

## 5. WATERWAYS AND WETLANDS EDUCATION STRATEGY



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The purpose of this report is to obtain approval for the 'Education Strategy for Waterways and Wetlands'.

An overview of the education strategy is provided below. A copy of the full draft document has been separately circulated to Councillors.

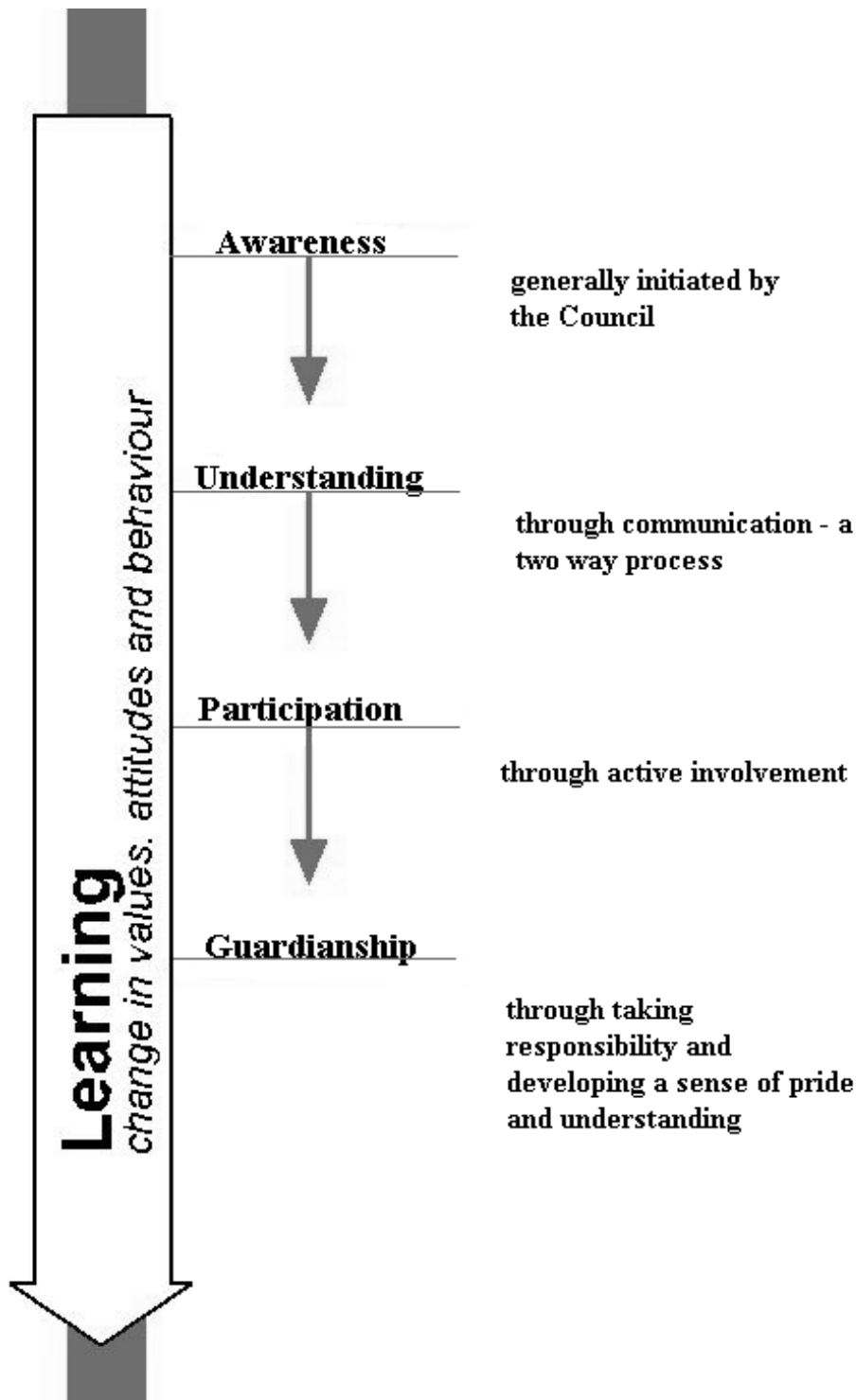
### INTRODUCTION

The waterways and wetlands of Christchurch City are managed in accordance with the Resource Management Act 1991, which has as its purpose the sustainable management of natural and physical resources. The act recognises that managing New Zealand's natural resources will not be achieved through rules alone. Other methods such as education are also important and may in the long term have greater success in achieving long-term changes in values, attitudes and behaviour towards these valuable natural resources. The importance of education and the involvement of local communities is also recognised in the Christchurch City Plan and other Council policies, as well as in national, regional and local documents associated with the Resource Management Act 1991.

As part of the Council's endeavours to meet the spirit and requirements of the Resource Management Act 1991, the Waterways and Wetlands Team has initiated a number of educational activities. Although these projects fulfilled particular needs it was considered that an overall education strategy was needed in order to maximise the use of resources and provide co-ordination between different activities. It would also clearly identify the outcomes sought and thus enable the various activities to be monitored and evaluated. Once the strategy is approved, existing and new education initiatives can be provided in accordance with the strategy approach.

### APPROACH

The Education Strategy is based on a learning model that highlights the different stages in the learning process associated with waterways and wetlands. These stages are identified as *awareness*, *understanding*, *participation* and *guardianship*. See diagram.



The model also recognises that education is a life-long process that will in the long-term lead to changes in values, attitudes and behaviour. People will, however, become involved in this learning process to varying degrees and in different ways. It is important to appreciate that learning is also a two-way process and that people learn from each other.

