

2. LITTER

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The purpose of this report is to advise on the current situation regarding litter in Christchurch.

INTRODUCTION

The Council has responsibilities under the Litter Act 1979 for the provision of litter receptacles in public places and may undertake the enforcement of the provisions of the Act by the appointment of Litter Control Officers. The Council has also taken advantage of using provisions allowing the funding of the Keep Christchurch Beautiful organisation.

LITTER ACT ENFORCEMENT AND LITTER BIN CLEANING

The Council has the power under the Act to appoint litter control officers who then have the powers specified in the Act as follows. Currently there are 30 persons who have been appointed by the Council as Litter Control Officers. It should be noted that all Police Officers are Litter Control Officers by virtue of their position. They may intervene to prevent the deposit or attempted deposit of litter in any public place, or onto private land from any public place, or wilful damage of any litter receptacle in any public place. They may require persons found depositing litter to remove the litter to an appropriate place. Subject to the territorial authority adopting the infringement notice provisions Litter Control Officers may issue these in the appropriate cases. The Christchurch City Council has adopted the infringement notice provisions of the Act with a fee of \$100, the maximum allowed under the Act.

Both Parking Officers and General Inspectors, who are appointed as Litter Control Officers, have issued in the order of 30 infringement notices in the past year. In most cases the General Inspectors have preferred to take the approach of "clean the litter up and produce a receipt from Metro Refuse to prove it was correctly disposed of, or get a Litter Infringement Notice and pay \$100". In just about all cases the litter is cleaned up. The most recent notice was issued to a person who was contracted to deliver advertising fliers but found it easier to just dump them on a vacant property. The agent for the advertising firm cleaned up the area and a notice was issued to the offender after discussion with him.

A prosecution was taken this year on behalf of the Regional Council in relation to a truckload of rubbish dumped on the Waimakariri River banks. The prosecution was successful with a fine imposed plus an order for the payment of the cost incurred in removing the rubbish.

The policy of the Council in regard to litter bin emptying on legal roads is that they are emptied at a minimum of five times a week in the central city and other special areas as found necessary. In all other areas they are emptied at a minimum of three times a week. The City Streets Unit undertakes this function.

KEEP CHRISTCHURCH BEAUTIFUL CAMPAIGN

There has been, in one form or another, an organisation with its major purpose the reduction of litter and littering behaviour in the city since the late 1960s. Besides the major purpose of these organisations being similar they have all relied largely on voluntary community-based persons to undertake the work in the community. They have also been supported to a greater or lesser degree by local authorities in the area by the provision of both support services and direct finance. (See attachment for the brief history of the groups in Christchurch.)

The legal power for the Council to make grants to the Keep Christchurch Beautiful Campaign (KCB) arises from the provisions of the Litter Act 1979. This states that any local authority may make grants to any organisation (not established for the purpose of making a profit) for the **purpose of abating or preventing litter**. A local authority may also spend money on any scheme or campaign for the abatement or prevention of litter.

One of the activities that KCB undertake on behalf of the Council are the twice a year litter counts. For ten years the litter counts have been carried out, usually every six months, at the same time each year. Although the city continually changes the sites that were selected 10 years ago have generally stayed the same, the committee therefore recently felt that it was time for a change with buildings being removed and sites having different uses. KCB have consulted with Keep New Zealand Beautiful and they also considered that changes could be useful. Changes included having the counting time to fit in with the four-term year and changed school holidays. Tourist areas also have a focus.

Over the 10 year period there has been a reduction in litter counted as can be seen from the graph attached. The trend would have been more apparent if the counts in 1998 and 1999 had not been included. I understand that KCB consider these were caused by a different person doing the counts and over-counting items. Some significant changes in the type of litter that has been found, as noted by KCB, are that matchsticks are not as apparent now, but takeaway straws have increased. Paper and card are still a significant type of litter. Tear tabs are now very rare. These seem to have been replaced with sipper bottles. Broken glass is not now as apparent. The counter has noted a heavy increase in takeaway litter from all the common companies - Burger King, McDonalds and KFC. A new counting sheet has been developed to best measure the current situation as evidenced by the changes noted. It should be noted that the litter count sites are all confidential.

With the increase in litter from "take away" premises, Keep New Zealand Beautiful have kept up with the trend and made their Car Litter Bags even bigger to accommodate this issue. KCB purchase a number of these bags which go to all the resident associations that request them, Automobile Associations, Council service centres and other interested groups.

One recent example of what is seen as a Keep Christchurch Beautiful Campaign Success story is as follows.

"One of the council enforcement officers approached the Executive Committee asking for some Keep Christchurch Beautiful Signs to be placed in three areas in Sydenham. The reason was an increasing accumulation of litter from two takeaway outlets – McDonalds and KFC. A draft poster was prepared and the Executive Committee approved its use. Six of these colourful posters were printed and laminated. The officer took them to three sites including a service station and two were put up in each building:

Mobil Sydenham

KFC Sydenham

McDonalds Sydenham

Since the posters have been up the Executive Committee has had positive feedback from two officers. They have reported back that the three car sales yards have seen a lack of takeaway litter present. KFC have started to sweep both sides of Colombo Street. McDonalds have hired a security guard to work the all night shift on Friday and Saturday and KFC are in the throes of requesting funding from their head office to do the same. McDonalds record incidents and contact an enforcement officer with the details. He then writes to the offenders about the incidents making them more aware of the litter fine and litter act."

- Recommendation:**
1. That the Council thank Keep Christchurch Beautiful for the good work they are doing in assisting the Council in litter prevention work.
 2. That litter control measures be targeted towards bank money dispensing machines (ATMs), where a prevalence of litter has been noticeable.
 3. That the City Services Committee be asked to examine provisions for:
 - the removal of material not accepted for recycling as part of the weekly recyclable material collection
 - the litter left lying in the streets following the weekly refuse collections
 - the provision of more litter containers at city bus stops
 - the provision of recyclable material bins in shopping malls
 - negotiations with Transit New Zealand as to the provision of an improved litter removal service on major arterial roads within the city
 4. That the Keep Christchurch Beautiful be asked to continue their educational-type programme, seeking the co-operation of people in picking up both litter and tree leaves in their respective streets.
 5. That the Committee be advised of the provisions in the Local Government Act giving power to local authorities to restrict the drinking of alcohol in public streets and places, as a means of curbing damage to property and spread of litter.