**Christchurch City Council submission to the Select Committee on the Greater Christchurch Regeneration Bill**

**Opening remarks from the Mayor of Christchurch, Hon. Lianne Dalziel and Chief Executive, Dr Karleen Edwards.**

The Greater Christchurch Regeneration Bill represents the most significant opportunity we have been offered as a city since the Canterbury earthquake sequence began just over five years ago.

People have been using words like step change and transformation. That's what this bill represents to us.

It is actually quite hard to believe that I am sitting here at this end of the table as Mayor of Christchurch - just over four and an half years ago I sat where you are sitting listening to submitters, which included all the strategic partners described in this bill.

There is a world of difference between then and now.

For a start today you have the Mayor and the Chief Executive sitting side by side with the backing of the Council - representing elected members and the organisation.

Last time we had the Deputy Mayor and an in-house counsel, but there were four Councillors who turned up because they hadn't had a chance to be involved in the submission process.

Tomorrow you will hear from one of those councillors who will make a submission as an individual - that's local democracy - but as a Mayor who sat where you sat and who has been a Cabinet Minister for over seven years - I can tell you that it has been a privilege to work with a government, a Minister and a Prime Minister, who are committed to the city's regeneration and are willing to try something bold - a joint agency to take on the next stage of our journey - hand in hand, shoulder to shoulder.

The fact that it was the Prime Minister who came to Christchurch to make this announcement has set the tone for an engagement that represents a sea change from the urgency of 2011.

This Bill offers the potential for a real legacy - and each one of you can be part of making history. We haven't had anything like this before. The confidence that the Prime Minister has expressed in us has been gratifying and we will not let him or our city down.

My mantra, since running independently for the Mayoralty, has been what's best for Christchurch - not the Council, not the Government, not CERA, not CCDU - but Christchurch. And I've had my mind focused on relationships - Waimakariri and Selwyn District Councils, ECan, Ngāi Tahu, the Ministers that we engage with as a city. There was more repair work to do than the broken pipes and broken roads.

It hasn't been easy. But our city deserves a legacy. And this Bill offers us more than a statutory agency called Regenerate Christchurch - it offers our whole city real hope for the future. So please support it.

I'm going to hand over to the chief executive who will provide a quick synopsis of why the Crown now can have confidence in the Council.

Now in reading our submission you could be forgiven for thinking that it didn't mean this much to us, but because of the tight timeframes, we have covered all bases - what if this - what if that - referring to the appendix we set out a chart of how the bill operates as it is written.

I believe this meets the Crown and Council objectives. I also have a copy of the Resilient NZ Report released this week that provides a really good basis for this approach.

The establishment of Regenerate Christchurch - a genuinely joint partnership between the Council and the Crown - will be the leader of regeneration in the key areas of Christchurch and a unifying force in bringing together the various initiatives required for a successfully regenerated Christchurch

We think the policy intent of this Bill is widely supported by both Crown and Council; the key challenge now is to get the legislation to more accurately reflect this policy intent.

Our submission today is focused on strengthening the Regenerate Christchurch mandate so that its leadership role is properly reflected in the legislation and more importantly the Christchurch community has confidence that we are getting on with it.

**Dr Karleen Edwards, Chief Executive**

In October 2013 a brand new Council came into office, and I started eight months later.

We are a very different organisation today.

**We have addressed our financial issues.**

We fully understand our financial position and Councillors have made prudent financial decisions including redeploying our resources.

For example, recently Council has announced the sale of one of our trading organisations, City Care to realise capital and to reinvest in our city.

We have driven efficiencies throughout our organisation and we will save $40 million over the next three years.

And we have the confidence of key stakeholders - our auditors around our long term financial plan and, just last week, Standard and Poors improved our credit rating and outlook because of the decisions made by Council.

We have restructured our organisation to better respond to a regeneration phase.

We have clearer lines of accountabilities, streamlined and joined-up planning and delivery, and we are a "can do" organisation.

We have totally changed the way we operate and have shifted the culture of the organisation to being citizen and community-focused, service orientated, open and transparent - and we make decisions based on what is best for the people of Christchurch.

We are passionate about local communities determining their own destinies and are committed to real engagement and public participation.

**We are a city and an organisation on the move**

For example

* We have regained accreditation for building consents and arguably lead New Zealand in these services (staff seconded to MBIE to partner on designing guidelines and standards)
* We have a one-stop shop for all consenting and licensing and a much more joined up approach
* We have reopened many community facilities over the year including a new library, and service centre and pool hub in Halswell last week
* The first flight by China Southern into Christchurch next week will open up new visitors for Christchurch
* The tender on our New Central Library closed two days ago and will be awarded in the New Year
* Our world class Art Gallery reopens next week
* The Town Hall repairs are well underway
* Yesterday we released five announcements on major decisions made by Council, such as our Eastern Sports and Recreation Centre.

We are a city on the move and everywhere you look things are happening. Our organisation is already leading our city through these changes. We are ready to lead our city through the next phase of our history.

We have also formed strong and productive relationships with central agencies. Our staff have been working closely with CERA on Regenerate Christchurch, and we are aligned.

So I would like to formally ask that our officials continue to work together with your officials and advisers on finalising the technical details of Regenerate Christchurch, so that the people of Christchurch get the best possible outcomes for our city.

We are ready and willing.