

4. FREE SWIM TICKET FOR CHRISTCHURCH HOUSEHOLDS

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Corporate Plan Output: Pools Council Operated	

The purpose of this report is to respond to a resolution passed by the Council at its February 2000 meeting. At that meeting the Council resolved: "That a report be presented to the Parks and Recreation Committee on the implications of providing a free ticket to all households in Christchurch entitling them to a free swim at one of the Christchurch City Council pools".

INTRODUCTION

The concept of providing each household with a free ticket to a Council pool may appear simple but there are several issues that must be considered if the process is to be fair and equitable.

The new rates system is able to select the 120,000 (approx) residential ratepayers, as opposed to commercial ratepayers, and an insert/voucher could be sent to this group.

ISSUES/IMPLICATIONS

1. All residents who rent their homes etc. would not receive a voucher as the landlord would receive the voucher and would only receive one.
2. The concept needs to be clarified as providing a free swim voucher for each household creates control problems as to the number of people in the family.
3. If one free swim voucher were provided to each household this would be the best method but would still not cater for rental properties.
4. Taking the child entry fee of \$1.50 the Council would be giving away \$180,000 in revenue. If the voucher provided a free swim to all the residents then the Council would be giving away in excess of \$450,000 in potential revenue.
5. If the voucher were posted out to all households the cost would be significant but it would reach rental properties. (120,000 x .40 cents = \$48,000)
6. The cost of printing a voucher for 120,000 households would be \$1,200 to \$1,500.
7. The other aspect that needs to be considered is that at many times, especially school holidays, both Pioneer and Centennial are unable to cater for existing demand.

As can be seen from the points above to provide a free swim to the city's residents on a fair and equitable basis is not a straight-forward exercise and several decisions need to be made to address the issues raised especially in regard to funding this proposal.

From the Leisure Unit's point of view this is not a viable proposal without providing additional resources address the equity issues and it is not seen as a marketing exercise that would increase patronage in the future.

The Leisure Unit intends to hold a "Have a Go Day" on 29 July between 10am and 2pm. On this day any member of the public will be able to take part in any of the classes run by the Centennial Leisure Centre, Pioneer Leisure Centre or QEII free of charge. Each centre will also provide a general explanation of other opportunities that are available. This is partially to mark 12 months of operation of the new Leisure Centres.

Recommendation: That the proposal to provide a free ticket to all households in Christchurch entitling them to a free swim at one of the Christchurch City Council pools be not proceeded with.