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| **Hon Hekia Parata**  **Minister of Education** | cid:image001.jpg@01CD971E.4E548F30 |
| 18 February 2013 | **Media Statement** |

**Building the best schooling network in the country**

Education Minister Hekia Parata today announced she has listened to parents and school communities and decided about a third of the proposals for greater Christchurch schools should now not proceed.

Ms Parata today announced interim decisions for 31 of the 38 schools affected by the Government’s Education Renewal Plans.

“The Government is absolutely committed to rebuilding Christchurch – that’s why we are investing $1 billion into restoring and renewing the education sector in Canterbury over the next 10 years,” Ms Parata says.

“Greater Christchurch will have one of the most modern schooling networks in the country that will serve communities for many years to come, and help each and every child get a great education.”

In summary, the interim decisions Ms Parata has announced today for the 31 schools are:

* 12 schools proposed for closure or merger should remain open.
* 19 schools should either close, or merge.
  + Of these 19 schools, seven should close and 12 should merge (to create six schools)

In addition to those interim decisions:

* Two schools have already closed voluntarily. Those schools are Hammersley Park and Le Bons Bay.
* Five schools in Aranui (Aranui, Avondale, Wainoni, Chisnallwood Intermediate, and Aranui High School) have an extended consultation period to 7 March. It is proposed those schools form a new Year 1-13 campus.

The 12 schools proposed for closure or merger that should now remain open are: Bromley, Burnham, Burnside, Duvauchelle, Gilberthorpe, Linwood Avenue, Okains Bay, Ouruhia Model, Shirley Intermediate, and Yaldhurst schools, and the two kura - TKKM o Waitaha and TKKM o Te Whānau Tahi.

“I have decided that Ouruhia Model School should remain open but should be relocated to West Belfast when the population is sufficient enough to support a school in that area.

“I have also decided that one of the kura should be relocated so that Māori medium schooling is available in the north of Christchurch.’’

In addition to Hammersley Park and Le Bons Bay schools, who have already closed voluntarily, the interim decision is to close seven schools.

These schools are: Branston Intermediate, Glenmoor, Greenpark, Kendal, Linwood Intermediate, Manning Intermediate and Richmond.

Glenmoor, Greenpark, and Richmond all had rolls of fewer than 50 children as of July last year.

Kendal had a roll of 90 children, Branston Intermediate a roll of 180 children, Manning a roll of 154 and Linwood a roll of 123.

The interim decisions for these seven schools affect around 670 children, or less than 1 per cent of the entire greater Christchurch student population of nearly 72,000

“I acknowledge that the interim decision to close seven schools will be disappointing news for those communities but parents will be supported in making decisions about their child’s future education and there are plenty of options available to them, depending on the final decisions,” Ms Parata says.

“The face and make-up of greater Christchurch has, and will continue to change dramatically due to the earthquakes, and the education sector must respond to those changes.

“There were already around 5,000 places available in schools in greater Christchurch before the earthquakes, and 4,300 students have not re-enrolled, meaning there are now 9,300 places available – that’s roughly equivalent to the entire student population of Gisborne.

“The aftermath of the earthquakes has required us to have a look at all the schools across greater Christchurch and see what we could do better.

“We have looked at not only earthquake damage, but also roll size, population movement and projected growth, building issues, and what opportunities existed to create better, more modern schools,” Ms Parata says.

These modern schools are designed to reflect the latest education research and the advice of education experts, to ensure children are being taught using the latest techniques and technology.

“We have a chance to build brighter, more modern schools in better locations, with great new facilities, and to ensure all children are getting access to good, quality education within a close distance of where they live.”

Of the 18 schools originally proposed for merger, Ms Parata is proposing to proceed with 12 schools merging into six schools.

Burwood should merge with Windsor, Central New Brighton should merge South New Brighton, Lyttleton Main should merge with Lyttelton West, North New Brighton should merge with Freeville, Phillipstown should merge with Woolston, and Unlimited Paenga Tawhiti should merge with Discovery One.

“We are now proposing that Phillipstown and Woolston merge onto the Woolston site, instead of the Linwood College site as originally proposed. This change would mean there would be no need to merge Linwood Avenue and Bromley schools.

“We are also proposing not to proceed with the mergers of TKKM o Waitaha and TKKM o Te Whānau Tahi and Gilberthorpe and Yaldhurst schools.’’

Ms Parata says the boards of the seven schools proposed for closure and the 12 schools planned for merger will now have until Friday 28 March 2013 to provide her with any further information before she makes a final decision in May.

“We have decided to give all the schools affected by my interim decisions more time than is required under the Education Act 1989 before I make my final decisions. This gives the time to review all the information we based our decisions on.

“I would like to thank parents, teachers, principals, and school communities for the feedback they provided during the consultation period. It was well-considered and thoughtful and gave me a real sense of each community.

