

# Introduction

2

**Christchurch City Council provides** a number of services that keep Christchurch running smoothly and help

make the City a great place to live, work and play.

*Much of the service we receive in Christchurch is taken for granted. Without it, however, quality of life would be affected and the City would be a less attractive place.*

These include providing an adequate supply of fresh water to all residents, looking after parks, ensuring sewage is treated, and building and maintaining Christchurch streets.

**Without these services, living,** working, running a business, growing up or many of the other activities we take for granted as part of daily life would not be possible.

Being able to turn on a tap and drink clean fresh water; flushing the toilet; driving along smooth, wide, well constructed, relatively traffic-free roads; carrying out our lives without the inconvenience of flooding; taking our children to the local playground — these are some of the positive features of Christchurch that we do not often appreciate unless we travel elsewhere in New Zealand or the world.

Breathing the fresh air among tall trees in green, professionally maintained and creatively planted parks; paying just a few dollars to enjoy well tended public swimming pools; living beside clear, sparkling, slow moving rivers; taking leisure on a clean, wide stretch of sand which reaches to a fresh crashing ocean — these are some of the things that make Christchurch a truly great place to live for those with the time and opportunities to enjoy them. They are also a large part of the reason the City has become so popular with tourists.

These are the advantages which make Christchurch a unique City and contribute to its excellent reputation. Many of them result from natural features, but most have been enhanced or maintained through careful planning and management over the years.

In order to maintain the character of Christchurch and provide the services used and enjoyed by residents — services that, in many cases, have been recognised through independent assessment as among the best in the world — Christchurch City Council has built up a considerable asset base. These assets range from recreation facilities such as libraries and swimming pools to the pipes and drains that remove the City’s rainwater; from sewage treatment plants to the trees and playgrounds that enhance Christchurch’s many parks.



The total value of these assets is approximately \$2,500 million. Maintaining them costs around \$110 million every year — money which Christchurch residents pay through their annual rates bills.



Each year the Christchurch City Council assesses whether or not it is maintaining its assets at an appropriate level. Should Council provide a better service or is more spent on looking after the assets than is necessary to keep the City functioning? At the end of this assessment process, the Christchurch City Council publishes an Annual Plan. In part this plan decides, for the following year, how much Council should spend maintaining the City’s assets. By establishing how much money is required, Council can determine what rates levy to seek from Christchurch’s residents — the people who benefit most from the services these assets help to provide.



As they pay for the assets and also benefit from them, the opinions of Christchurch residents are very important to the assessment process that results each year in the City’s Annual Plan.



This book provides a broad overview of the major assets owned by the Christchurch City Council and the services these assets enable the Council to provide. In total these amount to 70—75 per cent of the total Council budget. All assets included in this review are directly owned by the Council. It does not include assets belonging to commercial enterprises



such as the Lyttelton Port Company, Southpower and other companies, which are indirectly wholly or partly owned by Christchurch ratepayers through the Council's local authority trading enterprise, Christchurch City Holdings Limited.

*How much should the Christchurch City Council spend to maintain assets which serve the City's residents? How and where can these assets be enhanced in a way which will improve the services they provide?*

Associated with each asset included in this book is a series of possible options for future maintenance or improvement. For each of these options there is a cost attached.

For the current year, Christchurch City Council has undertaken a major review of its assets and the service standards associated with each of them. In each case the text in the following sections of this book outlines what these options are. For quick reference, the graphs to the right of the text indicate the costs for each option. On these graphs *Lowest Possible* refers to the option which fulfils no more than the basic health standards, statutory obligations or safety requirements for the service. *Current Spend* refers to the amount budgeted for the service for 1997. *Premium* refers to the amount required to make all the possible identified improvements. *Minimum Acceptable* is the minimum standard that Councillors are prepared to accept on behalf of citizens — the basic level necessary to maintain and enhance the quality of life in the City. In some cases, but not in all, *Lowest Possible* is the same as *Minimum Acceptable*.

This book outlines the results of the review, along with the *Minimum Acceptable Service Standards* and what each asset requires to maintain or surpass these standards.

Where figures or dollar amounts are given through each section in this book, these refer to the amount currently spent to maintain a particular asset or the amount required to improve the service as detailed. Unless otherwise specified, these figures represent the proportion contributed to that particular asset or activity from an individual annual rates bill of around \$750. For ratepayers paying more than \$750, it can be assumed that all figures are proportionately higher — for those paying less, relevant figures would be lower.

In preparing the Annual Plan for 1997, the task of the Council, for each asset, is to decide which option at which cost would

best serve the City. This book explains how you can participate in the decision-making process. You can do this by completing and returning the submission form at the rear of this book. This should reflect your response to the options and assumptions that are the basis for ensuring the Council continues to deliver acceptable services.

However, you should bear in mind that substantial improvement in a wide range of services is likely to cause increases in the rates bill. Similarly, making significant savings in rates would result in lower standards of service.

As a Christchurch resident, this is your opportunity to make your opinions heard and play your part in the development of your City.

Please consider carefully which particular services you regard as most important and what level of service you are prepared to pay for.

**Make your views count for the future of Christchurch.**

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