particularly pleased to see the development of the Te Pou Toetoe aquatic facility, further progress on the Avon Otakaro Network and major advances in the realm of active transport infrastructure.
20. Recreation Aotearoa would also like to acknowledge the Christchurch City Council for their support and contribution towards the Canterbury Spaces & Places plan, in partnership with Sport Canterbury and adjacent Local Territorial Authorities. Committing to and adhering to such a plan avoids duplication, enhances recreational opportunities and ensures efficiency of expenditure at a regional level.
21. The data provided by the Sport NZ Active New Zealand survey reveals that residents of Canterbury are among the most active in New

Zealand, with 75% of Adults undertaking physical activity on a weekly basis.

22. The same survey revealed that there is significant levels of unmet demand in the Canterbury region – 16% of adults wish to go on a day tramp and 13% wish to go swimming as new physical activities. However, 6% of Cantabrians report that there are no appropriate facilities or places conveniently located to do what I want to do.
23. Additionally, the data shows that in regard to the types of physical activity New Zealanders enjoy, the most popular forms are recreational in nature. This includes playing, walking, jogging, swimming, and cycling.

### **Specific Comments:**

24. Recreation Aotearoa submits its support for the budgeted investment in large-scale facilities across the city, specifically:
- The Te Pue Toetoe Aquatic facility in Linwood
  - The Metro Sports Facility
  - The Hornby multi-use facility
25. Recreation Aotearoa 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. Recreation Aotearoa urges Christchurch City Council to be patient with regard to how quickly and fully new facilities are utilised by different recreational groups.
26. Additionally, we submit that 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.

27. Recreation Aotearoa submits its support for Ōtākaro Avon River regeneration programme. 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.
28. Recreation Aotearoa submits its support for the Major Cycle Routes and Local Connections programmes and its array of improvements including Rapanui-Shag Rock, the Northern Line, the Nor'West Arc, the Southern Express, the Heathcote Expressway, the Ferrymead/Sumner Coastal Pathway between Ferrymead, the Avon-Ōtākaro Route, the Ōpāwaho River Route, the Southern Lights route and the City to Sea recreational cycleway
29. 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.
30. Recreation Aotearoa submits its support for the budgeted investment in Parks and Open Spaces by Christchurch City Council. Specifically the Botanic Garden Master Plan and regeneration work at Hagley, Lancaster and QEII parks.
31. However, concerned that the proposed Operational Expenditure for Parks and Heritage is insufficient to maintain parks at a fit-for-purpose level. We encourage Christchurch City Council to undertake playability benchmarking for its Parks and pay particular heed to the detail of park -maintenance contract specifications.
32. Recreation Aotearoa submits its support for the budgeted investment in Play by Christchurch City Council in its destination and neighbourhood Play Spaces. It is essential that investment in Play infrastructure is applied to the growing population in new urban developments and under-active demographics in high deprivation communities. Recreation Aotearoa notes that co-design kaupapa for Play infrastructure often results in a desirable bias towards less structured and informal modes of play.

33. Recreation Aotearoa encourages Christchurch City Council to be wary of a recreational workforce shortage and capability gap. Recreation Aotearoa submits that there have been significant challenges, relating to the canterbury earthquakes, in recruiting and retaining appropriately capable staff for the new recreational facilities. Recreation Aotearoa encourages Christchurch City Council to ensure there is sufficient operational resourcing and workforce development/capability to effectively activate recreation places and spaces