

## LONG TERM COMMUNITY PLAN 2004/14

### SUBMISSION

To: [ccc\\_plan@ccc.govt.nz](mailto:ccc_plan@ccc.govt.nz)

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Signed:

(Barry Paul)

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~~Reference is made~~ to the main points in my written submission, at the hearings to be held from Tues 1 June - Fri 11 June 2004.

#### A. POLICY

##### 1. REFORM

Council should recognize the groundswell of ratepayer opinion and reform spending by adopting a strict "Back to Basics" regime, Basics being defined as Roads, Reserves, Rubbish, Water and Sewer.

Anything else proposed should be put before a Ratepayer Referendum / Initiative and no approval given without ratepayer majority opinion.

This regime would lead to an annual rate **DECREASE** not the continual procession of rate **INCREASES**. Considering the vast range of Council services already being supplied, there is no justification for any further activities or commitments without ratepayer sanction.

Action: Introduce Initiatives as in California.

##### 2. DIVEST

Council should offer all the business enterprises held on our behalf by Christchurch City Holdings Ltd (6), plus Jade Stadium and Christchurch City Facilities Ltd, for sale as successful businesses in their own right, on the open market. The proceeds to be credited against next year's budget.

Again, this procedure would assist in ensuring rate increases are a thing of the past.

Action: Commence divesting procedure.

### **3. CAPITAL ENDOWMENT FUND (Vol 3 p137)**

This was set up in 2001 using \$75M from Orion's sale of its North Island gas company, with little if any sanction by ratepayers.

These sale proceeds should have been disbursed by CCHL back to the ratepayer shareholders, as a prudent action, as was the case elsewhere in New Zealand in similar circumstances (eg Otago and West Coast Power Boards). There was no justification for withholding these "windfall" proceeds without public assent. A legal opinion should be sought as to the probity of this action.

Action : Following the legal opinion, introduce an Initiative for ratepayers, as shareholders, to decide the action to be taken.

### **4. CHRISTCHURCH CITY FACILITIES LTD, SUBSIDIARY COMPANY JET ENGINE FACILITY LTD (Vol 2 p145)**

I object to rating monies being invested here. While the JEF concept is splendid, the main commercial players involved here have no need for additional funding being forcibly provided by the Christchurch public.

Action: Remove ratepayer finance from this venture.

## **B. GRANTS**

I object to the following grants:-

### **1. \$11M to a Flat Water facility alternative to Kerrs Reach (Vol 1 p29)**

Such an amenity should be entirely financed by a Trust or Association made up of watersport clubs, schools and other users.

Action: Abolish this Grant.

### **2. \$240,000 to the Christchurch Cathedral (Vol 1 p6)**

New Zealand is a secular state. It is therefore essential to separate Church and State, and to be seen to be so doing.

Although modest, this ongoing annual grant is controversial as well as unconstitutional.

Action: Abolish this Grant.

### **3. \$400,000 to the PGA Golf Tournament (Vol 1 p6)**

I strongly suggest this annual grant be discontinued, for no other reason than it is a precedent, and other sporting codes will consider it as favouritism and be encouraged to demand similar financing for high profile events.

Action: Abolish this Grant.

**4. \$3M for the Lyttelton Marina (Vol 1 p6)**

Council should not be making a grant towards Lyttelton boating facilities, otherwise this would also be seen as partiality.

Action: Rescind the budget figure.

**5. \$455,000 to Sister Cities, included within City Promotion and International Relations (Vol 2 pp67/71)**

I most strongly disagree with the Sister Cities scheme. It really is a meaningless concept, affording junkets for certain favoured persons with no concrete benefits to ratepayers.

The display of Sister City artifacts within the Halswell Quarry Park is inappropriate. The now disused Halswell quarry, with its wealth of historical association with regional buildings and monuments, has as much historical value in its own right as any decaying downtown building, and must be protected from unrelated tacky cultural displays.

The serenity of the grassed picnic spot beneath the massive quarry cliffs is unique.

Action: Abolish the Sister Cities Scheme.

**C. RECYCLING (Vol 1 p30)**

I urge an increase in the range of plastics able to be recycled, in particular Code 4 Low Density Polyethylene, and Code 5 Polypropylene.

This will decrease the amount of rubbish discarded into black refuse bags.

Action: Expand the range as above.

**D. WATERWAYS AND LAND DRAINAGE (Vol 1 p60)**

The Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) is a fascist piece of legislation imposed by Central Government on property owners, via Local Authorities. It permits property owners to own land and pay rates and levies, but in fact forbids them from developing their holdings without permission of the State, and then only through a complicated and expensive procedure.

Natural landscape features, trees, rocks, swamp and puddles all have "intrinsic value" according to the RMA, but human beings do not. In the whole of the massive RMA document the phrase "private property rights" is not even mentioned once.

As a result of its adoption of the RMA the Christchurch City Council has energetically pushed forward with "naturalization" of waterways, rather than piping, to alleviate flooding (which concept incidentally remains unproven, particularly when downstream culverts remain undersized). These naturalization "improvements" are deemed to increase property values.

The implementation of this policy means opening up areas of private land along creek and drain margins and widening the watercourses. These practical problems then appear:-

- (a) Fouling of lawns and gardens by ducks etc
- (b) Loss of privacy
- (c) Security concerns where young people and undesirables can gain access to the rear of private residences, often along unfenced boundaries.
- (d) Risk of vibration from machinery engaged on earthworks and stream realignment causing stresses and settlement of nearby dwelling foundations.

Far from improving property values these factors tend to lower them.

There is also the question of the financial probity of spending public monies on "betterment" works on private land, when such works are out of view of the general ratepaying public. I strongly urge Council to take a more conciliatory role with concerned landowners when naturalization projects are planned. Alternative adequately-designed piping would allow establishment and restoration of lawns and gardens right through to residential boundaries.

Action: Re-evaluate this section of the RMA with the view to accommodating opinions other than those of devout nature-worshippers.

**City Council please note - this submission is being sent both via Email and by post.**