

December 2015

# Submission on the Greater Christchurch Regeneration Bill

To the Local Government and  
Environment Select Committee

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This submission has been collated on behalf of Canterbury young people by Youth Voice Canterbury by Tayla Reece Co-Chair of Youth Voice Canterbury and Josiah Tualamali'i Chairman of the PYLAT Council Charitable Trust.

## 1. Executive Summary and Recommendations

Tena Kotou Katoa and Fakalofa lahi atu

Youth Voice Canterbury (YVC) is a network of young people from Youth Councils and youth participation groups from around Canterbury. YVC aims to support these groups and young people to get their voices heard by decisions makers.

1. Young people strongly believe that the appointment of people onto the Regenerate Christchurch Board is not fair, and would like to see the board members elected. They would also like to see the Select Committee ensure there is strong ethnic diversity and women on the board.
  2. The Christchurch City Council (CCC) should have a greater number of seats on the Regenerate Christchurch board than the Minister.
  3. That the power the Minister of Earthquake Recovery and the CEO of CCC do not have the ability to make decisions without some check on their discretion, or this be as limited as possible.
  4. There was no consensus on when local decision making should be fully returned to Christchurch, however the majority was within 5 years.
  5. In terms of representation, young people agreed that Ngai Tahu should be able to determine their own representative, and that the Regenerate Christchurch Bill definitely needs to support youth voice on the Regenerate Christchurch board.
- That the Local Government and Environment Select Committees move to allowing submissions through facebook.

Please read further to understand these perspectives more fully.

## 2. Introduction and Background

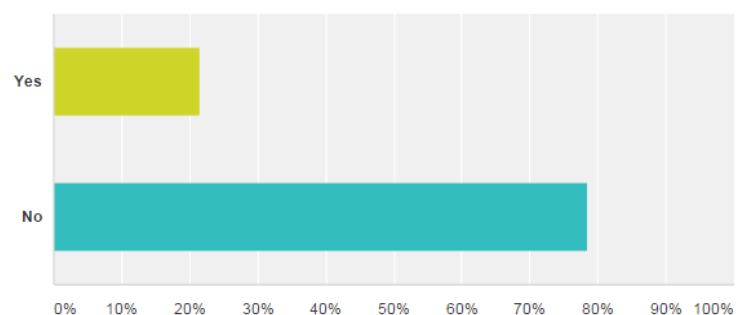
YVC gathered the voices of 56 young people to submit on the Greater Christchurch Regeneration Bill. The participants were mostly from Christchurch City, but there was also input from young people in the Selwyn, Waimakariri, and Hurunui districts. The majority of participants were in 19-21 age group and were New Zealand European, and 30% of participants were Māori and Pacific Peoples. The questions in the survey first focussed on the structure of the Regenerate Christchurch board, then looked at the proposed power to the Minister of Earthquake Recovery and the CEO of the Christchurch City Council, and the length of transition time. Representation from Ngai Tahu and young people was also covered.

Youth Voice Canterbury (YVC) is a network of young people from Youth Councils and youth participation groups from around Canterbury. YVC aims to support these groups and young people to get their voices heard by decisions makers. This is achieved through bringing the network together for quarterly Youth Connect events, training youth guides to assist young people voice issues in their communities, providing support and opportunities to get involved such as submissions, and advice groups and organisations on how to best engage with young people.

Specific groups in the YVC network that contributed to this submission was Pacific Youth Leadership and Transformation (PYLAT) Council, the Christchurch Youth Council, CDHB Youth Advisory Council, WAIYouth, Hurunui Youth Council, Synergy Youth, Selwyn Youth Council, MYD Youth Advisory Group, and Bounce.org.nz.



**Is it fair that all of the positions on the Regenerate Christchurch board are appointed, not elected by the people of Christchurch? Why or why not?**



### 3. Reviewing Greater Christchurch Regeneration Bill

#### 3.1 Should the Board members be elected?

A significant majority of the participants believed that the positions on the Regenerate Christchurch board should be elected by the people of Christchurch rather than appointed. Many people referenced democracy as a key value that needs to be upheld in this transition period. Transparency and accountability were also highlighted as important and needing to be reflected in this Bill and the Regenerate Christchurch board. Some comments were that electing the board is the way forward for the regeneration of Christchurch to be “locally-driven” and for people to feel like they “have a voice” and are “accurately represented”.

