

**Submission on the
Long Term Council Community Plan
(Our Community Plan)
2006 – 2016**

From
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I wish to talk to the main points in my written submission which I make on my own behalf.

My submission refers to the summary version page 4.

Introduction

I appreciate the opportunity to make this submission on the Long Term Council Community Plan, and in doing so I make specific reference to the "Summary of the Draft of our Community Plan" page 4.

- It is my sincere belief that the Botanic Gardens project for which \$11.1 million has been budgeted should be upgraded to the "Essential projects" category rather than remain classified under "Discretionary priority projects".
- I strongly support the allocation of \$17.2 million for the purpose of tree renewal.

My rationale for saying this is explained as follows:

Botanic Gardens Project

The Botanic Gardens are a focal point for Christchurch people and visitors because of their position near the centre of the City. Thus it is very important that standards of excellence be maintained. First and foremost is the maintenance of a first rate botanical collection of plants.

Alongside this is the fact that they are the leading botanic gardens in the country and I don't say this because I am a citizen of Christchurch. This means that the botanical aspect must always be kept in the forefront of planning because it is plants in variety that are the rationale for its existence and have been ever since its formation in the nineteenth century. Thus a proper botanical garden is not just a haphazard collection of plants brought in to make a pretty show.

Inevitably changes need to be made from time to time and perhaps a particular emphasis is developed or extended, eg. a collection of species in a particular genus or family is felt desirable to establish or, on the other hand, a collection of species from a particular area of the world, including New Zealand of course, might be considered desirable. This would often entail adding to and expanding an existing collection. From time to time areas have to be cleared totally or partially in order to establish a new collection, something that always needs to be carefully planned.

Facilities have to be maintained and upgraded from time to time. This is particularly important in relation to frost tender plants that need some sort of protection such as a frame or glasshouse. These have to be looked after carefully and money needs to be available when there is a need for replacement when necessary. Part of the strength of the Christchurch Botanic Gardens is that it has always tried to grow a very wide range of plants from temperate to tropical climates, this being one of the reasons why it is so important to maintain an adequate and experienced staff. It is fortunate that the Gardens have had a succession of good gardeners to try and maintain very high standards but they must have facilities that create congenial conditions for their work.

A corollary to the maintenance of a botanic garden with first class standards is that subsidiary facilities are of great importance too. I am thinking especially of a botanical library, seed bank and a herbarium; the last should mainly consist of the plants that are cultivated in the Gardens, although specimens of the species or their

close relations outside can be very useful. This implies that there has to be room for expansion of these facilities and as someone who uses the library fairly regularly it is obvious that there will soon be a need for more space there. It is crucial to maintain this facility to the best standards possible, meaning not only adequate room but also money for books.

Education of the public is something that has only been thought about in detail fairly recently. The current Information Centre needs either expanding in its present position or moved to a position closer to the main entrance. Such a feature should be attractive enough to entice people to come and learn more about plants. I have long thought that it is a great pity that the old Curator's House near the river did not become the Information Centre when it was vacated as a residence. A small demonstration garden to teach horticultural principles would be a useful adjunct to the Information Centre.

Finally, what are not needed are more facilities like the fountain near Rolleston Avenue or inanimate objects like statues and similar artificial objects that from time to time are introduced to the Gardens, some only temporary I'll admit. I am not saying that that fountain should be removed although if it had no historic significance I should not have supported its placement there. Plants should come first in this special place that was originally conceived for displaying them and modelled on similar botanic gardens in Europe.

Tree Renewal

While it is understood that the \$17 million budgeted for tree renewal will be spent right across the city, it is to be expected that a portion of this will be directed to Hagley Park and into the Botanic Gardens themselves. Indeed, as has been discussed in previous forums, the botanical enrichment of Hagley Park would complement the gardens and vice versa.



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Taxonomic Botanist

02.05.2006

LTCCP 2006-16 SUBMISSION

Submissions close on 5 May 2006

I wish to talk to the main points in my submission at the hearings to be held between Thursday 25 May and Wednesday 7 June 2006.

I am completing this submission:
For yourself

Number of people you represent:

My submission refers to:

Page Number:
Page 8

I also want to respond to: Other

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Your Submission:

Do you have any comments on the major projects in our Draft Community Plan?

A separate submission was made concerning the future of the Christchurch Botanic Gardens, a major item in the Draft Community Plan.

Do you have any comments on groups of activities (The activities and services the Council provides?)

As above

Do you have any other comments or suggestions you want to make?

This submission concerns the Christchurch Perimeter Walkway Project.

This walkway covers 120 km and has been traversed by a group of people for a full decade and we feel that for a very modest expenditure it could be put on a more formal footing, one important reason being that fresh walkers would not get so easily lost. This would involve marker posts, self guiding books (I understand that these have been partially compiled), as well as confirmation of proposed arrangements with accommodation and transport agencies.

The Walkway passes amongst very different scenery and thus brings people into contact with as much biological diversity as is feasible in the Christchurch area. This could have an appeal to locals and visitors alike, as well as offering interesting experiences to people of all ages.

Conversely, I believe that the numbers of the Christchurch City Council's publication "City Scene" should be substantially reduced; see under "Sale of Assets" on P. 8 of the City Plan. I feel sure that very few people do this publication justice anyway. If this were done it would release something like the modest sum needed to upgrade the Perimeter Walkway.