



Media Release

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Prestons applauds reappraisal of Christchurch Red Line

A reappraisal of Christchurch's future housing needs by Environment Canterbury and its Urban Development Strategy partners following the recent earthquakes has been strongly endorsed by the developers of Prestons, the eco-friendly village planned for the northern boundaries of Christchurch.

Under previous thinking, Prestons, which is only 5.5km from Cathedral Square, stood outside the areas that had been earmarked for future urban development. However, a rethink by the joint councils and New Zealand Transport Agency means they now support Prestons as being within the urban limit.

David Schwartzfeger, chairman of Prestons Road Ltd, said that the recent earthquakes have changed the face of Christchurch forever and that they were very supportive of the City Council and UDS partners' decision to reassess where future residential developments in Christchurch should take place.

"We are very fortunate that our block of land suffered no liquefaction or lateral spreading or any other seismically associated hazards during the three major earthquakes. A detailed geotechnical investigation of the site in 2008 indicated a low susceptibility to liquefaction and this has been confirmed over the last nine months.

"Whilst there are still some planning requirements to be worked through, we are committed to doing everything we can to provide Cantabrians with an alternative place to live, especially those in the eastern suburbs whose homes and land have been so badly damaged," he said.

Prestons is a 203-hectare block of land, bounded by Mairehau Rd to the south and lower Styx Rd to the north and bisected by Prestons Rd. It has the potential to house up to 8000 people in 2700 homes.

"The fact that the land has a low susceptibility to liquefaction is only one advantage. We are close to the city centre, we own the majority of the land and we are well resourced. We have been planning Prestons for several years and can basically start the next day, if we are given the green light - that's a critical difference between this project and other possible options.

"We know how long it takes to fully assess land for residential development. It is not something that can or, indeed, should be done in a hurry. People need reassurance that new locations for housing do not suffer from the same

or different problems to the areas they are moving from. Geotechnical assessment, flood hazard assessment, planning a good urban area that is safe and sunny all takes time and effort.

“We have assessed all of these things over the past three years and had all of our assessments peer reviewed by the Council and others. It has been frustrating at times but we know that we will have one of the best planned developments on offer and we think that the people of Canterbury will be looking for that sort of comfort when they make future purchasing decisions,” he said

Prestons Road Ltd is a joint venture including Foodstuffs (South Island) Ltd, Ngai Tahu Property and CDL Land New Zealand Ltd.

“Prestons is mindful of the damage caused in the eastern suburbs and would like the opportunity to provide an option for these people to stay near their family communities and schools.

“Many of these homeowners are uncertain of what to do in regard to their properties. They want to stay in the east, but they are not sure about the land around where they live. Prestons could be their answer,” he said.

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