

Let's create a Christchurch Enviro Hub



Map source: Environment Hubs Aotearoa

A proposal to return an environmental hub to our city

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Draft version 20th March 2017

There is something missing in Canterbury.....

A proposal to return an environmental hub to our city

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*‘Great things happen when people are connected’ –
Environment Network Manuwatu*

What is our vision?

To create a catalytic co-working and informal 'bumping space' for environmental organisations in the greater Christchurch area. This centrally-located 'Enviro Hub' will connect and inspire - building a platform for innovation and environmental leadership in our transforming city.

What would it look like? *Our concept*

A centrally-located home for environmental organisations that is affordable and with a secure future. The 'Enviro Hub' will have focus spaces for meetings (e.g. little nooks and pods) and interactive 'bumping spaces' (see figure 1). The Christchurch Enviro Hub will be nonpartisan, but tenants organisation will be free to be politically-engaged with their environmental campaign work. The Enviro Hub will be available to the full range of environmental, sustainability and conservation groups.

The Christchurch Enviro Hub would be administered by a charitable trust that would be established specifically to oversee the governance of funding, assets, and staff. This charitable trust would also be a social (environmental) enterprise with revenue from coworking rental and potentially other streams, such as education. With Scenario 3 (a purpose-build) we aim to become 'resilient' (self-funded and sustaining our work) within 5-10 years.

In scenarios 2 and 3 - a lounge area will double as an informal event space that is accessible to the general public. If a purpose-built building was constructed, it would be a green building that would reflect the nature of the area (figure 2). An Enviro Hub manager will, for example, administer the hub; actively connecting people, coordinating events and supporting volunteers.

An additional concept, yet to be explored, is the integration of environmental businesses and consultants into the Christchurch Enviro Hub, who would pay a non-subsidised rental. This would allow for greater connections and synergies, however the needs of NGO organisations would be prioritised.

Physical features

Meeting rooms and 'nooks'

Hot desking and fixed desks - potentially one locked office

Noticeboards and displays

Kitchen

Toilet

Bike parking

Storage

Scenarios 2 & 3:

Hub manager

Informal lounge 'bumping space' that can be used as an informal event space

Events calendar for greater Christchurch

Website



figure 1: concept of a co-working space and informal 'bumping space'



figure 2: concept of a purpose-built building in the Christchurch Residential Red Zone that would reflect the nature of the area.

Our proud history - Background

Christchurch has the proud history as the first New Zealand city to open an environmental centre in 1976. The manager was an energetic 18-year old (the passionate and spirited Rod Donald) who has left his mark on this city, even after his sad passing. This environmental centre was open for many years until 2009 when it closed its doors due to lack of funding. Many remember and cherished the space, particularly when it was based at the Arts Centre.

The face of the modern environmental centre is changing. The promotion of green information, goods and services and/or an eco shop at a physical shop has been superseded by the internet. The internet has also evolved the ability to work from home, but has also created a disconnected environmental community.

The umbrella group ECO (Environmental and Conservation Organisations) identified a need to bring groups in the greater Christchurch area together in 2016. Through hui with member groups and others, the need for a physical co-working space was raised.

An example of the potential of a shared space for environmental groups was created by the Centre for Contemporary Arts with the 'Precarious Nature' exhibition from November 2016 - February 2017. The invitation by CoCA for environmental groups to use the space resulted in more than 20 shared events, workshops and talks and a joint environmental display.

Research – *Why bumping spaces and coworking?*

“Coworking happens anytime more than one motivated person gathers with the intention to work and create shared value for the benefit of the community” (Kwiatkowski and Buczynski 2011).

Coworking spaces have become a worldwide phenomenon over the past decade with more than 100,000 people utilising over 3,000 coworking spaces (DeskMag.com, 2013). They are a response to the challenges; distraction, self-motivation problems, and feelings of isolation, that face freelancers and other location-independent professionals that work from home or public spaces such as coffee shops (Kwiatkowski and Buczynski 2011, Spinuzzi 2012). These challenges can lead to decreased work efficiency and in some cases even depression (Spinuzzi 2012). Coworking spaces provide a community where collaboration and socialization are readily available. Coworking is generally defined by five major values: collaboration, community, sustainability, openness, and accessibility (Kwiatkowski and Buczynski 2011). Research shows that there are measurable benefits of coworking space. Innovation is increased by collaboration, bringing together distributed knowledge, and dynamizing the “local buzz” (Capdevila 2015) as well as increasing motivation (DeskMag 2010).