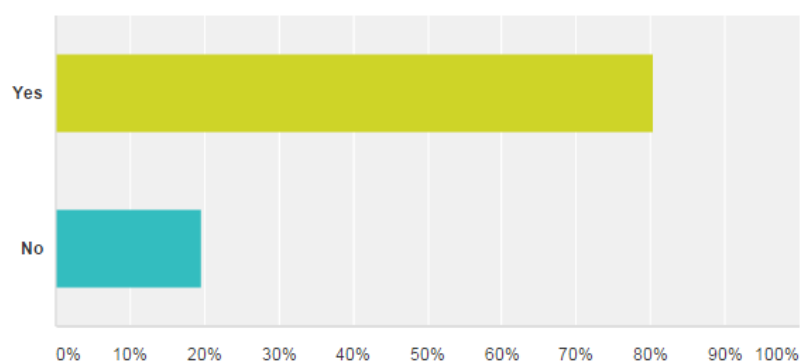
Around 20% of participants thought that appointing positions for the Regenerate Christchurch board was completely fair. One view was that “the CCC is elected by a democratic process ... [therefore] our democratic voice is clear in the creation of this board”. There was also the view that appointment meant the position would be based on “merit rather than how much time they have to get votes”. Another person referred to the issue “tyranny of the majority, whereby decision makers would act in ways that offer immediate benefits to the majority without considering marginalised groups or long term consequences”.

Whether the positions on the Regenerate Christchurch board are appointed or elected, one thing that came through strongly in this survey was that it is important for the regeneration of Christchurch to be locally-driven and that this board has an “obligation to fully and fairly consult with residents” of Christchurch.

#### 3.2 Should Christchurch City Council (CCC) have more seats than the Minister?

Participants strongly support the CCC having a majority of the seats on the Regenerate Christchurch board. Young people believed that the CCC “are locally driven, understand our issues and have greater accountability to” us which was the core reason for this

**Should the Christchurch City Council have a greater number of seats on the Regenerate Christchurch board than the Minister? Why or why not?**



perspective. Others felt that “eventually power would be returned to the city...and that legislation is about specifically returning to local leadership” so why couldn’t that be fast tracked a bit by having a “diverse group” selected by the CCC. Some saw a greater number of CCC seats as a way to restrict the government’s power, “the government has had free reign in Christchurch for too long.” Another key reason was “being future focused” and letting go of ways we have worked until now, recognising this is a new phase where we can make sure people feel the people on this board and connected and represent them.

A few young people liked the proposed makeup with 3 members appointed by CCC and 3 appointed by the Minister as it would bring “more ideas” and mean more collective decision making. To them, having equal seats was demonstrating a partnership and that each had their strengths “the CCC...know the lay of the land and care...whereas the Minister will ultimately know what is best for the reports that he must make to his party in government.” Some said this makes sense because you’ve got to remember who’s paying for it.

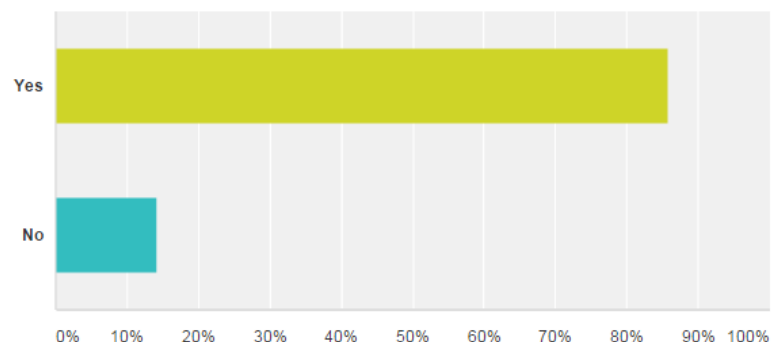
Some young people thought that the “seat numbers don’t matter and the work getting done matters most.” Others said that there should be youth positions. Some participants considered the whole discussion tokenistic “if central govt want something their way, get it.” Lastly some commented on the role of Te Runga O Ngai Tahu position on the board and there was concern “that consultation is a very lenient word.” *Please see 4.1. for more thoughts on this.*

### 3.3 Power of the decision makers

Participants were extremely dissatisfied that this Bill enables the Minister of Earthquake Recovery, and CEO of the CCC, the power to make some decisions without a way for the public to challenge or appeal them.

Many were concerned this proposal was “breaching] the fundamental principle of limiting executive discretion [by] having a check on

**Is it a problem that this Bill gives the Minister of Earthquake Recovery and CEO of the Christchurch City Council power to make some decisions without a way for the public to try and appeal/challenge theses decisions?**



power.” There was strong feedback that “ministers should not be free of the courts” and that this process would “take the voice away from the community.” There was criticism of the only perceived check on the Minister, “simply voting once every three years and leaving everything else up to people in charge is not a democratic process.” In terms of the CCC CEO, there was concerns that as they were not an elected representative, they had limited means of accountability to young people and the wider Christchurch community. Some young people looked at the definition of Minister in the dictionary to look at what they should be doing “they are meant to be serving... (Verb) form of minister: to attend to the needs of, ministering,”

There was also strong call regardless of the outcome, for the Minister and the CEO to make an effort to come across as “unbiased, educated ...and open to hear consultation” and there needed to be a commitment around this. There was some suggestions that there should be an independent board that these two roles must report to manage “their corrupt [ion].” The main underlying value was that young people and their families would have the ability to share their views about the city and new innovation around them, and the perception that this might impose suggesting this wasn’t ok, or wanted.

