Cameron Moore

Submission to the Christchurch City Council

Draft Annual Plan 2006

I WISH TO SPEAK TO MY SUBMISSION

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SUBMISSION TO THE CHRISTCHURCH CITY COUNCIL DRAFT PLAN 2006

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1. IMPORTANCE OF THE BOTANIC GARDENS TO CHRISTCHURCH

Christchurch is a noted "Garden City" and was voted the "Garden City of the World." The corner stone and focus of this reputation is the Botanic Gardens, Hagley Park and the Avon River.

A Destination Benchmarking Study completed for Christchurch and Canterbury Marketing during 2000/01 surveying 1,100 visitors to Christchurch and covering 6105 visits demonstrates the popularity of the Botanic Gardens. Rankings by attractions visited were:

	%
Cathedral Square	80
Shopping	71
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Christ Church Cathedral	47
Canterbury Museum	39
Christchurch Tram	30
Antarctic Centre	28
Christchurch Gondola	24
Robert McDougall Art Gallery	18

Visitor numbers to the Botanic Gardens surveyed in 1995/96 were at 1,200,000 visitors per annum and the current but yet uncompleted survey is showing a further increase of visitors above the 1.2 million of the 1995/96 survey.

See Appendix 1, page 10.

2. ROLE OF BOTANIC GARDENS IN THE 21st, CENTURY

Each botanic garden has a different location, purpose, and organisational structure, therefore the emphasis of its work may vary. This different emphasis is what gives each botanic garden its distinctive character. However there are a number of roles common to the description "botanic garden"

They are: Civic Park

Education Conservation Research

Roger Beale, Secretary. Environment Australia

"Modern botanic gardens.... Now serve a more complex function. Botanic gardens are part of the cultural fabric of society, feeding our significant need for spaces and creating dialogues between us and the natural world. They have developed important roles in science and education, and the embracing of technologies has opened a new era of co-operation and information sharing.

Botanic gardens have a central role in promoting local and global cooperation in biodiversity conservation, sustainable development and research."

3. IMPORTANCE OF A VISION AND A STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE CHRISTCHURCH BOTANIC GARDENS

I appreciate that the Council is currently preparing a strategic plan for the Botanic Gardens. It is vital this is given urgent attention and the necessary resources, before any long-term capital commitments are made.

You need a mental image of a possible and desired future, a realistic, credible attractive future, a condition that is better in some important ways than what now exists. You need to recognise the mission for the Botanic Gardens must cover both strategy and culture. It will need both commercial and moral rationale and in business terms, it needs to understand what business it is in and what strategic position it is seeking. The development of a mission is intellectual; converting individuals to it, is emotional.

In April 2002 the Friends of the Christchurch Botanic Gardens in their submission to the Christchurch City Council on the future use of the Robert McDougall Art Gallery building raised the lack of a mission and strategic plan for the Botanic Gardens. Now after three years it still remains uncompleted.

Further notes on this are to be found in Appendix 3. page 14.

4. GENERAL COMMENTS

I am pleased to see the recognition by the City Council in the allocation of additional resources to reverse the lack of development in the Botanic Gardens over the last decade.

It is not easy to analyse this Annual Draft Plan and its financial implications unless it is done under the umbrella of a long-term strategic plan.

My comments in this submission are offered in a constructive and hopefully helpful manner as we understand the additional commitment Council is making to the Botanic Gardens. I am sure you realise, the year 2013 is the sesquicentennial of the Christchurch Botanic Gardens. Botanic gardens have by their very nature a long investment horizon and 2013 gives us only eight years.

5. OPERATIONAL ISSUES

In their submission to the Christchurch Community Plan 2004-14 the Friends of the Christchurch Botanic Gardens raised their concern over operational expenditure in the Botanic Gardens. I support their comments.

However I do wish to comment on your budget process. You will see from the attached budget figures in Schedule 4, page 19 that the previous year's figures have been adopted with almost no change. With the exception of *Allocated overhead-Cost centre*, the only changes are the addition of \$100,000 for *Labelling of plants* and *General Expenses* which changes from \$58,120 to \$59,520.

