



30 May 2012

Draft Education Renewal Recovery Programme
Ministry of Education
shapingeducation@minedu.govt.nz

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Draft Education Renewal Recovery Programme

The North East Secondary Education Committee (NESE) formed in 2008 following growing concern in the community about local high schooling options in North East Christchurch. NESE's eleven Management Committee members are all parents and grandparents from a wide cross section of the local community. NESE is supported by more than 1000 families and individual subscribers.

In this submission we speak on behalf of our supporters and refer to their homes as being in the 8083 area. This area is the postal code for the area north of the Avon River, east of Marshland Road and south of the Waimakariri River.

Goals and Principals in the Draft Education Renewal Recovery Programme

NESE supports the overall goals and principals expressed in the draft education document, particularly those addressing inequities relevant to our area by:-

- Redrawing the boundaries of school enrollment zones as this could improve access for students throughout the city, providing more balanced enrolments at all schools that reflect the diversity of our society while giving all suburbs a school that is closer to the heart of their community.
- Sharing school facilities with community groups, forming stronger attachments between schools and their communities.
- Improving access to education for Maori, Pacifica and low socioeconomic learners, encouraging them to complete more qualifications and to realise their full potential.

Resident Migration in Christchurch.

We disagree with the broad statements in the draft document about migration of the City's residents from East to West and particularly the implication that this trend will continue. Since the initial post quake flight, much of the movement away from the eastern red zone areas has been towards homes in nearby suburbs. People have a strong desire to remain connected with their communities.

Within the 8083 area the majority of people are now anchored to their properties by their TC3 land classifications. They no longer have a choice about when they can leave the area. Residents are starting to rebuild their homes, lives and businesses. As their homes are repaired residents are living nearby and then returning to their homes.

We believe the Ministry of Education has a moral obligation and responsibility to students and their families. The Government is asking families to rebuild their homes, businesses and lives in the TC3 areas of North East Christchurch. The Government also needs to be seen to reinvest in the community by committing to strengthening and developing the communities through the provision of a comprehensive local education network in North East Christchurch.

Secondary Education in North East Christchurch.

Our children and families have needed much support in the last year. This will be an ongoing challenge. The eight primary schools in the 8083 area were amazing, supporting students and their families throughout last year. However, our secondary students did not have the benefit of their schools being engaged with that same level of local community support due to the historical inequity of the area having no local community high school. The lack of a local secondary school has been a major issue for our families for 25 to 30 years.

Increased travel distances limit the accessibility of a school and can cause non participation and truancy in vulnerable children. Children who must travel greater distances become less self sufficient for transport and have less participation in sport and other activities beyond school hours. Children in our community already use active transport to travel to primary school. Walking and biking to secondary school would be a natural extension of their current lifestyle. Our children wish to feel included as members of a sustainable community.

We should always provide our children with local schooling and recreation opportunities. Provision of timely local education for children in North East Christchurch was not happening before the earthquakes. It needs to be prioritised now. We want to waste less time transporting students. The current situation where more than 500 students travel over 10 km to high school by car every day is neither economic nor healthy for our community.

Growth and development in the 8083 area continues. Properties are currently selling in new developments at Waitikiri, Alpine View and Northshore. The Prestons Road development will provide new homes for 6000 more people over the next two years. Our communities will continue to grow.

NESE asks that the Ministry also support our young people by providing secondary education within the 8083 area. This would meet the draft document's goals of creating a seamless transition between primary and secondary education, while supporting further education for our socially disadvantaged residents who tend to drift away from education, failing to reach their full potential. Many students would benefit from continuing their secondary education within our supportive community.

Accessing schooling shouldn't be difficult. Children need to see they are provided for locally to be able to envisage their education path. Local schools get community support. Our community is prepared to contribute planning, time, resources and Public Private Partnership money towards a local secondary school.

Changes to Established Family Migration Patterns in North East Christchurch

Historically, many families have moved away from the 8083 area for their children to attend high school. This has created an unnatural population with a low number of teenagers.

A significant number of homes inside the 8083 area were heavily affected by the earthquakes. For most families repairing or rebuilding their homes is forecast to take two to five years. Residents are concerned about the future value of their homes and wonder if they will ever be able to sell their property. Many families with children in primary school years five to eight, who had previously planned to move away from the area for high schooling are now feeling trapped. They are having difficulty or are unable to sell their damaged homes. Any property sale may realise a significantly lower price than the property's pre-earthquake valuation, resulting in families being less able to afford property near a high school.

The annual migration of families away from North East Christchurch for schooling reasons has slowed dramatically, as many families are now restricted by damaged homes. Many of these families will now remain in the 8083 area as they are unable to afford to move for high schooling as previously planned. This could quickly impact on the capacity of the nearest high schools.

Delayed implementation of the higher teacher to pupil ratio in North East Christchurch.

It is disappointing for the document refer to "best practice" where evidence based research to shows the benefits of smaller class sizes and smaller schools, along with Ministry's contradictory proposals to increase the pupil to teacher ratio. We ask that the Ministry of Education consider delaying implementation of the increased teacher to pupil ratio in North East Christchurch. Our families have been through so much and have yet to meet the challenges associated with repairing their homes and reestablishing their businesses. We ask that you allow the projected population increase in the area to gradually increase student numbers to meet the new higher teacher to pupil ratio over the next few years. This concession would support the health and well being of our fragile communities.

NESE's Report to the Ministry of Education.

Attached is NESE's "*Report to the Ministry of Education for Consideration in Conjunction with the Area Report on North East Christchurch*". It was written for consideration in conjunction with the Ministry of Education's Area Report for North East Christchurch. Although the report identified and focused on issues affecting North East Christchurch before the earthquake, these issues now affect many areas of the city. Some of the unique concepts and features of this report should be reflected upon when considering the future provision of education network across Christchurch as a whole.

Summary

Our community has a strong desire for a local secondary school. We would like to see provision of a comprehensive, sustainable and affordable education network that meets our community's needs well into the future. We need to tailor decisions for each individual community. We must establish a full network of education provision within each community.

We ask you to carefully consider our requests for provision of secondary education and delaying the implementation of the higher pupil to teacher ratio. These two proposals would have a very positive impact on our community allowing children to feel secure during their schooling years and beyond.

Yours Sincerely

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North East Secondary Education Committee Inc

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