Places where we have a casual conversation, ask how people are going, and share stories and local knowledge are examples of ‘bumping spaces’. They are how we relate to one another, get comfort and feel connected, and lead to co-creation. Bumping spaces are definitely not new. They are sadly those shared physical spaces that are increasingly disappearing in our modern world and lifestyle. The office bumping space has disappeared for many environmental organisations. Many bumping spaces are now largely interest-based and require a fee to access them - such as the conventional modern coworking space. The Christchurch Enviro Hub would be different - by ensuring that a bumping space was provided to all public, not just tenants of the facility.

Please Mind the Gap – A needs analysis

The Christchurch Enviro Hub would fill a need identified by environmental NGO stakeholders; providing low-cost co-working space and saving resources, as well as supporting and coordinating the environment sector in greater Christchurch. The hub would be an innovative space for the environment in Christchurch and be a focal point for environmental entrepreneurs working towards environmental wellbeing.

The closure of the Christchurch Environment Centre in 2009, a space which provided a platform for NGO organisations in the environment field, created a gap in the ability for these organisations to network and work together. A ‘Celebrating Matariki and Voices of the Third Sector’ forum convened by One Voice Te Reo Kotahi (OVTRK) on 7 July 2016 highlighted a call to revive the Environment Centre. An Environment Canterbury-facilitated ‘Networking for the Environment’ meeting held in November 2016 of about 60 organisations also identified two key needs facing the environment sector: (1) the need of coordination with a view to avoiding duplication of work and (2)

funding.

Currently, many hubs exist in Christchurch for other sectors, but not for environmental co-creation and innovation. In addition, many of these coworking spaces are already at capacity. The Community House provides working spaces for 31 non-profit organisations (<http://www.cch.org.nz/members.html>) the majority of which are social organisations. Bizdojo – “a co-working and collaboration network” (<http://www.bizdojo.com/>) –provides work spaces (hot desking) for freelancers and small businesses at a monthly rate ranging from \$199 (2 days/week) to \$399 (full-time), and aims to create a community of like-minded people to share ideas. The Ministry of Awesome supports entrepreneurs with ideas for projects and co-working by providing desks from \$550 per month for social entrepreneurs and business start-ups. The EPIC Innovation connects high-tech and IT start-up entrepreneurs with each other (<http://epicinnovation.co.nz/>), through co-working space and lounge facilities available, enabling sharing of experiences and knowledge. XHCH, the Christchurch Exchange, helps individuals as well as organisations “develop their practice, share ideas and connect with other creative practitioners” (<http://www.xchc.co.nz/about/>) by providing space for production of creative work and showcasing their work. Ōtākaro Orchards, a community garden facility was developed by the Christchurch Central Development Unit (CCDU), the lead for the rebuild of Christchurch which is also part of CERA, and is to be run by the Food Resilience Network. That facility, if funding is secured to build, will provide a place for people in the food resilience space to gather and socialise, and have information around food available to the public. It plans to provide six hot-desking spaces, but no opportunity for fixed desks. Discussions with the Food Resilience Network have led to mutual agreement that this space would be too small to also accommodate a Christchurch Enviro Hub.

The Three Scenarios

Three scenarios are presented in this proposal, however the reality is that there are a multitude of potential scenarios. Scenario Two and Three are the **preferred options**, with Scenario One seen as less preferred option due to the lack of financial sustainability long-term and lack of profile. Potentially Scenario Two, to lease a building, could transition to Scenario Three, when a building was completed.

Scenario One ‘Bare Bones’	Scenario Two ‘Comfortable’	Scenario Three ‘Resilient’
Subsidized co-working space is managed by a current provider e.g. BizDojo, Ministry of Awesome No or little branding as an enviro hub No managing charitable trust	A co-working and ‘bumping space’ is leased and managed by a charitable trust as a social enterprise. Funding secure for 3+ years. Branding as the Christchurch Enviro Hub with clear sponsorship recognition	A co-working and ‘bumping space’ (potentially environmentally purpose-built), is owned and managed by a charitable trust as a social enterprise. A free/subsidised land lease for long-term resilience-secure 5+ years

