

8. NEW ZEALAND RECREATION ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE NOVEMBER 2002

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The purpose of this report is to inform Community and Leisure Committee members about the highlights of this conference, which was attended by Councillors Condon and Ganda, as well as staff from the Leisure and Parks and Waterways Units.

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The 2002 Annual Conference was held in Hamilton and had twin themes of "Leisure in the Commodity Age" and "Recreation to Go." The conference explored the changing face of leisure and the growth of recreation as a commodity. In a consumer society leisure activities become traded as commodities, with, for example, children's play today dominated by need for the right "gear" (eg skateboarding or snowboarding equipment, clothing etc) before an activity can be taken part in. This is in contrast to past generations of children who have "made their own" recreation equipment and ideas. These changes were well highlighted in the presentation by Sandra Coney about her childhood growing up on Piha Beach in Auckland, where she lived in the surf, using her body or a plank of wood to surf with!

Highlights of the conference were the presentations by Professor Ian Pool, Professor of Demography and Population Studies Centre, University of Waikato, who presented on the impact of demographic changes on recreation; Alan Hall, Associate Professor at the University of Waikato School of Education, who presented on how the quality of the recreation experience continues to change in the face of growing commodification and globalisation and their impact on recreation; and Professor Boyd Swinburn: Physical Activity and Nutrition Research Unit, Deakin University, Melbourne, Australia, whose presentation on obesity prevention through influencing the environments that are promoting obesity was very thought provoking.

The conference also presented many opportunities to network with other recreation professionals from around the country (who were mainly from local authorities) and with staff and board members from SPARC. It also contained a programme of short presentations on best practice programming and research which will be usefully applied here in Christchurch.

As a result of the conference Professor Swinburn has accepted an invitation to come to Christchurch in March this year to present to a cross-section of staff and Councillors and to do a public lecture on influencing the environment/social trends which are contributing to the sedentary nature of today's society and its associated health issues.

Chairman's

Recommendation: That the information be received.