

Our Community Plan Christchurch O-Tautahi 2004/14 SUBMISSION

Submissions close on 6 May 2004

I wish to talk to the main points in my written submission at the hearings.

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Your Submission:

Submission to Christchurch City Council from The Cancer Society of New Zealand [Canterbury West Coast] re "Our Community Plan"

Area of submission - Parks and Open Spaces reference page 51

Introduction

The Cancer Society of New Zealand devotes a significant proportion of its health promotion resources to the prevention of melanoma and sunsmart activities. In Canterbury West Coast over a third of the health promotion budget is allocated to supporting Sunsmart events, provision of sun sense information resources and distribution of sunscreen. In addition considerable time is spend working with schools, councils and other organisations promoting Sunsmart behavior.

Skin cancer costs the New Zealand health system about \$33 million a year. Most of this could be prevented yet skin cancer prevention continues to have a low priority in national health purchasing. Nevertheless each year some 200 New Zealanders die of melanoma. Furthermore about 1800 new melanoma cases and about 45,000 new non-melanoma cases are confirmed each year. As much of this can be prevented by sun protection strategies, the Cancer Society considers it important that all components of protection are fully understood and widely available.

Whilst the personal protection message has been well established with use of sunscreen, clothing and sunglasses, the Cancer Society wishes to reinforce the Sun Smart message with an increased emphasis on shade. The provision of shade both natural in terms of trees and artificial in the form of shade structures represents the most effective form of protection and should be promoted as such by the Society.

The role of the Cancer Society in promoting shade

The role of the Cancer Society is seen in terms of

- Informing - Provision of information and guidance on the benefits of shade for outdoor environments.
- Advocating - working with organisation to support the use of shade at events, assisting with funding applications for shade structures or ensuring shade is a key component of any sun safe policy.
- Resourcing - providing shade structures for outdoor events as a means of demonstrating the importance of shade and encouraging organisations to invest in their own equipment.

**Your Submission
(Cont'd):**

The importance of shade in our open spaces

The Cancer Society supports the City Council's provision of parks for healthy active people. As part of this, the Cancer Society welcomes any move to increase the provision of built shade e.g. shade sails within public spaces. Whilst provision of built shade is not cheap and requires careful planning to ensure compliance with health and safety regulations, it does make a major contribution to healthy outdoor spaces.

The Cancer Society acknowledges City Council shade improvements made to date, particular with regard to swimming pools. In addition we are delighted with the on-going partnership between the Cancer Society and the Council's community leisure teams for provision of portable shade and sunscreen at summer events. Further opportunities exist with parks swimming pools and open spaces to improve built shade facilities; particularly those areas designed for children e.g. children's play area/pool within the Botanic Gardens. The need to protect areas for children is particular important given the evidence that sun burn in childhood is linked to melanoma in later life

The Cancer Society believes shade and planning design is a key part of any management strategy for public open spaces. Christchurch City Council's community plan for 2004/14 represents an opportunity to see our parks and open spaces as supportive environments for healthy active living in which shade plays an important role.

Martin Witt DPH

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