

Cantabrians will march from Latimer Square to Cranmer Square past their Provincial Council Chambers on 1st December demanding the Government give back DEMOCRACY to their city

RALLY FOR DEMOCRACY: OUR CITY, OUR SAY

will begin at 2pm on Saturday December 1st in Latimer Square where citizens will **rally with the call: Our City, Our Say.....we want our city back!!**

This rally and march will unite many organisations including:
Save our Schools, IConIC, Historic Places Canterbury, WeCan, Christchurch Civic Trust, Save Hagley Park, TC3 Residents, Water Interests, Wizard of NZ Inc.

At the heart of the problems faced by all these groups is the lack of democracy, the Government's dictatorial approach to Canterbury.

A wave of discontent has been gathering over the loss of democracy in Christchurch since early 2010 and during the earthquake recovery, with Government/CERA making decisions without any input and consultation with the citizens of Christchurch and its elected members. This week's report by the Human Rights Commissioner to the Parliamentary Select Committee has highlighted a prime example of this shocking loss of democracy.

It began in 2010 when our democratically elected body Ecan was sacked and Commissioners were appointed. "The promise of an election in 2013 has been reneged upon: we now suffer the indignity of no elections for at least three more years," says Glenn Livingstone, one of the spokespeople for the combined march. "This is intolerable!"

From the beginning of its regime in Christchurch CERA, using Section 38, has set about destroying heritage buildings throughout the central city. "After 18 months of rampant demolition we are still losing our heritage and character and what are essential features of our city," says another spokesperson for the march, Ross Gray of Historic Places Canterbury. "CERA shows virtually no consideration for our heritage and has set about destroying our history at an alarming rate. There is wanton destruction of many of our most precious buildings. A graphic example of this is the recent quick resumption of demolition of Cranmer Courts and the refusal to agree to the City Council's request for Cera to call a halt for 30 days."

The recent schools proposals continue to confirm the top down “consultation” approach from our Government toward Christchurch. “Schools have been savaged, with pretend consultation, falsely based claims and wildly inappropriate solutions to problems,” says Wayne Hawker of Save our Schools. “There appears to be no consideration for communities and the real people they will affect in announcing these destructive proposals.” Only now do we hear Hekia Parata talk about genuine consultation but our communities do not trust her and it’s too little too late.

The CCC ‘Share an Idea’ campaign, which saw a huge number of Cantabrians contribute 106 000 submissions for the redevelopment of the inner city, was paid mere lip service to by CCDU and arrogantly replaced by the Government’s own Blueprint plan. Democratic rights of property owners are to be obliterated on a “like it or lump it” basis. “This Government expects Christchurch ratepayers to fund their think big ideas for our inner city. We will be forced into debt for generations if our rates are to pay for enormous projects like the covered stadium, which is to be inappropriately sited and which may have limited support from citizens,” states Lisle Hood of IConIC.

The lack of consultation has also been a hallmark in the land zoning decisions. There were no consultations on land zonings. There were no consultations on how to handle the major issues of the east. The battles many have had and continue to have with CERA and EQC have been disempowering and exhausting. As Mike Coleman of WeCan says, “This recovery has been done to us!”

Citizens agree: the end of this state of siege is long overdue. We will therefore march from Latimer Square to Cranmer Square past our Provincial Chambers, a wonderful heritage building which is being carefully deconstructed for future restoration and the symbol of our local democracy. This will be the place where we will demand with one voice

Our City, Our Say....we want our city back!!

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