



Ōtoromiro/Governors Bay Jetty: Key findings

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Key takeaway

The jetty is the heart of Governors Bay and has been described as “inherent in people living here”. It provides various functions and is of immense value to the local and broader Christchurch community.

Background

We had the privilege of participating in a Summer Research Scholarship project titled *Jetties and small settlement regeneration in Banks Peninsula*, funded by the Building Better Homes, Towns and Cities National Science Challenge through AgResearch.

Our study was conducted over the summer of 2021/2022, exploring the jetty restoration efforts in Banks Peninsula and how they can be an important site for community relationships. For our study, we interviewed 8 people involved with restoring the Governor’s Bay jetty, as well as 10 other people who were involved in other jetty restoration efforts around Banks Peninsula.

Insights

Our research identified some fundamental values associated with the jetty and why it is so important to the community.

- The jetty provides a vital connection between the land and marine environment, and ease of access to the marine environment through which people gain enjoyment.
- Recreational activities associated with jetties are an inherent part of Governor’s Bay culture.
- The jetty also has strong emotional and spiritual value to the community. It serves as:
 - a meeting point for people to interact and connect, i.e., a “social boardwalk”.
 - a venue for weddings, boat races, community social events at Christmas and New Year’s Eve.
 - a place to connect to nature, described by some as the “Blue Hagley Park”, and the experience on the jetty is like “walking on water”.
 - a recreational facility (e.g., for jumping into the water, fishing, boating).
 - an inclusive outdoor experience for all ages and capabilities, including being wheelchair accessible.

- It is an inviting destination for people from the wider Canterbury region and tourists, who then also commonly contribute to the local economy (visitors to the pub/hotel/café).
- There is a sentimental and historic value. For many users it has been a “signature part of their lives”. It also “makes a statement” and offers an educational purpose, raising questions about how the community once functioned.
- The jetty is listed under Schedule 5.12 of the Regional Coastal Environment Plan as a protected recreational, cultural, or historic structure, acknowledging its wider regional significance.

Implications

Without the jetty, access to the water is more difficult. The tidal mudflats in the bay mean there is a small window of time that people can reach the water directly from the land.

- Lack of accessibility for recreation (e.g. fishing, swimming, kayaking, paddle boarding and other water dependent activities).
- Interviewees highlighted the importance of the marine environment and the pleasure it brings to their lives and enhancing wellbeing. These advantages of “being in” that environment via the jetty would be lost.



Photo courtesy of Governors Bay Jetty Restoration Trust

Further information

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