<p>No hub manager, website, nor events calendar</p> <p>No open informal space for all environmental groups (only tenant organisations)</p>	<p>One full-time hub manager is employed. A website, social media and events calendar are maintained. Tenants are supported.</p> <p>Volunteer and internship possibilities fostered</p> <p>Open informal 'bumping space' available free for all environmental groups and public</p> <p>Storage space available</p>	<p>Branding as the Christchurch Enviro Hub with clear sponsorship recognition</p> <p>One full-time hub manager is employed and additional project support staff. A website, social media and events calendar are maintained. Tenants are supported.</p> <p>Volunteer and internship possibilities fostered</p> <p>Open informal 'bumping space' available free for all environmental groups and public</p> <p>Storage and locked office options</p>
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Budget

The funding model is a social enterprise with revenue from co-working space and meeting room rental. Other potential initiatives, such as sustainability education programmes have not been factored into the current budget. Funding from sponsors will partially offset running costs of the Christchurch Enviro Hub. The charitable trust will be Not For Profit with a medium-term vision of becoming self-funded within 5-10 years under Scenario 3.

Tenants would qualify for subsidized co-working space if they met a set of criteria set by the Christchurch Enviro hub Trust.

See separate budget spreadsheet for details. All figures are **excluding GST**

Scenario One "Bare Bones"						
		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Expenditure	No set-up required	\$141,372	\$172,512	\$203,652	\$234,792	\$270,720
Rental Income		\$62,400	\$76,800	\$91,200	\$105,600	\$122,400
Grants		\$78,972	\$95,712	\$112,452	\$129,192	\$148,320

Income						
Scenario Two "Comfortable"						
	Year 0	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Expenditure	\$22,554	\$198,203	\$191,942	\$233,599	\$242,838	\$252,792
Rental Income	\$0	\$58,800	\$73,440	\$88,080	\$122,880	\$143,640
Grants Income	\$22,554	\$139,403	\$118,502	\$145,519	\$119,958	\$109,152
Scenario Three "Resilient"						
	Year 0	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Expenditure	\$22,554	\$978,263	\$138,228	\$139,225	\$146,107	\$150,643
Rental Income	\$0	\$0	\$73,440	\$88,080	\$122,880	\$143,640
Grants Income	\$22,554	\$978,263	\$64,788	\$51,145	\$23,227	\$7,003

Locations and Timeframes

For Scenario 1, the location would depend on the partner shared coworking space, such as at the BizDojo on Ash St or the Ministry of Awesome headquarters on St Asaphs Street (if their current premises can be enlarged). An enviro hub could be set up as soon as funding was confirmed and coworking space was available.

For Scenario 2, a leased, accessible CBD commercial space of at least 150m², with pre-installed kitchen and toilet is desired. This space could be potentially leased for a reduced rate if the proposal is sponsored by Christchurch City Council or Ōtākaro Ltd for example. These potential partners have been approached to discuss discounted commercial leases.

For Scenario 3, A suitable build site that provides an accessible CBD commercial space of at least 500m², (200m², -300m², building footprint) would need to be purchased or gifted. This would be a longer term scenario with a timeframe of construction within 5 years. A key potential site that will be pursued, will be the gifting of a site within the Residential Red Zone area off Bangor St, in the 'Avon Loop' community area. This area is within the CBD, and will be allocated land uses under the Ōtākaro/Avon River Corridor Regeneration Plan, to be drafted by Regenerate Christchurch in 2017-18 (figure 3).

