

**HON NICKY WAGNER SPEECH  
CHRISTCHURCH SEISMIC CONFERENCE  
BANQUET HALL, PARLIAMENT  
TUESDAY 15 MARCH 2016  
6pm**

Thank you for inviting me to be part of your conference today.

Christchurch has come a long way since Sept 4<sup>th</sup>, 2010.

It's been an emotional rollercoaster, and we are still learning how to re-organize our lives, how to manage our emotions, and how to cope with grief; grief for people we've lost, grief for the homes that have been destroyed, and grief for the communities that have changed.

But together we have survived the emergency phase. We are managing recovery and are now looking forward to regeneration.

The phases all morph into each other, as circumstances change and our individual futures evolve at different speeds.

But 5 years on – it's time to focus on the future and embrace regeneration as the road back to business as usual, local leadership, local management, and local control.

Regeneration is a “bigger” more exciting concept than recovery.

It's about building back better; it's about urban renewal and development, restoration, revitalization and enhancement – our opportunity to improve the environmental, economic, social and cultural wellbeing of our city and its environs.

We all know where we want to end up. Submitters to the “Share an Idea Campaign” made it very clear.

We want to live in a leafy, people friendly, vibrant city – a place where **all** generations want to come and live, work, and play.

We want a city that focuses on community wellbeing, a city that we can be proud of, a city that we can enjoy.

And I believe we're on our way there.

The new Greater Christchurch Regeneration Bill with its SOP provides the framework within which we **all** can work together to get the best possible outcome for our city and Greater Christchurch.

The Strategic Partners – 4 councils, central government, Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu have all got roles to play to deliver this outcome and to prepare local organizations to take over and continue the work in the future.

The Bill establishes a joint council/Crown organization, Regenerate Christchurch, to guide regeneration in the city. You will hear about it later today from Chair Designate Andre Lovatt.

It also establishes Ōtākaro Ltd. – a Crown company that will oversee the development of the Crown's central city anchor projects and make sure they are delivered as effectively and efficiently as possible.

This bill has only a 5 year term but regeneration and urban renewal will continue well past 2021.

In fact, it should be continual and ongoing. So post 2021, Regenerate Christchurch will then become a new council-controlled organization.

The Bill represents an important milestone and allows for the much discussed “step change” move, from recovery mode to regeneration, and from the Crown being in the driving seat to the progressive handover to local leaders.

Submitters were very keen that the community was fully included and had a strong voice in future decisions.

The government agrees and this Bill provides many more opportunities for public input. The key is to develop a vision that will bring local people together and allow regeneration to happen quickly and efficiently.

Engagement in the development of regeneration plans will be particularly important.

The Bill requires proponents at the early outline plan stage to set out the opportunities for public engagement and how this will be undertaken.

Regenerate Christchurch also has a statutory role to engage with communities, stakeholders, and decision makers to achieve its purpose of supporting a vibrant, thriving, and engaged Christchurch.

I said earlier that I thought we are well on the way to becoming the city that we envisage. I just want to recap some of the positive outcomes for the city.

Firstly, the wellbeing of the community:

We know that it takes 5-10 years for a community to recover from a major disaster so we have been very focused on monitoring wellbeing.

At September last year, 77% of Greater Christchurch people rated quality of life as good or extremely good.

Stress levels are steady with 20% of the population feeling stressed “always” or “most of the time”. 78% felt they had moved on from the effects of the earthquake.

Fewer respondents, 11%, reported that their children are anxious and clingy compared to 17% in 2012.

The low unemployment rate in the city, greater availability of housing, and cheaper rentals all underpin an improved perception of wellbeing.

But illness, disability, and continuing earthquake issues are still taking a real toll. And we are very aware that we need to continue supporting those people.

In terms of tangible outcomes in the city:

- Over 68,000 houses have been rebuilt or repaired
- Street and infrastructure repairs are over 90% complete
- Over 300 new buildings have been completed, and the city is still full of cranes and new construction sites.

We're getting great use out of the Cricket Oval, and the Bus Interchange is changing the way we deliver public transport in the city.

The Te Papa Ōtākaro – Avon River Precinct is nearing completion with the first part of the earthquake memorial opened, and the Bridge of Remembrance ready for ANZAC Day.

The terraces are almost complete and Victoria Square's refresh is almost signed off – I can't wait to see The Bowker Fountain completely repaired.

The Justice and Emergency Precinct is on track to open later this year; Metro Sports design is nearly complete, and the Convention Centre – nearly, nearly there.

And of course there is the magnificent Margaret Mahy playground.

The Valentines earthquake last month reminded us just what it was like 5 years ago, but also emphasized how far we have come.

It gave me confidence to see that our new buildings stood up so well and that any damage – rock fall, cliff crumble, or mass movement – only happened where we expected, behind the barricades.

Canterbury will continue to be a “shaky” place, we know that our geography is constantly changing, but we can be assured that our geo-tech experts have got a really good handle of how earthquakes work in our region. (Most of us have learned a lot too!!)

I believe that the Bill as reported back from select committee with its SOP will provide that “step change” we all seek, and will support the exciting journey from recovery to regeneration, and from regeneration to a new local “business as usual”.

And along the way it will open doors, so many doors, so that we the inhabitants of Greater Christchurch can embrace new ideas, new opportunities, and new ways of working.

That’s our challenge and our responsibility for those who have come before and will continue after us.