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## Breathing new life into our central cities

### Verney Ryan 1

#### 1. Beacon Pathway Inc

In 2012 Beacon Pathway Inc. worked as a catalyst to establish the Christchurch Breathe New Urban Village design and build competition. This international competition challenged entrants to develop a concept for medium density living - a new urban village that would provide a variety of housing options and lifestyle choices based on sustainability, innovation and a strong sense of community.

One of the central goals was to create a concept that would change the way people think about urban living in Christchurch. More than simply an ideas competition, the intention of the main stakeholders (Christchurch City Council and the Ministry for Business Innovation and Employment) was that the resulting built development would be the catalyst for modern urban living in the heart of Christchurch. This project is a flagship part of Canterbury rebuild post-quakes and seeks to attract a new and diverse residential community back into the Central City.

From 58 entries from 15 countries, the judges identified four finalists who had three months to take their initial concepts through to a more developed design. The winning concept is now being built adjacent to Latimer Square, offering its residents an exceptional quality of life, with local parks, entertainment, recreational facilities, and the central business area nearby.

Beacon views design and build competitions as a worthwhile and replicable intervention in the new-build market: high profile urban development results in great housing and neighbourhood outcomes. As part of Beacon's role a toolkit has been produced which provides a framework for how others might replicate the success of Christchurch's Breathe competition. This paper outlines some of the key features of the competition, showcases some of the inspirational designs submitted and highlights how this approach can help to bring good quality desirable medium density to NZ drawing on national and international expertise.

#### References:

Breathe - The new urban village project, Whakaaturanga Kāinga Nohoanga;  
<http://www.futurechristchurch.co.nz/breathe>

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