“During the consultation process, I also personally visited 35 of the schools affected by the proposals and met with about 2,000 parents, teachers, and other interested parties to hear their concerns.

“In making these interim decisions, I am mindful families in greater Christchurch have already been through a lot and I hope that today’s announcement will provide some certainty for this stage of the process.

“I think this is a sensible and fair plan,” Ms Parata says.

**Media contact**: **Julie Ash 021 940 357**

*Note for editors*:

Of the 215 schools in greater Christchurch, 177 schools, or more than 80 per cent, are not affected by our proposals.

In summary, of the 38 schools covered in the original proposals announced in September last year:

* 12 schools proposed for closure or merger should remain open.
* 19 schools should either close or merge.
  + Of these 19 schools, 7 should close and 12 should merge (to create six schools)
* Five schools in Aranui (Aranui, Avondale, Wainoni, Chisnallwood Intermediate, and Aranui High School) have an extended initial consultation period to 7 March 2013. It is proposed those schools form a new Year 1-13 campus.
* Two schools have already closed voluntarily. Those schools are Hammersley Park and Le Bons Bay.

We are building or rebuilding 15 schools over the next 10 years:

* Work will begin on building the new Waikuku School in Pegasus Town, north of Christchurch, and on the complete rebuild of the earthquake-damaged Halswell Primary School in April. Both schools are expected to open early next year.
* An addition five brand-new schools are planned to be built at Lincoln, Rangiora West, and West Halswell and two in Rolleston.
* We are also rebuilding new schools for eight schools that are being relocated and built on new sites. These are: Bank Ave, Marshlands, South Hornby, Sockburn, Ouruhia Model, Unlimited Discovery One (the merger of Unlimited Paenga Tawhiti and Discovery One), Linwood College, and one of the kura.

The 12 schools proposed for closure or merger that should now remain open are: Bromley, Burnham, Burnside, Duvauchelle, Gilberthorpe, Linwood Avenue, Okains Bay, Ouruhia Model, Shirley Intermediate, and Yaldhurst schools, and the two kura - TKKM o Waitaha and TKKM o Te Whānau Tahi.

Ouruhia Model School should remain open but will be relocated to West Belfast when the population is sufficient enough to support a school in that area.

One of the kura should also be relocated to provide Māori medium provision to north of Christchurch.

It was originally proposed that Duvauchelle and Okains Bay schools’ would become attached to Akaroa Area School as satellite schools but they should now remain as separate schools.

Of the nine mergers (involving 18 schools) originally proposed, three should not proceed. These mergers are:

* Bromley and Linwood Avenue
* Gilberthorpe and Yaldhurst Model
* TKKM o Waitaha and TKKM o Te Whanau Tahi (these schools should both remain open but one should relocate to the other side of the city)
* The six school mergers (involving 12 schools) that should proceed are:
* Burwood and Windsor - on the Windsor School site.
* Central New Brighton and South New Brighton - on the South New Brighton site.
* Freeville and North New Brighton – on the North New Brighton site
* Lyttelton Main and Lyttelton West – on the Lyttelton Main site
* Phillipstown and Woolston (using the Woolston site)
* Discovery One and Unlimited Paenga Tawhiti – on a new site.

In additional to Hammersley Park and Le Bons Bay schools who have already closed voluntarily - the interim decision is to close seven schools.

These schools are: Branston Intermediate, Glenmoor, Greenpark, Kendal, Linwood Intermediate, Manning Intermediate and Richmond.

Greenpark, Richmond, and Glenmoor all had rolls of fewer than 50 children as at July last year. Kendal had a roll of 90 children, Branston Intermediate a roll of 180 children, Manning a roll of 154 and Linwood a roll of 123.

The interim decisions for these seven schools affect around 670 children, or less

than 1 per cent of the entire greater Christchurch student population of nearly 72,000

The interim decisions for the 12 schools proposed for merger affect around 3,100 children or around 4 per cent of the entire greater Christchurch student population of nearly 72,000

The interim decisions for all 19 schools, that should either close or merge, affect around 3,800 children or around 5 per cent of the entire greater Christchurch student population of nearly 72,000

The interim decision is for both Linwood Intermediate School and Manning Intermediate Schools to close, but there will be further consideration given to provision options for Year 7 and 8 children.

All 31 schools we have announced interim decisions for today will now be given until March 28 2013 to provide any further feedback before final decisions are made.

The Minister has decided to give all 31 schools more time than is required under the Education Act 1989 to provide further information and before final decisions are made. This gives these schools time to review all the information that the interim decisions were based on.

School Boards also have the option of accepting the interim decision earlier than the 28 March deadline. This needs to be done in writing to the Minister. Should this happen, the Minister can make and advise the Board of her final decision as quickly as is feasible and will not wait until the end of May.

Under the Education Act 1989, the decision to close or merge schools is made by the Minister of Education.