Even *Depreciation* remains unchanged even though considerable capital expenditure was to take place over the 2004-05 years.

I find this lack of change incomprehensible as it assumes no operational or pricing changes.

In their submission last year the Friends of the Botanic Gardens raised the issue of escalating cost of mowing. This work I understand is performed by an outside contractor and with the increase in this item, it should be offered for open tender. The budgeted amounts year by year are:

	\$
2001/02	14,900
2002/03	15,198
2003/04	20,198
2004/05	35,000
2005/06	35,000

This is an increase of 134.9% over 3 years?

Has this issue been investigated?

Thirdly, I am led to believe there is no increase in full time labour numbers (FTE) and a senior staff member has been allocated to a major project updating the asset data base and thus not available for gardening. We still believe the Botanic Gardens are under staffed. In Volume 1 of the Community Plan 2004-2014, page 29 it states:

Public comments have identified a perceived decline in the standard of the Botanic Gardens. The plan then goes on to say this view is also reinforced by the observations of the new Curator and Operations Manager. Is "perceived" the correct word to use? What real investigation has there been in FTE needs to meet forecast expectations? It must be added that generally my contact with staff only confirms a thoroughly professional group of people. It does seem to me, that with the growing skills shortage and the forthcoming 150 year anniversary there is a real need to increase the apprentice intake.

6. REVENUE

The 2004 plan stated "analysis has revealed revenue has been consistently overstated in the budget in recent years and it is clear revenue targets are not being met in some areas and are unrealistic. In particular this relates to the Botanic Gardens, where revenue targets for lectures, tours and product sales have been overly optimistic."

Budgeted targets have been correspondingly reduced. Budgeted revenue over recent years is:

	\$000's
2001/02	161.0
2002/03	175.0
2003/04	131.0
2004/05	114.5
2005/06	114.5
	2002/03 2003/04 2004/05

Whilst I agree budgets must have reality based on the business plan, I wonder if these are nothing more than a figure "which we hope will happen." No action, no performance!

On a general analysis of botanic gardens around the world, the average income earned from external sources compared with total income including government/local body income is around 30%. Ours is about 7%. To me this seems a very negative statement reflecting a misunderstanding of commercial reality.

You need to ask:

Who are our customers?
What are our competencies?
How do we "create" our "customers?"

What you are allowing is a lowering of revenue standards each year. You should be making these standards harder, not easier. As Peter Drucker, the doyen of management consultants said "the predominant role of any organisation is to innovate and create its customers."

Over half the visitors to our Botanic Gardens are from outside Christchurch and current estimates on overseas visitors to Christchurch forecast an increase of 58% between now and 2008. A recent visit from the Chief Executive Officer of British Heritage stated their most profitable activity was their shops which enjoyed very high margins.

This compares with our budget for shop sales, which in last year's budget were reduced by 24% from the previous year's budget, but even more importantly the trading margin on these sales was reduced from 45% to 26%? Can this be explained? The position remains unchanged.

I understand increased activity in school education is taking place on a no charge basis. Is this correct? I would have thought education related to unit standards and provided at a fee as is widely done overseas, providing additional revenue to the botanic garden as well as providing value to a school would be part of your strategy. It would force a professional education approach to be taken providing real value rather than a *play way garden visit*.

Capital Expenditure

Two significant items are included within the budget period. They are the major tree replacement programme and the proposed visitor facility and greenhouse replacement. These two total \$10,575,782.

The tree replacement need has been known for over 10 years and it is pleasing to see it being recognised operationally.

The Friends of the Christchurch Botanic Gardens have in previous years raised the issue of a lack of a strategic plan.