Those opposed mainly thought it was impractical for there to be any alternative to the Minister and CEO’s power. Some provided comments like “if we wait for every chch citizen to voice their opinion...we won’t be going anywhere fast.”

Another participant stated deep concern at the crown not being bound to pay out property owners at market value and wanted something rectified with this; this to some was rehashing what happened to tangata whenua in the 1840’s, “and look at what good that achieved. One young person commented that it was strange how the Bill hasn’t gone through yet but “they’re already announcing the chairman?!? How does that happen?”

### **3.4 Length of transition time**

When asked about the length of the transition period and when full local-decision making should be returned to CCC, the responses from young people were diverse. They have been broken down into the following headings:

As soon as possible

A small group of participants strongly believe that local-decision making needs to be returned to CCCI as soon as possible. Responses included “CCC are more than capable of making decisions on their own” and that this kind of decision-making “should never have been [removed]” from CCC.

#### 1 - 2 years

Around a quarter of participants thought 1-2 years was the appropriate length of time for transition. Some opinions were “sooner rather than later as they are the elected officials who know the city best”, or to review the current process after two years. One young person commented that full decision-making should only be returned once they have proven they are actually capable, while another reflected that a lot can change in 5 years.

#### 3 - 4 years

Another small group believed that 3-4 years was the best length of transition time. Common opinion was that the transition phase should last until the local-body elections in 2019, and then local-decision making should fully return to CCC after that.

#### 5 years

There was also support to stay with the proposed 5 years. While some would prefer a shorter time frame there is understanding that the regeneration of Christchurch is a massive task, and some commented it is still good to have Crown support and that by then the future of Christchurch will be clearer.

#### As long as it takes

Some young people didn’t indicate a specific length of time for the transitions but made a general comment about for as long as it takes. There were three key thoughts here: “I hope CCC are learning and growing in such a way and putting structures in place that will help them once they get full local decision-making back; “Government should just have a support role during this transition period;” “Local decision-making should have been restored to CCC some 4 years ago.” Progress in Christchurch has been delayed “which has been fostered by the Crown and associated ministers, meaning there is no way to predict when the CCC will be in a position to resume full local government responsibilities in the area.”



## 4. Representation

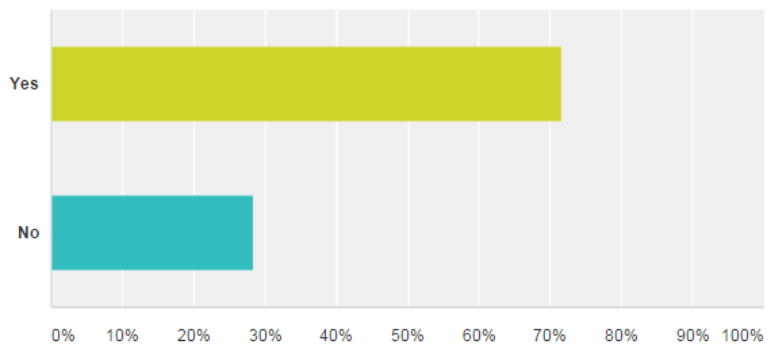
### 4.1 Te Runanga O Ngai Tahu

The majority of participants supported Te Runanga O Ngai Tahu, determining their own representative and the Minister following this advice.

This came down to two key reasons: (a) that there needed to be an “honouring” of the local iwi and “recognising their indigenous status as Tangata whenua and allowing them self-determination as promised in Te Tiriti o Waitangi,” and as a vital voice in Canterbury decision making, (b) that consultation historically has “little meaning” and does not ensure the voices of tangata whenua will come through.

A minority group of young people did not support this for two main reasons that (a) “selection should be on merit” and that the Minister could judge this, (b) others stated reasons around not considering this position fair.

