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MAYORAL CANDIDATES DEBATE

City cost-sharing talks 'will be public'

TINA LAW

Changes to a controversial funding agreement between the town and the city council will be debated publicly after October's election.

Christchurch Mayor Lianne Dalziel gave the assurance during The Press' inaugural debate at the Transitional cathedral last night.

The cost share agreement was signed by the previous council and the Crown in 2011. It laid out their respective funding contributions for the city's anchor projects, including the convention centre, metro sports facility and stadium.

The council is "refreshing" the agreement with the Government behind closed doors and has previously refused to answer questions about the scope of the refresh, the potential for any public input or the timing of the negotiations.

Dalziel said at last night's debate the "refresh" discussions had been put on hold until after the election.

"I have said there will be no decisions made on any refresh until after the election and when we do take it in council, it will be in public, read my lips, in public."

Mayor candidate John Minto said the agreement was unworkable, based on Government mismanagement and he wanted it renegotiated.

"Christchurch should be deciding what we want to do, not the Government," Minto said. "The projects in the agreement were built projects and the ongoing running costs were going to be a huge drain on our city's finances."

He wants this big rugby stadium in the middle of town, when we have Lancaster Park? "Inaugurs" it could be fixed. Dalziel scoffed at that statement, saying she would reduce the interest's "good grief".



From left, Lianne Dalziel, moderator Jessica North and John Minto during the mayoral debate at the Transitional Cathedral last night. PHOTO: GUY LAWRENCE/GETTY IMAGES



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teacher at Hersey High School, is standing for the Keep Our Assets (KOA) group.

He is standing on a plank of five issues, 100 new council homes, sustainable rivers and bringing an immediate halt to the city's seven council employee restructures.

"It was a living wage introduced for council staff and management salaries capped at \$100k. Dalziel said a living wage would be achieved by the council, but the people paying rates should also have access to a living wage."

She did not believe the top salaries should be cut. But in support of tax increases on the top. The buses would be paid for by spending on the roads, Minto said. Dalziel revealed her call for the council to take over the buses from Environment Canterbury (ECAN).

She encouraged people to vote for ECAN representatives who would give the buses to the council.

"Give us back our buses. Give us back our public transport. We don't need ECAN at the table." "I'm on Lianne's side," Minto said.

"All I need to do is make them free. By making them free we save hundreds of millions."

The Government identified a \$715 million stadium as an anchor project for Christchurch. The stadium was originally expected to be completed in 2017.

The council, which would own, extends the lifespan to 2027. "To be blunt a stadium is a waste of time," said Dalziel.

multi-use areas was what the city needed, she said. "Can we make a multi-use facility work? Could we just stand on accommodation in these areas before finalising the areas to offer."

Christchurch Deputy Mayor Vicki Buck said encouraging people drilling tower Canterbury made environmental or economic sense. "We have no expertise as a council to deal with an oil spill, she said. "It's a highly high risk and doesn't actually make economic sense."

The world was moving away from oil and Canterbury's even only depended on its already limited oil power plants, she said. "The last thing you want is any form of oil spill off your coast, because the scrubbing of your furnace is done forever."

Oil and gas exploration plan for Canterbury coast 'lunacy'

CHARLE MITCHELL

A large chunk of Canterbury's coast will again be offered up for oil and gas exploration, under a Government proposal described as "lunacy" by Christchurch's deputy mayor.

The Government wants to set aside 100,000 square kilometres of New Zealand's east coast for oil and gas companies as part of a 2017 block offer.

The annual block offer (spate) is a way of allowing companies to explore for oil and gas. This year's proposed offer would open up the largest area ever for exploration.

It includes a square near the Banks Peninsula Marine Mammal

Reserve, home to the endangered Humpback dolphin.

Last year's offer was deeply unpopular with the Christchurch City Council and environmental groups. They argued that deep-sea drilling would threaten the region with a catastrophic oil spill for inter-ecosystem gain.

Despite logging oil prices, the offer of oil prices environment that industry is currently facing but we have commodity prices are critical. Energy Minister Simon Bridges said.

"The Government remains committed to providing a stable and predictable future."

He said the Government would



...It's lunacy, and I cannot believe they haven't just quietly gone away with this ridiculous idea. The proposal would allow exploration of an area known as the Canterbury-Coral South Sea. It stretches from Banks Peninsula down the South Canterbury coast. Another large area near Banks Peninsula, known as the Fegasus Basin, was also part of the proposed offer. Permits in the past have been given to international companies including Shell, Anadarko and Woodside Petroleum. Bids for the 2016 block offer closed earlier this month, with permits expected to be awarded in December. It was possible a company would secure an exploration permit. Oil Free Oceania spokesman

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