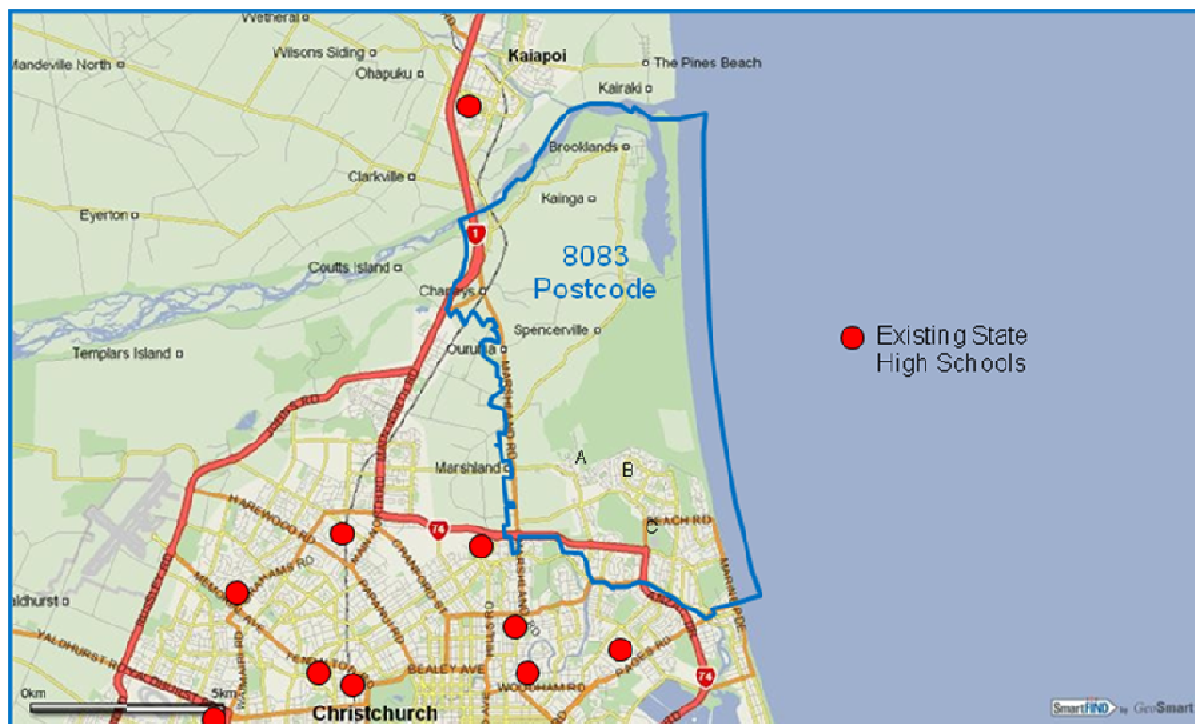


Proposal to Build a New High School in the North East of Christchurch Following Investigation into Secondary Education Requirements.

Summary

An investigation was conducted into current high schooling in the north east of Christchurch. The area is defined as being south of the Waimakariri River, east of Marshland Road and north of the Avon River. The total current resident population in the area is over 25,000. There are now more than 2,200 children attending primary school, across six schools in this area. There are no high schools or intermediate schools in this geographic area, which is also defined by the '8083' postcode, and hence forth is referred to as "the 8083 area".



The Parklands Residents Association held a Special General Meeting where the community of north east Christchurch was invited to explore current high school options. The North East Secondary Education Committee (NESE) was subsequently established. NESE began to investigate ways to optimise current high schooling options, including roll imbalances and to look into the viability of a new local high school. The committee's role is to be an advocate for parents and children, to be impartial in its investigations and address the majority of the community's needs in its recommendations. Following are its findings.

A high school was originally planned for the area in the 1970's on the site of what is now the Parklands Reserve and Community Centre. Due to delays in community population growth the school was deferred and the site sold to the Christchurch City Council in 1989.

The nearest existing state high schools are Shirley Boys' High School, Avonside Girls' High School, Mairehau High School and Aranui High School. Shirley Boys' High School and Avonside Girls' High School to the south west are zoned. Mairehau High School mostly services the community west of Marshland Road. Aranui High School mostly services the community south of the Avon River.

The rolls of both Shirley Boys' and Avonside Girls' high schools are at capacity after increasing by an additional 200 students in recent years. These schools have been seeking additional resources, while there remains extra capacity for 300 to 400 students between Aranui and Mairehau high schools.

Aranui and Mairehau high schools have also had significant issues retaining their senior students. The Ministry of Education is working with these schools and their communities to develop initiatives which should boost their rolls. Reviewing the implementation of local high school zones may be required. Additionally, education policies under development will increase the retention of more 17 and 18 year old students at all existing high schools.

The population in the north east of Christchurch is young and growing. Population growth in this area has considerably exceeded the Ministry of Education's projections. The current primary school population is growing steadily. Local primary schools' future growth projections for the next 10-20 years expect an increase to 2890 students by 2015, then to over 4,000 students by 2025. Recently there has been considerable growth in birth numbers, mirrored by the establishment of many private early childhood centres in the area.

Since 2004 there has been significant residential development in the proposed area with the building of nearly 1,000 new homes. There are an additional 3,500 dwellings planned for the area over the next 20 years. These include Preston's Road Ltd's proposed subdivision of 2,500 houses where the developers have already identified the need for a new primary school. The north east of Christchurch also contains large areas of undeveloped land within Christchurch's urban boundaries.

The 8083 area is a wonderful environment and a great community to live in. It is abundant with resources for an outdoor lifestyle. It caters well for children with primary schools, clubs, sports activities and local resources. It has the advantages of every amenity and facility required to sustain a community, except for a high school. No other area of equivalent population in New Zealand is without a high school.

The failure to provide a high school has left a void. This creates a dilemma for families in the area. There is considerable evidence of widespread relocation of families with high school aged children out of the area and into areas with high school zones.

Three potentially suitable locations for a new high school are shown on the map.

Some of these sites could provide mixed use locations and benefit from shared facilities.

- A. Bordering Bottle Lake Forest - east of Waitikiri Drive and north of Rothesay Road.
- B. Queenspark Reserve, next to Queenspark Primary School.
- C. QEII Park/Ascot golf course.

Recommendations:-

On behalf of the community the North East Secondary Education Committee recommends the following:

- That the Ministry of Education acts to ensure the area is adequately resourced in terms of educational capacity for the current population
- That in doing so, provision must be made for the expected population growth.
- That existing imbalances between high schools' rolls are addressed and resolved.
- That any action is made promptly to maximise the positive economic and environmental benefits of establishing a new high school in this area.
- That the Ministry consults fully with the local community, Christchurch City Council and all affected parties during its investigation of possible sites for a new high school.
- That the community's strong desire for a new local high school be addressed.

The complete Proposal and a Feedback Form are available from www.aarongilmore.org.nz