


12. PROPOSAL FOR JOINT PRIVATE/PUBLIC AUTUMN EVENTS MARKETING CAMPAIGN



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PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. The purpose of this report is to seek Council approval for the allocation of funds from the Capital Endowment Fund interest, towards a joint public/private marketing campaign to promote the City's autumn events season.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2. The Council recently approved for consultation the Draft Events Strategy, which is expected to be adopted by the end of 2006. This strategy proposes a new direction for events in Christchurch which will focus on developing existing events to attract more domestic visitors and help change visitor perceptions of Christchurch, as well as providing vibrant events for Christchurch residents.
3. The Draft Visitor Strategy proposes a private/public partnership approach towards domestic marketing around events. It has been noted that the success of Wellington's events calendar and supporting domestic campaigns, is due to a similar partnership model between the private and public sectors.
4. A key tool to help implement this new direction is the introduction of a Four Seasons approach to the marketing of events in Christchurch. This focus is now being implemented through the Council's www.bethere.co.nz website, which has been extensively revamped and redesigned to align to Four Seasons theming and focus on these seasonal marketing opportunities. The new site was launched as part of the Events Strategy consultation programme, and goes 'live' in November.
5. Key private sector agencies have recently expressed a strong interest in a joint domestic events-based marketing campaign during the autumn season, in partnership with the Council. The campaign would be built around the new *bethere.co.nz* design and Four Seasons approach, and would focus on Auckland and Wellington during February and March 2007. This is the first time that such a joint campaign has been supported by major event and visitor industry players.
6. The minimum sum considered necessary to fund a viable marketing campaign in the Auckland and Wellington markets is \$200,000. The external partners in the proposed campaign (Christchurch and Canterbury Tourism, the Hotel Council, Christchurch International Airport, Air New Zealand and event organisers) have committed to contributing \$150,000 to fund the campaign. The Christchurch City Council has the opportunity to contribute the balance of \$50,000 to the campaign.
7. Funding for such a contribution from the Council is available from the Capital Endowment Fund interest. In July 2006 the Council approved the partial allocation of funds from the Capital Endowment fund interest towards various economic development initiatives, but retained \$224,000 in the current year for future allocation.
8. Some urgency is required to confirm the campaign as media space is in high demand and must be purchased early.
9. Initiation of this campaign would enable the Council and the events and visitor industry to build on the momentum created by the Draft Events Strategy and Visitor Strategy. The Council will be seen to lead the initiative, and this model can subsequently be carried through to other initiatives which will emerge from the final Visitor and Events Strategies. If the campaign does not proceed, there is a risk that one or more private sector organisation/s may create their own domestic campaign, without the integration and connection to the events programme that this proposal offers.

FINANCIAL AND LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

10. The funds identified are provided for in the LTCCP and are available for allocation.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Council approve the allocation of \$50,000 from the unallocated portion of the Capital Endowment Fund interest, towards an autumn events marketing campaign, in conjunction with private sector partners.