In my opinion this should precede any planning work on the proposed visitor centre. You need to know what you are going to use the facility for before planning it. For instance this Community Plan refers to a "staff and visitors" facility, but does not mention education, conservation, research or commercial opportunities? The present Information Centre reflects the lack of a strategic vision at the time it was built. One area not mentioned is its location and the need to provide information at the Rolleston Avenue entrance where 45% of visitors enter. This entrance is the linkage with the "heritage precinct" of Christchurch, It was "interesting" to read in the Community Plan 2004-2014 on page 29 of volume 1, "Interestingly, less than 8% of all visitors find the Gardens' Information Centre, something the Friends of the Christchurch Botanic Gardens have been saying for some years and one of the major points raised

in their previous submission on the use of the Robert McDougall Art Gallery building. On the same page it states that over half of all visitors to the Botanic Gardens are from outside Christchurch. Current forecasts for overseas visitors to Christchurch between now and 2008 are for a 58% increase. Any plan for additional buildings must contain commercial facilities to help finance the Botanic Gardens. The Council should reconsider its position on an information centre for Rolleston Avenue.

7. GOVERNANCE

I am concerned about the "governance" of the Botanic Gardens and I wish to reiterate comments made by the Friends of the Botanic Gardens in previous years.. To me this very important City asset is too far removed from effective governance. How does it develop a vision and "business" plan without an effective *Board* structure to which the "*Director*" of the Botanic gardens can relate? Under its present structure it is just too far down the organisation chain to have effective governance. The Botanic Gardens report to operational personnel, whose major operational role is maintaining the asset at lowest cost and balancing the budget. There are very real opportunities in external funding and this requires a wide blend of skills at the governance level over a consistent period.

Currently there is an emphasis on the Botanic Gardens, but over the last decade this has not been so. The procrastination of the decision on ageing trees is a very good example of the lack of governance in recent times.

Ian Blackburne Chair Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust (Sydney)

"From the outside, a botanic garden looks a beautiful place- lush with wonderful plants, tranquil and serene, beautiful birds,... streams, sculpture, a safe and secure place. Botanic gardens fill many needs... scientific, botanic and horticultural as well as historical, cultural, leisure and entertainment. The realities of all botanic gardens today is that they are businesses ... facing issues such as occupational health and safety for the visiting public, employees and contractors, financial pressure to deliver innovative and relevant programs and sustain themselves in spite of reduction in public funding; and always provide plantings and collections as well as other programmes to meet public expectations."

"To be relevant today, BGs need to provide leadership in issues of plant conservation, biodiversity and environmental standards and procedures, to utilise modern communication techniques and media; and look at who they are, what they do and ensure they meet consumer needs."

Our Botanic Gardens are just too important to be managed rather than governed. This is an important consideration that needs to be debated, not swept under the mat.

11. CONCLUSION

I am pleased to see the increased commitment by the Council to rejuvenate the Botanic Gardens.

I applaud your decision to extend the opening hours of the current Visitors' Centre.

There is widespread recognition of the value and importance of these very special facilities to our residents and tourists.

I hope my comments have been helpful and I look forward to working in partnership with you to enhance our Botanic Gardens.

IMPORTANCE OF THE BOTANIC GARDENS TO CHRISTCHURCH

Christchurch is a noted garden city and was voted the "Garden City of the World." The corner stone of this reputation is the Botanic Gardens, Hagley Park and the Avon River. Christchurch has become a heritage tourist centre and the western area of the city adjacent to Rolleston Avenue is a recognised heritage quarter within easy walking distance from the city's centre.

It comprises:

Arts' Centre Museum Christ's College City Art Gallery Botanic Gardens

The Botanic Gardens are an obvious and focal point for both local residents and tourist. A major survey (1995/96) confirms our Botanic Gardens attract over 1.2 million visitors per annum. This survey did not count tour groups on guided tours who average about 5000 per annum. The profile from this survey is as follows:

		%
Christchurch residents	762,000	63.5
Other N. Z. residents	185,000	15.4
International visitors	253,000	21.1
Total visitors	1,200,000	100.0

Currently a new visitor survey is under way and figures to date show an increase over the 1995/96 survey.

It is interesting to compare these visitor numbers from 2000/01 with other well known icons:

The Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne	1,900,000
The Christchurch Botanic Gardens	1,200,000
The Royal Botanic Gardens Edinburgh	700,000
Auckland Regional Botanic Gardens	700,000
Canterbury Museum	550,000
Robert McDougall Art Gallery	250,000

A Destination Benchmarking Study completed for Christchurch & Canterbury Marketing during 2000/01 surveying 1,100 visitors and covering 6,105 visits demonstrated the popularity of the Botanic Gardens. Rankings by attractions visited were:

	%
Cathedral Square	80
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Current estimates of international tourist growth forecast a 58% increase from now until 2008.