The Christchurch community consists of a range of people from different age groups, backgrounds and interests. Consequently, individuals and groups of people within the community will approach waterways and wetlands from different perspectives. In order to maximise learning opportunities and the resources available for education, the strategy recognises the following groups of people — citizens, Tangata Whenua, developers and consultants, young people and teachers, senior citizens, waterside residents and landowners, special interest groups with environmental objectives, together with Christchurch City Council elected members and staff.

The education strategy will deliver a series of programmes based on these different groups of people. Each programme is developed in accordance with the learning model and its four stages. Similarly, each programme also has its own set of objectives, methods of implementation and techniques to monitor and evaluate progress. The strategy recognises that education is not a separate component of the work of the Waterways and Wetlands Team but rather an essential part of its activities. It therefore promotes education as integral to the work of this team. Education in this sense is not something that can be provided by a centralised group remote from the activity.

## **ISSUES**

### **Programme Development**

The strategy will require a proactive approach in the development of the various programmes. Existing successful learning activities should provide the building blocks for the development of future programmes and be modified or expanded accordingly. It is also important that programmes are innovative, involving and enjoyable for all those participating in order to maximise their learning potential.

Budget constraints will mean that programmes and activities will need to be prioritised in accordance with how they add to the overall strategy and their anticipated results on the outcomes sought. Efforts should be focused on those activities that have the greatest impact.

In order to be successful, it is also important to appreciate the size of the target audience. Christchurch has a population of approximately 300,000 people and, rather than many small promotions, it may be more successful to have a broad-brush initiative reaching a large number of people in a short time (e.g. 50,000 people).

The education strategy will incorporate flexibility in the type of planting associated with restoration and will also ensure safety is an important consideration.

The cost and the effectiveness of the various programmes are important considerations in the development of the education strategy. Monitoring and regular evaluation will be essential tools in determining the success or otherwise of the strategy.

### **Website Development**

Information and communication technology is rapidly changing people's working and learning environments. The Ministry for the Environment recognised this when, in 1998, they provided funding for the Water Services Unit website, a pilot educational resource for young people. Although the website is very limited in the range of information and the scope of activities it provides, it has been well received by those people who have used it. Consequently, it is important that the Council builds on the success of this pilot project through the development of new learning activities and information sharing, as well as investigating opportunities to make it more interactive.

### **Co-ordination with other Programmes**

Other organisations have also initiated a range of education programmes and some of these may overlap with those proposed in the education strategy. These include the Canterbury Regional Council, Fish and Game, universities, schools, non-government organisations, as well as other units within Council including the Parks Unit, Environmental Planning and Policy Unit and the Waste Management Unit. The Water Services Unit will work to ensure that overlap is eliminated. It is important that where there is an overlap, education activities are co-ordinated (e.g. joint ventures) in order to maximise the limited resources available and avoid contradiction, duplication and confusion. As stated earlier this does not mean that education initiatives should be delivered by a centralised agency.

### **Monitoring**

Monitoring and evaluation should be seen as essential components of the Education Strategy. This will ensure that programme objectives are being met and that resources are being used wisely. It will also highlight the need for modifications to particular programmes as well as recognise the evolving nature of the work of the waterways and wetlands activities by the Council. In order to do this, time frames and performance indicators will be required. It is important that these are achievable and able to be measured. The full draft strategy contains many examples of monitoring techniques.

## **Funding**

Education needs to be considered as an essential component of all waterway and wetland projects. It is anticipated that no increase in the budget for general education initiatives will be required. When education is part of a specific project then the cost of this education initiative will come from that budget. Nevertheless, the Waterways and Wetlands Team will be seeking opportunities to maximise other funding sources in order to increase learning opportunities. This will require the Waterways and Wetlands Team to think laterally and have an appreciation of who else may benefit from the different activities.

It is also important to appreciate that funding support may not necessarily be in the form of financial assistance, but could occur in a variety of other ways.

Possible sources of funding could include the following:

- Existing budgets
- New budget provisions
- Re-allocation of funds
- Sponsorship
- Trusts, awards, and special funds from other Government organisations
- User pays
- Advertising

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

In order to implement the Waterways and Wetlands Education Strategy the following steps will be pursued:

### **Approval of the Waterways and Wetlands Education Strategy by the Parks and Recreation Committee**

#### **Programme Development**

- A programme of learning activities will be developed for each target audience in accordance with the objectives outlined in the education strategy.
- The cost of the various learning activities and programmes be identified.
- The programmes will be prioritised so as to reflect their importance and the impact that each learning activity will have on the strategy's objectives.
- A person(s) will be given the responsibility for monitoring and evaluating the success of the different programmes, including obtaining baseline information.
- Co-ordination of activities will be promoted between the different educators (schools, other Units, etc).

## **Development of the Website**

- The existing Water Services Unit website will be evaluated, future opportunities assessed and a programme of website development will be identified and implemented.

## **Development of a Visual Communication Guide**

- A set of guidelines will be developed for all graphic and written materials, including the web site and signage for waterways and wetlands, e.g. use of graphics, font, style, logo and themes.
- At the time of updating, all publications and material developed by the section will be revised.
- A team will monitor all work in this area in order to ensure that quality and consistency is maintained.

## **Funding**

- Various options for funding the Education Strategy will continue to be pursued.

- Recommendation:**
1. That the Education Strategy for Waterways and Wetlands and the steps outlined for its implementation be approved.
  2. That highest priority be assigned to:
    - (i) The following target audiences:
      - Streamside residents and landowners.
      - Developers and consultants.
      - Young people and teachers.
    - (ii) The following learning activities:
      - Publication and promotion of the Waterways and Wetlands Design Guide.
      - Raising awareness and involvement of communities in the development of visions for each project area identified in the Waterways and Wetlands Asset management Plan once it is approved.
- The WaterLink Programme.