BACKGROUND

11. In the Draft Events Strategy, approved earlier this month for public consultation, the Council has endorsed a stronger focus for the Council's events investment on developing significant festivals and events to attract domestic visitors and to help change perceptions of visitors towards the city. This sits alongside the objective of providing a vibrant and diverse events calendar for Christchurch residents. Such events will contribute to social and cultural community outcomes and to economic benefits for the city.
12. The Draft Strategy also endorses the need for more private/public sector partnerships to promote events, and for the city's investment in developing and promoting events to be leveraged against the support of private sector partners who also recognise the benefits of active promotion of the city's events calendar. During the research phase of developing the Draft Strategy it has been noted that the partnership model between the private and public sector has been a significant factor in the success of Wellington's events calendar and supporting domestic campaigns.
13. The Council has also endorsed the concept of a Four Seasons approach to the domestic marketing of events in Christchurch. This will contribute to strengthening the Garden City identity of Christchurch through events, and also enable effective promotion of distinctive events in the shoulder autumn and spring seasons, outside the peak domestic visitor periods.
14. The Four Seasons proposition is considered distinctive to Christchurch, and the Christchurch Events Strategy (expected to be adopted by Christmas 2006) will aim to deliver events that support an integrated 'Four Seasons' marketing campaign, ie a 'hero' event each season to bring visitors into Christchurch, in addition to a strong calendar of visitor and identity-driven supporting events.
15. Web-based promotions will be a significant element in supporting domestic marketing programmes across other media, and the Council's *bethere.co.nz* website has now been through an extensive redesign, which incorporates the Four Seasons marketing approach. The new site has been re-launched as part of the Draft Visitor Strategy consultation programme, and goes 'live' in November. Operational funding of \$70,000 provided in the LTCCP for marketing has been allocated to the development of the Four Seasons theme, website redevelopment and ongoing resident-focused promotion within the local market.
16. Christchurch and Canterbury Tourism and other key players in the private sector have strongly urged the development of a domestic events-based marketing campaign during the autumn season. Having viewed the new *bethere.co.nz* design and Four Seasons approach, and been part of the Visitor Strategy and Events Strategy consultation, these organisations are interested in combining with the Council to fund a significant autumn events campaign in Auckland and Wellington during February and March 2007. This is the first time that key visitor industry players been prepared to make a contribution towards a joint campaign, and has largely been driven by the view that the new Four Seasons marketing approach, using *bethere.co.nz*, provides an effective marketing platform.
17. Initial scoping of a possible campaign has been carried out, which indicates that an investment of no less than \$200,000 in appropriate media is necessary to generate a viable campaign in the Auckland and Wellington markets.
18. The core external partners in the joint campaign include:
 - Christchurch & Canterbury Tourism
 - Christchurch International Airport Ltd
 - Air New Zealand
 - New Zealand Hotel Council - Christchurch branch
 - Event organisers
19. These agencies have indicated a commitment of \$150,000 towards a campaign, predicated on the additional contribution of \$50,000 from the Christchurch City Council to ensure the viability of the campaign.

20. The Council has an available source of funding in the Capital Endowment Fund. This fund has been in place for several years with the interest, after provision for inflation adjustment, available for economic and Civic projects on a 70/30 split. Of the 70% available for economic development, historically \$1.5 million has been allocated to the Canterbury Economic Development Fund managed by Canterbury Development Corporation (CDC) with the balance available for Council, CDC and Christchurch and Canterbury Marketing (now CCT) initiatives.
21. The total funds available in the 2006/16 LTCCP for economic development initiatives were \$2.354m. In July 2006 the Council approved the allocation of \$2.110m from the economic development funds, retaining \$224,000 for future allocation.

CAMPAIGN PROPOSAL

22. The primary focus will be advertising in Auckland and Wellington, encouraging autumn visitation to Christchurch, focusing on the range of city events and the appeal of the season. Given current lead-times for domestic travel and the desired travel period being targeted by the partners, April/May, the campaign period would run approximately mid-February to mid-March 2007.
23. Past research into the domestic traveller market confirms that for Christchurch to make a significant impact, a focused approach on primary urban centres needs to be adopted. Research also suggests a key target market for short-break/extended weekend travellers can be defined demographically.
24. The demographic market includes:
 - 35 years plus age group, middle and mid-to-high socio-economic category
 - the short break/weekend traveller
25. The geographic markets include:
 - Primarily Auckland
 - Secondarily Wellington
26. The key attributes which will be promoted are in keeping with the travel appeals for Christchurch during autumn, including:
 - Season virtues; colours of autumn, settled warm weather, post-tourist rush, etc
 - Autumn Events - eg Jazz Festival, Savour New Zealand, Super 14 Rugby, Le Race
 - A complete events calendar via www.bethere.co.nz including other events like exhibitions, theatre, lectures
 - Fly to Christchurch using the city as the hub to take in an event, and then explore further
 - Secondarily promoting the gateway to satellites such as Hanmer Springs, Waipara, etc
27. The media chosen for the campaign will be determined by available budget and timings. The likely options include:
 - (i) Online:
 - www.nzherald.co.nz (home page and travel pages)
 - www.ticketek.co.nz (weekly newsletter banners)
 - (ii) Print:
 - Inflight Magazine
 - Newspaper – NZ Herald and Dominion Post
 - (iii) Outdoor:
 - Billboards
 - Bus backs

28. Key product elements to be reflected in the campaign include air fares, accommodation, event ticket purchase, rental car hire, activities and attractions and general destination and event information. These provide a direct focus on the city as a destination and location for events and attractions.
29. The *bethere.co.nz* website will offer comprehensive event-related information, including event ticket purchase via Ticketek. It will also provide a direct link to CCT's holiday planner webpage, part of www.christchurchnz.net. This link can provide a complete holiday planner for the purchase of accommodation, rental car, activities and can include an Air NZ fare finder for the purchase of flights.