

The Community Relations Manager reported on the implementation of the Government's community wage strategy.

The report advised that to date, the major involvement by the Council in this new employment strategy has been in accepting Community Work and Training referrals from the Employment Services Team within the Canterbury Development Corporation. Employment Services, and the Canterbury Development Corporation, entered into a contract with Work and Income New Zealand to provide 180 placements on Community Work and Training (CW&T) in the 15 month period ending on 30 June 1999. Employment Services has created a community work and training programme that offers the following benefits:

- A wide variety of work opportunities that do not require participants to become part of "make work" schemes, but rather allow them to experience work environments relevant to their future aspirations.
- A comprehensive menu of training opportunities that allows the participants to choose options relevant to their current roles and their intended career paths.
- Regular and unfettered access to Council officers, who are able to offer effective advice and support when needed.
- A system of monitoring that is supportive rather than regulatory. This enables personal and family issues to be effectively addressed, while also allowing for positive role modeling, motivation and increased skill levels.
- The selective waiving of sanctions.
- A programme where the emphasis is firmly on voluntary participation and achievement, where nobody is forced to participate or to work on projects to which they are unsuited.

The report concluded that the results strongly support the scheme run by Employment Services. There have been 124 positions listed with 90 of these being filled to date. Of the 51 people who have completed or left the scheme 78.5% achieved the criteria for a positive outcome and of this group, 80% have moved into full time paid employment.

Employment Services believe that the scheme has materially assisted individual participants enhance their skills and improve their job prospects while providing the Council and community organisations with the opportunity to complete many worthwhile projects.

The Committee **decided**:

1. That staff be asked to report back to the Committee on the issues raised in the joint Council of Social Services/Community Volunteers' submission with particular reference to the legal status of community wage recipients, the use of sanctions, the impact on the Canterbury Development Corporation's operation if it withdrew from the scheme, and responsiveness to community views on the community wage strategy.
2. That a response also be sought from the Canterbury Development Corporation to the legal issues raised in the joint submission.
3. That the views of the Canterbury Employers Chamber of Commerce and relevant government agencies on the community wage strategy also be represented in the report, together with the policy relating to holiday pay.