

August 2020

INTRODUCTION

1. This is a submission from the Canterbury Employers' Chamber of Commerce (The Chamber) on proposed amendments to the Christchurch Central Recovery Plan to manage noise from the Canterbury Multi-Use Arena.
2. The Chamber is a not-for-profit membership-based service organisation that has been the home and voice of business in the Waitaha Canterbury region since 1859. Comprised of over 2,600 member organisations, The Chamber's purpose is to empower people in business by providing advisory and consultancy support in employment relations, human resources, health and safety, international trade, migrant support, manufacturing, research and development grants, training and development, and events to inspire, inform and educate our members.
3. In the COVID-19 environment, this has included providing support to all businesses in Te Wai Pounamu the South Island through our 0800 50 50 96 COVID-19 Business Helpline and our dedicated COVID-19 Response Team.

OVERVIEW

1. As our city and region faces the challenges of responding to the COVID-19 environment, and the early days of a severe global economic recession – especially as the city was already in the process of rebuilding and regenerating after the Canterbury earthquakes – we need to ensure we are doing everything possible to make the most of all opportunities to help get our city back on its feet and maximise opportunities available to reposition our city and region.
2. The planned \$473 million Multi-Use Arena has the potential to make a significant positive difference to local businesses and the social fabric of our community, so we need to ensure there are no unnecessary restrictions that could compromise the optimal use of this key city asset.

Recommendations

3. The following are comments based on the direct consultation questions:
 - a. Operating guidelines, including finishing times and noise levels should be competitive with our geographically closest alternative, Forsyth Barr stadium in Dunedin, and ensure that this facility can be used to its full potential, thereby maximising the social and economic outcomes.
 - b. There should be no set limit on number of concerts, instead each opportunity should be considered on a case-by-case basis.
 - c. Acoustic insulation of new houses in the nearby area should be at the discretion of the developer to consider and those choosing to purchase homes will make their decisions based on the environment they choose to live in.

COMMENTARY

4. We must ensure Ōtautahi Christchurch, as Aotearoa New Zealand's second largest city, has the amenities to not only compete with other major cities in New Zealand, but to stand out and lead the way.
5. Businesses have chosen to stay, come here and invest in our city on the proviso we would have a fully functional nationally competitive multipurpose arena in the middle of our city.
6. This eagerly awaited, long overdue anchor project will play a pivotal role in resolving the gap in the city, region and South Island's events profile, which will help to boost our tourism levels, economic activity, and increase the vibrancy and vitality of the central city – while also playing a key role in retaining and attracting young people and further investment.
7. On completion of the Multi-Use Arena, we will have a new, purpose-built facility and need to ensure that this facility will position Christchurch as the premier city for international sporting, cultural and events of the future, and must not compromise this opportunity by placing our own limitations on operating – and economic return – potential.
8. We also need to ensure our service offering for event promoters is highly competitive, or preferably superior to that of other sporting and concert facilities that the Multi-Use Arena could be competing with, such as Forsyth Barr stadium.
9. The business community that has relied on – and invested heavily in – the delivery of this facility has already been let down in terms of delivery date; it is vital to their goodwill that they are not also disappointed on the Arena's ability to generate stimulus in our local economy by limiting the number of events.
10. At The Chamber, we advocate strongly for removing barriers for business, so would not support adding another regulation for developers around noise insulation. It should be up to developers to utilise the opportunity to include this as a feature in their sale proposition if they choose to do so – market driven versus compliance driven. With the roofed facility not due for completion until 2024, there is also still time for current residents and property owners to sound-proof their buildings should they decide they require it.
11. From a social perspective, many people move into the city for the hustle and bustle of a thriving CBD. They have also been aware of the placement of the Multi-Use Arena for a number of years, as well as the potential issue of noise disruption, much like the impact of living near bars and restaurants that have open air bands and gigs. It is part and parcel of living in any thriving CBD.
12. It is also worth noting that the existing central city recovery plan (CCRP), or blueprint, places no limits on stadium noise, so it is not clear why this needs to be re-visited now – this very issue was raised several times during earlier engagement and the Council reinforced this was not an issue.
13. A vibrant, bustling facility will help to attract and retain people and businesses, with the opportunity to reposition Christchurch now with both our domestic tourists and international tourism market for when the borders re-open and provide a reason to return to the central city.

14. In order to do that, it is vital that we maximise the potential of this anchor project to ensure the successful delivery of a leading national facility for top-tier and large-scale events.
15. We need to ensure that we are focused on maximising the economic benefits of this facility – now more than ever as the city and our local businesses adapt to the COVID-19 crisis – rather than limiting delivery of a key asset.
16. We would implore you to use the key measure of having the best interests of our city, our residents and our business community at the heart of your decision-making, to ensure that as a city we make the most of this significant opportunity right when we need it most.
17. As the home and voice of Canterbury business, The Chamber appreciates the opportunity to provide feedback on this anchor project and work with the Council to ensure that together we can deliver the city that our residents and businesses deserve.

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