

Submission: Christchurch City Council Draft Annual Plan 2006

Submission from

Organisation: The Canterbury Branch of the Royal Society
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Hearing: Yes, I do wish to speak briefly at the hearing

Signature: _____ Date: 11 May 2005

Introduction

The Canterbury Branch of the Royal Society in partnership with "Our City O-Tautahi" is presenting a monthly series of midday lectures called "Science in the City". These lectures at 'Our City' are intended to provide a scientific perspective on current issues affecting the city and to also provide an insight into the relevant processes of science, especially important given the significance of science and technology in our society.

The Canterbury Branch of the Royal Society was founded in 1862 as the Philosophical Institute of Canterbury, and affiliated with the Royal Society of New Zealand in 1868. Its object is to advance and promote science and technology in Canterbury and it has been diligent in this for 143 years.

We wish to congratulate the Council on its foresight in using this delightful heritage building as a location for providing information and encouraging debate about issues affecting the city. Our only regret is in not utilising it earlier to widen our lectures beyond our evening public lectures at the University of Canterbury.

The first two speakers in the "Science in the City" lecture series were Prof. Steve Wratten on biodiversity in the city (as both an introduction to the BioBlitz in Hagley Park and to emphasise the importance of ecological services in sustainability), and Prof. Ali Memon on aspects of an urban development strategy. The May lecture will be about

avian influenza and its possible threat, presented by Dr Lance Jennings. The June lecture has yet to be confirmed (we try to ensure that issues really are current!).

Submission

We wish to support the place of "Our City O-Tautahi" (page 31) as an increasingly important element in ensuring that citizens are well-informed and have opportunities to debate issues. We suggest that the Council continue to encourage meetings at this venue for information and debate about local issues in particular.

The variation to the draft plan that we would suggest would be to add a line in the 'Service' column which recognises the contribution of other organisations, for example: "Encourage local organisations to use "our City O-Tautahi" as a venue to contribute useful information, insights and debate on current issues affecting the city."

This may require funding the installation of a sound system and digital projector to enhance presentations, and perhaps reducing the hire fee for organisations providing relevant lectures or other opportunities for citizens to gain further information and/or debate on current issues affecting the city.