**Should Ngai Tahu be able to determine their own representative and the Minister to act on their decision, instead of being consulted?**



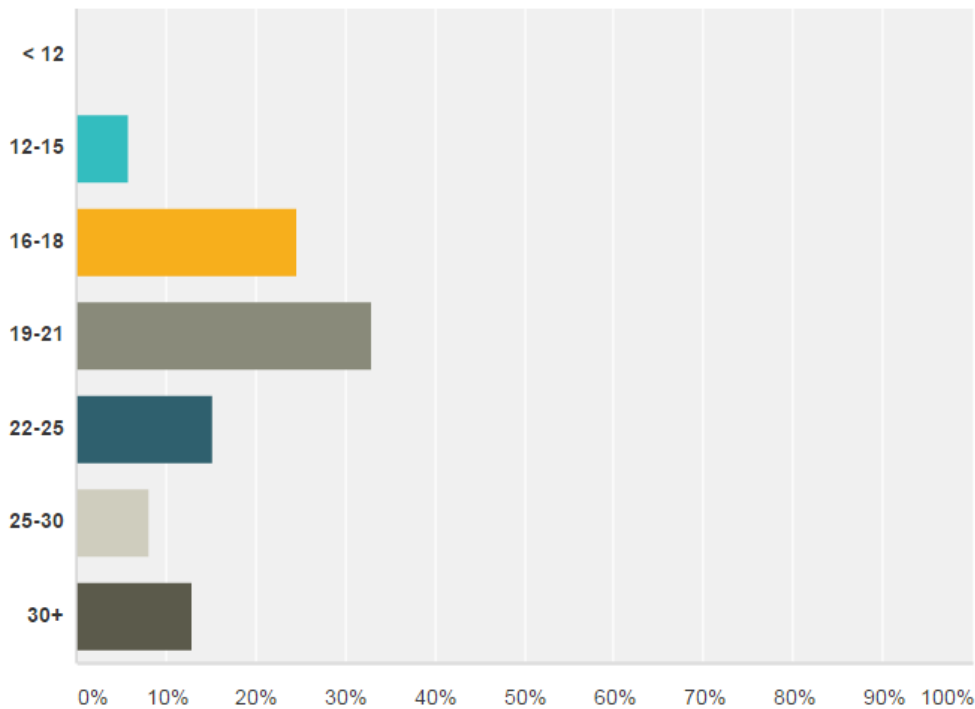
### 4.2 Youth voice on the Regenerate Christchurch Board

YVC asked young people whether there should be a part of the Greater Christchurch Regeneration Bill that supports youth voice on the Regenerate Christchurch board. There was support to have a youth position on the Regenerate Christchurch board, and there was also support for the Regenerate Christchurch to set up a youth advisory group. Nearly 50% of participants thought that having both a youth representative and youth advisory group was ideal. One young person suggested consulting with already existing youth advisory groups. Comments included “Young people are the future of this city” and “the decisions [being made] will affect [youth] in the long term”. Overall it was strongly agreed that youth need to have input into the regeneration of Christchurch by having a voice on the Regenerate Christchurch board.

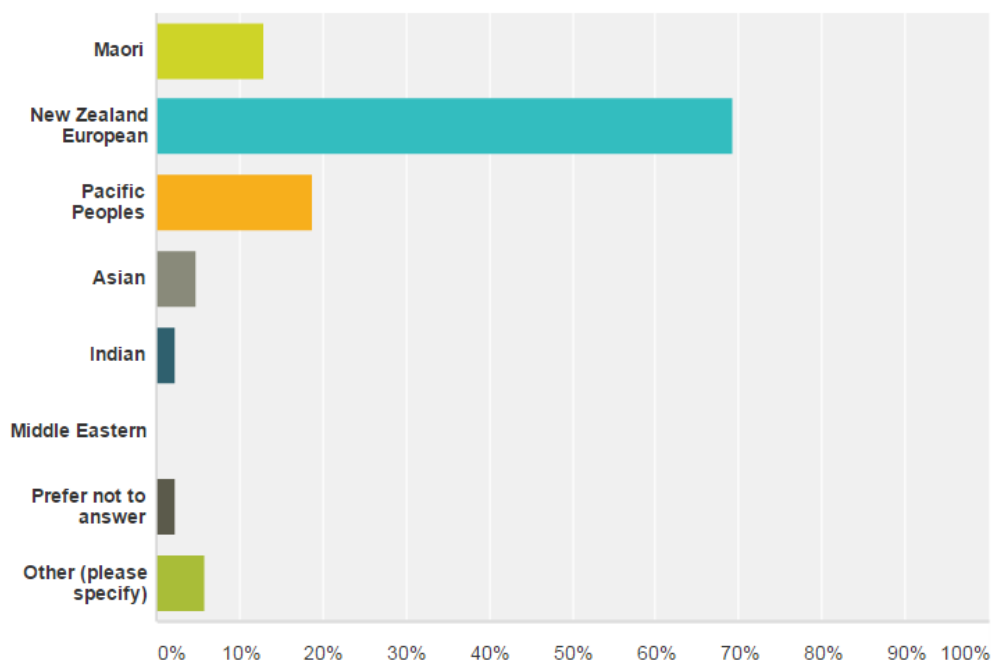
## 5. Young people's perspectives in full

### 5.1 Who the participants are

#### What is your age?



#### What is your ethnicity? (Please select all that apply.)



## Where do you live?

