

Our Community Plan Christchurch O-Tautahi 2004/14 SUBMISSION

Submissions close on 6 May 2004

I wish to talk to the main points in my written submission at the hearings.

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Your Submission: Mr Mayor and members of the City Council. My name is Sarah van Ballekom. I am 15 years old and I attend Villa Maria College.

Over the past few months, I have been supporting the proposal of the Lake Isaac Trust which asked for 11 million dollars to build a flat water facility on land donated by Lady Isaac. Unfortunately, the Council voted against the Lake Isaac proposal, but has allocated money for another yet-to-be-identified site. I have read the Flat Water Facility Report by Peter Walls, and this shows that out of the eleven proposed sites, Lady Isaac's land is the most suitable for this facility.

Please let me give you some background about my involvement in rowing, one of the main uses for Lake Issac. Over the last 9 months, I have spent over 400 hours rowing on the waters of Kerr's Reach training for my sport, rowing. As you are aware, the popularity of rowing has increased significantly over the years. In fact it is one of the fastest growing sports for girls and Christchurch girls' schools dominate girls' school rowing in New Zealand. However, congestion from rowing boats, kayaks and dragonboats is one of the main reasons Kerr's Reach has become so unsuitable and unsafe (mainly due to the increased chance of collision with other users) for training- as well as the problem of the amount of weed that is in the river.

Lake Isaac would provide a safer environment and an alternative superior venue for the people of Christchurch who are involved in passive water sports and who use Lyttleton Harbour and Kerr's Reach.

I think that the teenagers of today are encouraged to succeed academically but also to have a healthy lifestyle. We are encouraged to participate in sport but we need the facilities, and we do have them but not everyone wants to play netball, rugby, tennis, hockey etc. Lake Isaac would provide a venue to numerous sports such as dragonboating, rollerblading, cross country, kayaking, rowing, triathlon, waka arma; the list goes on.

We see and hear about rolemodels such as the Evers-Swindells (rowing), Steve Gurney (multisport) and Ben Fouhy (kayaking) who all excel in their areas of sport and are inspired to take up their activites but we have no venue that caters for all these sports. From my reading I see that a flat water sports facility was accorded "top band" priority in the council's recreation and sports strategy.

I would like to remind you about the fantastic facilities previous councils built, the botanical gardens, some such as the Westpac Trust Centre and QEII were controversial but I couldn't imagine Christchurch without them.

**Your Submission
(Cont'd):**

Would the facility be a burden on future rate payers? The Lake Isaac Trust has only requested for 11 million capital. The independent report produced by Deloitte for the Christchurch City Council showed that the lake would be sustainable through affordable user charges, this would mean that the income generated will cover maintenance and operation costs. The Council would not be asked to contribute to on-going costs.

I have always thought I am so lucky to live in Christchurch. It has such a great sporting heritage. The Commonwealth Games were held in 1974 in Christchurch. This was long before myself and my peers were born. How come the young people of today don't get to experience major international events such as this? This is the motivation and fun that makes cities great places to live in, otherwise young people will move away. Lake Isaac would offer so many opportunities for hosting international, national and local events. The city of Christchurch would benefit immensely from hosting water sport events. These events would boost our economy and inspire more people, young and old, to participate in passive water sports.

I understand that the building of Lake Isaac could create a birdstrike problem, but I really think a good solution could be reached if everyone puts their heads together. Andrew Crossland, ornithologist, suggests deterrents such as fireworks, laser beams, chilly-based sprays, guns etc. I have read that Clearwater has an effective bird management plan and the Christchurch airport has complimented them on it. It shows bird numbers are being managed in agreed, tolerable levels. I understand Lake Isaac wishes to adopt a similar pro-active management plan as proposed by Ecosure

I realise there is risk with birds and planes, but all over New Zealand, (Queenstown, Wellington, Auckland) and in fact all over the world there are major airports near large bodies of water such as, Hong Kong, Amsterdam, Milan, Spain and Sydney, and it has been proven that this has no effect on airport operation.

Some councilors have suggested using Lake Hood. Lake Hood is most unsuitable because of its own weed problem and the fact it is south of Ashburton and would take 5 hours to bike there, or an hour in the car- this is beyond most families, the least by being approximately an extra \$100 a week of petrol money alone, if we trained there everyday after school. This would mean I would have to start biking at 2 o'clock in the morning for 7am training sessions at the lake. Lake Isaac's location is only 12km from the city centre and a much shorter bike ride.

In summary you should support the Lake Isaac proposal because:

You have allocated 11 million dollars to find an alternative venue and build a water sports facility. Lake Isaac would be built on donated land which would mean the council could use the 11 million to construct and build the lake rather than using it to purchase land.

Lake Isaac is the best site for building a flat water facility out of the twelve analysed sites.

Kerr's Reach and Lyttleton Harbour are unsuitable to train at for a number of reasons, safety being the major one, and Lake Hood is too far away. These are identified in Peter Walls' report.

The people and economy of Christchurch would benefit immensely from the usage of Lake Isaac and I know I would too.

Thankyou very much for allowing me the opportunity to present my case to you.

Sarah van Ballekom