

11. LOCAL GOVERNMENT NEW ZEALAND CONFERENCE 2002

Mrs Yvonne Palmer, Chair, Shirley/Papanui Community Board, reports:

I found this LGNZ Conference as one of the most interesting conferences for a Community Board member. I also felt that the opportunity for all Christchurch delegates to stay in the same hotel had advantages especially networking and sharing information.

I enjoyed Austin Mitchell's address. However, I enjoyed the opportunity during the conference to inform him on the way Community Boards work and the success of the Christchurch Community Board System.

Likewise I found Sir Geoffrey Palmer's keynote speech excellent as a Community Board member and his endorsement of community development and the threats to the community. A valuable message for Community Board members working at the grass roots level and the need for leadership at the community level. As a person who has been very involved in the Local Government Bill it did give me some food for thought, although I don't support his theory that the bill needed reducing to 20 pages.

One of the Choice sessions that I attended was Councils as Leaders where Margaret Evans, former Mayor of Hamilton, spoke of the Mayors as Council leaders. Margaret had completed her thesis research on the increasing complex, demanding and widely misunderstood role of a Mayor. Must say that I was slightly disappointed in her presentation, she failed to recognise that there were many other people involved in chairing of meetings and leadership in local government besides the Mayor.

Another session was Council as Facilitators - I thought that this was an excellent session and Richard Lauder's presentation was well received and Christchurch can be very proud of Richard.

Trustpower presentation by Graeme Purches was very good about their awards, which generated discussion by the attendees. Juno Hayes was able to share with the attendees his council's view and the support that the community got from being involved. I found this particularly interesting because of the Community Board Awards and how Christchurch can add value to the awards nationally.

Council as Funders was an interesting session and I felt that some of the attendees did not appreciate the presentation by the Fontera Manager on the findings of farmers as employers. As a person who had been involved in employment I found that the research said the same, that I found in my every day involvement with young people working in the farming industry.

The Sector group section for the NZ Community Boards was held on the Tuesday and four of the seven NZCBEC members were in attendance. One member could not attend as his Council would not fund him, and the other two members were ill.

Jeremy Dwyer facilitated this session and both Community Board members and Councillors attended it. Local Government New Zealand Member's Manager Denise Bush launched the LG web page for Community Board members. This was well received and will be regularly updated with my Chairperson's report to the National Council of LGNZ following our three monthly meetings.

It was good to see more Community Board members attending conference especially a new member that Kapiti District Council sent as one of their representatives. This sector group meeting allowed board members to have a frank discussion and share issues and concerns.

There is no doubt that Christchurch City Council leads the way for Community Boards being effective and having leadership at the local level. I always find that I am able to share good ideas and ways forward for other community board members to consider.

Another highlight for me was the opportunity for the Christchurch delegates along with our neighbouring councils to travel by bus to the Tamaki Village for dinner and share in the activities of this unique tourist venture. I am sure that this will be an asset to Christchurch once it is established and I would recommend it as a worthwhile event to attend.

I would like to thank the Mayor and Councillors for continuing to support me as your delegate to conference and Zone 5 meetings. Also for the huge support that both elected members and staff give me as Chairperson of the New Zealand Community Boards Executive Committee, without this support I could not do this job so effectively.

Chair's

Recommendation: That the information be received.