It is only now we are recognising the importance of heritage tourism and the central role Christchurch occupies in New Zealand in this growing sector of international tourism. The Botanic Gardens play an important role in this.

ROLE OF BOTANIC GARDENS IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Each botanic garden has a different location, purpose, and organisational structure, therefore the emphasis of its work may vary. This different emphasis is what gives each botanic garden its distinctive character. However there are a number of roles common to the description "botanic garden"

In his book *Guide to the Botanic Gardens of Britain*, published by Collins in 1987, Michael Young lists the roles of botanic gardens as:

Public access
Labelling
Instruction
Research
Plants gathered together to form a scientific collection

At its meeting in Canberra in April 2001 the Gardens 2001 Congress defined four major roles for botanic gardens as:

Education Conservation Research Horticulture

Similarly, the International Agenda for Botanic Gardens Conservation in May 2002 stated:

"Botanic Gardens are institutions holding documented collections of living plants for the purpose of:

Display
Conservation
Education
Scientific research."

The Botanic Garden Conservation Strategy Conference in 1989 gave a very comprehensive list of activities defining a botanic garden but pointed out that each individual botanic garden did not necessarily carry out all of these functions.

From these and other internationally recognised sources, the major function defining a botanic garden can be classified under the two over riding headings of **pleasure** and **value**.

These two headings can be amplified as:

Civic Park

Pleasure gardens

Education

Interpretation (signage)

Importance of plants in our life

Conservation Plant life

Plant collections

Gardening information and advice

Conservation Preserving species

Genetic diversity

Rare and endangered plants both in situ and ex situ.

Research

Conservation Environment Seed exchange

Plant collections

Rare and endangered plants

Herbarium Ethnobiology

Taxonomy (plant names)

How do our Botanic Gardens compare with these benchmarks? Without doubt our Gardens have a very high grading as a civic park or community garden. In the other categories of education, conservation and research the rating would be poor. Yet exciting and valuable opportunities exist in those areas.

IMPORTANCE OF A VISION AND A PLAN FOR THE BOTANIC GARDENS

I am convinced the Botanic Gardens need a vision and a sense of direction to fulfill its potential, both to its citizens and visitors. Whilst I am pleased our Council is currently preparing a strategic plan for the Botanic Gardens, it is vital urgent attention and the necessary resources are allocated to ensure its completion. Once the draft plan has been finished it will need professional critiquing before adoption. Council must ensure this process proceeds without delay to ensure timely implementation. (N.B.150th celebration in 2013).

Youneed a mental image of a possible and desired future, a view of a realistic, credible attractive future, a condition that is better in some important ways than what now exists.

This mission is much more than intentions and fine ideals. It must represent

- (a) the framework for the entire business,
- (b) the values which drive the Botanic Gardens,
- (c) the belief the City and the Botanic Gardens has in itself and
- (d) the confidence we can achieve the goal to be a leading botanic garden.

Currently Greenspace have set up a review committee to explore the need for a new Staff and Visitors' building. Whilst I applaud the sentiment of this effort, I believe it is the "cart before the horse." This committee has no set objectives. It is essential you should be defining the MISSION STATEMENT for the Botanic Gardens and starting to walk, in business terms, the trail of:

Mission Product areas Products Processes and resources

It will need to keep these thoughts in the back of its mind:

To succeed, how will we look to our stakeholders? Financial To achieve our vision, how will we look to our visitors? Visitors To satisfy our visitors, what processes must we excel at? Internal To achieve our vision, how must we learn and improve? Innovate

You need to recognise our mission covers both strategy and culture. You need both a commercial and a moral rationale and in business terms, you need to understand what

business you are in and what strategic position you seek. You should be defining your future, not defending youtr past. The development of a mission statement is intellectual; converting individuals to it, is emotional.

Dr Hugh Mackay, Physcologist writer and social researcher from Sydney

Wrote.

