

7. OUR CITY UPDATE

Officer responsible Director - Our City O-Tautahi	Author: Jenny May, Director - Our City O-Tautahi, DDI 941-7461
---	--

The purpose of this report is to update the Committee on matters relating to Our City O-Tautahi and the Canterbury Provincial Council Buildings.

OVERVIEW OUR CITY O-TAUTAHI

April/May have generally been more productive months regarding usage of the building. We have had a number of school groups through and currently have Opawa School operating a class through Global Net every Monday morning this term. This is an excellent programme and use of the building being focussed around Civic issues. We have also had two seminars which are part of national museum and gallery training programmes hosted by Te Papa National Services.

We have had 2,800 visitors for the two month period.

Suggestions made at the March Committee meeting to advertise the building more widely and consider a partnership with the Arts Centre with respect to hireage have been followed up and we have undertaken a reciprocal agreement with the Arts Centre to promote each other at this stage - equally we are working in with the Art Gallery on the same agreement. Distributed to you following discussion at the March 2003 meeting have been copies of the DLE size promotional pamphlet and printed in-house, a small pamphlet that details the rooms and hire availability. We have recently had advertisements in the Heart of the City, Kidsfest and Arts Trail brochures.

We opened on Saturday 17 May 2003 for the Heart of the City two day promotion. About 60% of our visitors were locals who had learned we were open through the Heart of the City advertising. We had a total of 83 visitors essentially between 1.30pm and 3.30pm. The main comment from locals was they were pleased we were open on a Saturday as they did not have time during the week to visit and wished to see it opened permanently.

We are running tours and quizzes for children during Kidsfest 2003.

EXHIBITIONS UPDATE

This updates areas of the full programme previously outlined in the report in March 2003:

Ground Floor Exhibitions

- **Past**

Gifts to the City - The collection of items gifted to the City and Mayors, past and present, of Christchurch from around the world is being updated at the moment with two new displays.

Lost Christchurch - A pictorial examination of buildings now demolished - this exhibition will close in March 2004 and will be replaced with a pictorial exhibition which covers images over time examining the theme "From the McDougall to the Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna O Waiwhetu."

- **Present**

Environment Canterbury - The current exhibition 'Sharing our Seas' will be replaced at the end of June 2003 by an exhibition 'Future Path Canterbury'. The exhibition will revolve round how people from Canterbury want to see the region in 50 years time.

- **Future**

This month we installed an exhibition which examines the revitalisation project being undertaken over the next few years by the Canterbury Museum and features two models and a video on the plans, as well as support material.

In this area we have retained the model of the Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu and are providing copies of the current programme of exhibitions for the gallery.

EVENTS

Heritage Week

Planning is now well underway and the Carter Group have renewed their sponsorship as the naming rights sponsor for another year. The draft proposal has been drawn up - key features will be recognition of a number of anniversaries; the sesqui centenary of Provincial Government, the centenary of the formation of the Tramways Board, the 50th anniversary of the air race from London to Christchurch, the amalgamation of Sydenham, Linwood and St Albans with the city to form 'Greater Christchurch'. (A note of interest – 5 May 1903 was the first meeting of the 'Greater Christchurch City Council'.) Exhibitions, displays, articles and parades are being established around these celebrations and this years theme, "Spire, Wires and High Fliers - Christchurch on the Move" has been chosen to reflect this.

Hagley/Ferrymead Community Board Awards

We are assisting with the administration of the awards and the launch of the awards for 2003 was held on 27 May 2003 in the Our City O-Tautahi Library.

Environmental Awards

Our City O-Tautahi will be co-ordinating this again for 2003.

STAFFING

Jenny May has been seconded to the Heritage Team for 6 months for 50% of her time for specific project work and Linda Halliday has been employed on a six month contract at Our City O-Tautahi.

The Art Gallery continues to assist with security liaison for the building during open hours.

CANTERBURY PROVINCIAL COUNCIL BUILDINGS

The public liaison component of these buildings is managed by Our City. This involves the Buildings being open to the public six days a week. As well as the casual visitor the buildings are well utilised by tour groups and school groups.

The major project currently at the Buildings is the development of the Interpretation Centre which is our sesqui-centenary event planned to open on 27 September 2003 - the date of the first Provincial Council meeting.

Over April and May 2003 visitation to the buildings has been exceptionally busy.

- April: 1,824 (NZ: 1,140 Overseas: 684)
- May: 1,248 (NZ: 685 Overseas: 563)

During this period we have hosted 20 events/hireage which has included the Secondary School Debate final - held annually at the Buildings - and a considerable number of wedding ceremonies in the Stone Chamber.

We are currently developing a website, printing new postcards and have organised, in partnership with the New Zealand Historic Places Trust Pouhere Taonga, a Harry Potter Treasure Hunt. There will be three sessions of this as part of Kidsfest 2003.

Maintenance and conservation work is undertaken by the Property Unit in consultation with the Heritage Team. We have recently completed restoration work on the Armagh and Durham Street stone towers and this has also seen the decorative crestings and flag pole restored on the Durham Street Tower.

The foyer of the Durham Street entrance to the Buildings has recently been painted and a small display of stone carving removed in the recent conservation work put on display in this area.

OPENING HOURS

Since Our City O-Tautahi opened in August 2002 we have had a considerable number of enquires with respect to weekend opening. Many enquiries have come from residents who are unable to visit during the week while others have come from tour organisations. This short report is in response to a letter to the Mayor from the Christchurch Personal Guiding Service for the Council to give consideration to provide funding to open Our City O-Tautahi seven days a week. The Mayor has referred this matter to the Arts Culture and Heritage Committee for consideration.

Our City O-Tautahi was developed to provide a space to inform and educate citizens and visitors about the City's environment and past, present and future developments and to provide opportunities for existing agencies to communicate information and issues with a local, regional and global perspective. Exhibitions, displays and seminars held at Our City O-Tautahi are designed to encourage the exchange of ideas and knowledge about urban development and environmental issues between the Council, Environment Canterbury, Christchurch Environment Centre, the Tangata Whenua, residents.

Increasingly, we are receiving bookings to hold functions during the weekend. This alone brings a considerable number of local and national visitors to the building. However, while we provide security for such events, funded by the hire rate, due to insufficient funding for staffing we are unable to open the exhibition spaces. Thus opening Our City during the weekend would not only meet the requirements for local residents but allow for a wide range of visitors to the building to visit the exhibition spaces.

Currently there is not a budget allowance for staff costs to open the building at the weekend. Estimated costs on current staff salaries would mean a further \$22,000 annually would be required to meet opening hours of 10am to 4pm for Saturday and Sunday. This estimate is for staff salaries only.

Staff

Recommendation: That the Committee receive the information.

Chairman's

Recommendation: For discussion.