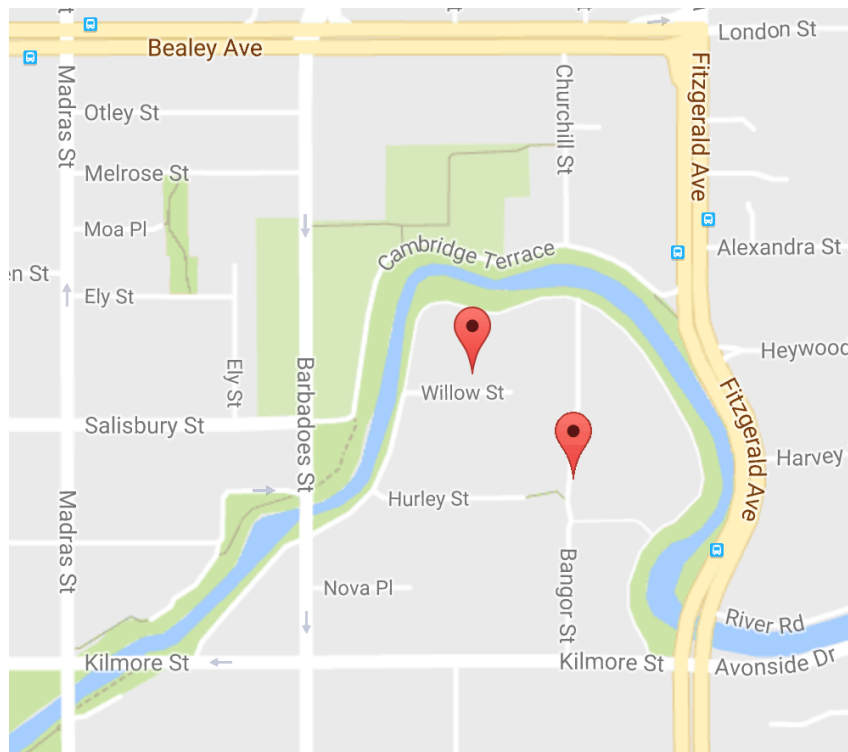


Figure 3 indicates potential build sites for Scenario Three in the Residential Red Zone, to be allocated land uses in the Ōtākaro/Avon River Corridor Regeneration Plan 2017-18

References

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Appendix 1: Case Studies – Environment Hubs

Enviro Hub Bay of Plenty

<http://envirohub.org.nz>

Vision: A sustainable Bay of Plenty

Structure: A charitable trust which facilitates a network. In 2012 Envirohub Bay of Plenty applied for, and received seed funding from the Bay of Plenty Regional Council to facilitate the development of an environment network. This network was established in response to grassroots community groups across the region identifying a need for greater collaboration, knowledge sharing and networking opportunities within the wider community and across different groups and organisations.

Workstreams: We are a non-profit, non-political organisation that works within the Bay of Plenty community delivering innovative and practical projects and programmes designed to educate, inform and inspire our people. From care groups, to recycling initiatives, to maara kai and community gardens, to sustainable transport.

Sponsors: Councils, Pub Charity, Ministry for the Environment, Todd Foundation and others

Environment Network Manuwatu

<http://www.environmentnetwork.org.nz>

Vision: The environment faces real and pressing challenges. You can be part of the solution.

Structure: Society that connects a network of organisations

Workstreams: Sustainable transport, biodiversity and conservation projects, freshwater quality, Urban parks and reserves, coastal environment, trips, tracks and walkways, community food and resilience, sustainable living practices, education and talks, advocacy, sustainable agriculture, resources and recycling, economic resilience

Sponsors: not listed

Ecomatters: West Auckland

<http://www.ecomatters.org.nz>

Mission: EcoMatters aim is to be a tohu (focal point) to connect people and the environment and to nurture a sense of guardianship (kaitiakitanga) for our beautiful planet.

Structure: Trust with board, project staff

Workstreams: Visitors Centre, school visits, projects, workshops, events, E-waste drop-off, events calendar

Sponsors: Council, Community Licensing Trusts, MfE Community Environment Fund

Nelson Environment Centre

<http://www.nec.org.nz>

Vision: A sustainable, resilient and fulfilling future for all
Structure: Trust with board, project staff

Workstreams: Reuse and recycle centre, eco-shop, education, projects,
-Focus on businesses, communities, schools, homeowners with sustainability info

Sponsors: Councils, businesses, community trusts & philanthropists, Ministry for the Environment and others.

Appendix 2: Environment Hubs Aotearoa

<http://www.environmenthubs.nz>

Environment Hubs Aotearoa is an umbrella organisation for 12 environment centres. Most centres have a strong sustainability focus, with some also featuring conservation projects. The Christchurch Enviro Hub would become a member of Environment Hubs Aotearoa.

Environment Hubs Aotearoa has identified some common threads among existing environment centres in New Zealand (figure 4).



Figure 4. Source: Environment Hubs Aotearoa

The Christchurch Enviro Hub would align well with other Environment Hubs in Aotearoa by providing these core services:

- A public centre to visit
- Environmental event listings, as well as social media and news
- Volunteer opportunities