One of the "factors likely to increase public interest in, support for and use of public gardens Is that demographic trends towards smaller households will force us to seek creative ways of satisfying our herd instincts. We are.. social creatures...we will be wanting to make more use of public space connecting with the herd."

(Maybe we need to encourage a return to promenading in our Botanic Gardens as the early settlers did, instead of joining the crowds in the malls.) "People will be looking for ways to compensate themselves for the pressure of contemporary life. They will be looking for symbols of simplicity. The garden is one such symbol." In our case so very accessible. "(The public gardens have the great advantage that 'I don't even have to do the weeding') A public garden is far more than a botanical museum;: in the future, it will be an oasis in which we find some of the tranquillity, sanity and simplicity for which we yearn".

From report of the 'Conference on Botanic Gardens in the 21st Century,' held in Canberra April 2001. This International Congress was attended by 240 delegates.

Roger Beale, Secretary. Environment Australia

"Botanic Gardens have undergone radical evolution since their inception. Early botanic gardens displayed biological souvenirs and curios from 'the other world'. Modern botanic gardens.... Now serve a more complex function. Botanic gardens are part of the cultural fabric of society, feeding our significant need for spaces and creating dialogues between us and the natural world. They have developed important roles in science and education, and the embracing of technologies has opened a new era of cooperation and information sharing.

Botanic gardens have a central role in promoting local and global cooperation in biodiversity conservation, sustainable development and research.

Botanic gardens will remain relevant and valuable to society while they retain their responsiveness to change. New challenges* are arising..... Co-operative partnerships with the community such as through volunteers and ...commercial organisations will become increasingly important, as will sponsorship and commercial partnerships, as non traditional sources of funding."

Ian Blackburne Chair Royal Botanic gardens and Domain Trust (SYD)

"From the outside, a botanic garden looks a beautiful place- lush with wonderful plants, tranquil and serene, beautiful birds,... streams, sculpture, a safe and secure place. Botanic gardens fill many needs... scientific, botanic and horticultural as well as historical, cultural, leisure and entertainment. The realities of all botanic gardens today is that they are businesses ... facing issues such as occupational health and safety for the visiting public, employees and contractors, financial pressure to deliver innovative and relevant programs and sustain themselves in spite of reduction in public funding; and always provide plantings and collections as well as other programmes to meet public expectations."

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CUDISTICUIDOU BOTAN	IIC CARDENC	PUDGET EI	CUDEC		5	Schedule 4		Page 19
CHRISTCHURCH BOTAN CITY PLAN 2005/06	IC GARDENS	BUDGET FI	2001/02 \$	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	
1 CORPORATE OVER	HEADS ???		•	88370	89653	113887	108321	
2 GARDENS & HERITA	AGE PARKS-ADMINISTRATION							
2.1 EXPENSES			3553	6468	6484	6500	6500	
	Herbarium		1050	1040	1040	1040	1040	
	Professional Fees		5000	5000	3500	3500	3500	
	Data base of Existing Collections		0	0	0	50000	50000	
	Promotion & Brochures		0	0	0	5000	5000	
	Information Centre		28000	24763	24763	13000	13000	
	Recoverable Expenditure		3090	3150	2000	2100	2100	
	Information Centre stock purchases		30000	30000	30000	31000	31000	
	Maintenance-Building		17285	24560	24100	24100	24100	
	Storm Damage		0	0	0	0	0	
	Radio Communications/Cell 'phones		8000	3000	3000	1000	1000	
	Maintenance-Toast Rack		7676	8450	7000	7000	7000	
	Sub-total		103654	106431	101887	144240	144240	
	Allocated Overhead-Cost Centre		188234	171223	212700	242876	226301	
	Depreciation		695	170	0	0	0	
	TOTAL-G & H Admin. Expenses	3	292583	277824	314587	387116	370541	
2.2 REVENUE	Information Centre Sales		50000	55000	55000	42000	42000	
2.3 TOTAL GAI	RDENS & HERITAGE PARKS-ADMI	N.	242583	222824	259587	345116	328541	

