



CHARTER

This Charter represents the current Vision, Aim and Objectives of the Avon-Ōtakaro Network, it is a living document that will evolve over time.

Vision

To promote the future use of the Ōtakaro/Avon River and the surrounding red zone lands as an ecological and recreational reserve for the community.

Aim

We wish to establish a community-driven, science-informed living memorial to rejuvenate and nurture the long-term environmental, economic, community and spiritual wellbeing of the eastern suburbs and greater Christchurch.

We aim to create a place of hope and inspiration for the people of Christchurch by restoring health and vitality to our river and its lands.

Membership

Avon-Ōtakaro Network (AvON) is a network of individuals and organisations, founded in 2011 by:

- Avon River Park Facebook Group
- River of Life
- Campaign for a Memorial Reserve Covenant

Background

In June 2011 the Government announced that more than 5000 homes would have to be abandoned within a ribbon of residential “red zone” that tracks east from the CBD along the banks of the Ōtakaro/Avon River and some of its tributaries (from now referred to as the Ōtakaro/Avon River Red Zone). This left many residents devastated and their communities decimated. The reason for abandoning red-zoned land was that it is too damaged to be economically remediated for residential redevelopment at present.

Since the announcement, Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Minister Gerry Brownlee has indicated that the land is to be cleared, fenced and grassed, pending a decision on its long-term future. This leaves the possibility that some of the land may be remediated and redeveloped for residential use in the long term.

Public feedback via the Share an Idea campaign identified very high levels of support for:

- community input into the future of the city;
- a greening of the city;
- continuous parklands along the banks of the Ōtakaro/Avon River from source to sea; and
- extensive cycle and walkways along the river.

The ideas listed above are featured prominently in the Central City Plan, particularly in relation to the Papawai Ōtakaro/Avon River Park project and green frame, however the objectives of the network are also consistent with a range of other popular initiatives including Greening the Rubble, Gap Filler, Building Resilient Communities, the Avon-Heathcote Estuary Ihutai Trust and Sustainable Otautahi Christchurch. As well, more than 95% of those responding to a Facebook question indicated the Ōtakaro/Avon River Red Zone land should become a park/reserve and more than 18,000 people signed a petition to Parliament to this effect.

Te Ngāi Tūāhuriri Rūnanga and Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu support the proposed Papawai Ōtākaro project within the Central City Plan and have also submitted to CERA about the need for specific recovery planning for the natural environment, including a focus on the potential restoration of the Ōtākaro as it relates to the residential red zone.

Objectives of the Avon-Ōtākaro Network

1. To advocate for the Ōtākaro/Avon River and the surrounding red zone lands to become a publicly owned ecological and recreational reserve, running from the proposed Papawai Ōtākaro/Avon River Park in the CBD, through to the coast.
2. To work with Te Ngāi Tūāhuriri Rūnanga and Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu on their vision for the Ōtākaro and ensure the incorporation of cultural heritage and values are included within the development of an Ōtākaro/Avon River Park.
3. To promote the establishment of a broad, continuous, natural corridor of indigenous habitat as appropriate to the historic ecology of the Ōtākaro/Avon River and its catchment, including Te Ihutai/Estuary, with specific regard to enhancing water quality and indigenous biodiversity.
4. To advocate for definitive and timely decisions regarding the long-term future use of the Ōtākaro/Avon River and residential red zone lands, to provide certainty and confidence for those having to abandon the lands, those living in adjoining communities and greater Christchurch.
5. To quantify and disseminate findings about the economic value of this initiative in terms of wetland management, biodiversity, water quality, carbon economics, cultural, recreational and community assets, health, tourism, education, employment and small business.
6. To promote a widely supported, multi-purpose amenity by incorporating, where appropriate, other desires raised by the people of Christchurch for the future use of this red zone land, including (but not limited to):
 - A. A continuous network of pedestrian paths and cycle ways from CBD to coast as both a recreational and tourism asset, able to interconnect with similar networks in the north, south and west;
 - B. Land and water-based recreational facilities and amenities for the health, wellbeing and further development of the community;
 - C. Some exotic parkland (possibly retaining existing trees and other plants from the abandoned gardens of Red Zone residents);
 - D. Entertainment, recreational, and commemorative events, such as the Spring River Festival, Christchurch Marathon and River of Flowers;
 - E. Food resilience and sustainability with provision for communal gardens and allotments;
 - F. A living memorial to those who lost their lives and homes in the earthquakes;
 - G. Art, craft and cultural amenities that reflect our diverse heritage;
 - H. Promotion of learning and research opportunities in social and environmental studies and community resilience, for all levels of education.
7. To promote these initiatives as a seamless extension of complementary initiatives in the CBD and elsewhere along the river, estuary and coastal systems of the region.
8. To integrate the multipurpose objectives into a coherent spatial plan for the Ōtākaro/Avon River and the surrounding red zone lands incorporating the above.

Statement of Support

The focus of AvON is the future use of the Ōtākaro/Avon River Red Zone. However, we acknowledge the plight and pain of those of us who have had to abandon red zone homes, and the financial difficulties many faced in doing so. We hope that by working to ensure the land becomes a place of beauty and pride, we can give some comfort and peace to those directly affected. We offer our support to those individuals and groups focused on negotiating and advocating for the best possible housing outcomes for all.

Contact

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