CHRISTCHURCH BOTANIC GARDENS CITY PLAN 2005/06		BUDGET F	IGURES				
		1992/93	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05 \$	2005/06 \$
3 BOTANIC GARDEN	S-GROUNDS	*	*				*
	S Firewood Preparation		1050	1071	0	0	0
	Mowing	45739	14900	15198	20198	35000	35000
	Specialised mowing/turf care	32124	25000	25500	25000	25000	25000
	Gardening	406968	108400	110568	90000	91000	91000
	Trees	57228	53200	54264	72600	72600	72600
	Pathways	22266	24300	24786	24100	25000	25000
	General	86773	43200	51120	58120	58120	59520
	Building maintenance	20324	29900	30498	30498	42000	42000
	Conveniences		40200	41004	41000	50000	50000
	Storm damage		2570	2620	2620	2620	2620
	Labelling of Plants						100000
	Sub-total	671422	342720	356629	364136	401340	502740
	Allocated Overheads-Cost Centre	232726	759910	776070	704052	735744	852018
	Depreciation	0	70600	13538	25156	40084	40084
	Error in figures	17579					
	TOTAL-B G Grounds Expenses	921727	1173230	1146237	1093344	1177168	1394842
3.2 REVEVUE	Sundry Revenue		18800	11364	9000	5000	5000
	Lease-commercial		70000	90300	88500	88500	88500
	Firewood		11100	13180	4000	1000	1000
	Weddings & Commercial		9900	10118	2000	3500	3500
	Sale of plants		7000	7000	2500	1500	1500
	Recoverables-general		1700	0	0	0	0
	Services & consultancy		42900	43700	25000	15000	15000
	TOTAL B G Revenue		161400	175662	131000	114500	114500
3.3 TOTAL BO	TANIC GARDENS-GROUNDS		1011830	970575	962344	1062668	1280342

CHRISTCHURCH BOTANIC GARDENS		BUDGET FI	GURES				
CITY PLAN 2005/06		1992/93	2001/02	2002/02	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06
		\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
4 BOTANIC GARDENS-NURSERY & CONSERVATORIES							
4.1 EXPENSES	Production-bedding plants	46518	44500	43900	43900	44000	44000
	Production-plants for conservatories	153195	90600	88460	88460	88460	88460
	Production-Plants for grounds	10445	7500	6825	6825	10000	10000
	General	28052	22200	23382	23382	23382	23382
	Display maintenance	193631	93900	93300	93300	94000	94000
	Building maintenance-conservatories	23554	47300	46810	144110	45000	45000
	Building maintenance-nursery	30441	50000	49550	49550	49550	49550
	Sub-total	485836	356000	352227	449527	354392	354392
	Allocated Overhaed-Cost Centre	176308	271257	266751	281181	258356	298898
	Depreciation		16880	2396	15259	34807	34807
	TOTAL B G N & C Expenses	662144	644137	621374	745967	647555	688097
4.2 REVENUE	Cunda		E00	500	500	500	500
4.2 REVENUE	Sundry Sala of Blants		500	500	500	500	500
	Sale of Plants		4500	4500	3000	3000	3000
			5000	5000	3500	3500	3500
4.3 BOTANIC	GARDENS-NURSERY & CONERVATO	ORIES	639137	616374	742467	644055	684597
GRAND TOTAL				1898143	2054051	2165726	2401801

CHRISTCHURCH BOTANIC GARDENS CITY PLAN 2004/05

BUDGET FIGURES

	2001/02 \$	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05 \$	2005/06
SUMMARY					
Corporate Overheads ???	0	88370	89653	113887	108321
Administratior Expense	292583	277824	314587	387116	370541
Revenue	50000	55000	55000	42000	42000
NET COST	242583	222824	259587	345116	328541
B G Grounds Expenses	1173230	1146237	1093344	1177168	1394842
Revenue	161400	175662	131000	114500	114500
NET COST	1011830	970575	962344	1062668	1280342
B G Nur & C Expenses	644137	621374	745967	647555	688097
Revenue	5000	5000	3500	3500	3500
NET COST	639137	616374	742467	644055	684597
GRAND TOTAL	1893550	1898143	2054051	2165726	2401801