



Cameron Moore

Submission to the Christchurch City Council

Our Community Plan 2006 to 2016

I WISH TO SPEAK TO MY SUBMISSION

Submission presented by: Cameron Moore

1. Contact:

Cameron Moore	15 Glandovey Road
	Fendalton
	Christchurch 5.
Telephone:	351-5915
Cellphone:	0274-422215
Email:	<u>cam@moore.net.nz</u>

Cameron Moore

SUBMISSION TO THE CHRISTCHURCH CITY COUNCIL COMMUNITY PLAN 2006 TO 2016

CONTENTS	PAGE
1. Importance of the Botanic Gardens to Christchurch	3
2. Role of Botanic Gardens in 21 st . Century	3
3. Importance of a Vision & Strategic Plan	4
4. General Comments	4
5. Operational Issues	5
6. Revenue	5
7. Capital Expenditure	6
8. Governance	7
9. Conclusion	8
10. Appendix 1 Importance of the Gardens to Christchurch	9
10. Appendix 2 Role of Botanic Gardens in 21 st . Century	11
11. Appendix 3 Importance of a Vision & a Strategic Plan	13

1. IMPORTANCE OF THE BOTANIC GARDENS TO CHRISTCHURCH

Christchurch is a noted "Garden City" and was voted the "Garden City of the World." The corner stone and focus of this reputation is the Botanic Gardens, Hagley Park and the Avon River.

A Destination Benchmarking Study completed for Christchurch and Canterbury Marketing during 2000/01 surveying 1,100 visitors to Christchurch and covering 6105 visits demonstrates the popularity of the Botanic Gardens. Rankings by attractions visited were:

	%
Cathedral Square	80
Shopping	71
Botanic Gardens	67
Arts Centre	66
Christ Church Cathedral	47
Canterbury Museum	39
Christchurch Tram	30
Antarctic Centre	28
Christchurch Gondola	24
Robert McDougall Art Gallery	18

Visitor numbers to the Botanic Gardens surveyed in 1995/96 were at 1,200,000 visitors per annum and the current but yet uncompleted survey is showing a further increase of visitors above the 1.2 million of the 1995/96 survey.

See Appendix 1, page 9..

2. ROLE OF BOTANIC GARDENS IN THE 21st. CENTURY

Each botanic garden has a different location, purpose, and organisational structure, therefore the emphasis of its work will vary. This different emphasis is what gives each botanic garden its distinctive character. However there are a number of roles common to the description "botanic garden"

They are: Civic Park
Education
Conservation
Research

Roger Beale, Secretary, Environment Australia

“Modern botanic gardens... Now serve a more complex function. Botanic gardens are part of the cultural fabric of society, feeding our significant need for spaces and creating dialogues between us and the natural world. They have developed important roles in science and education, and the embracing of technologies has opened a new era of co-operation and information sharing.

Botanic gardens have a central role in promoting local and global cooperation in biodiversity conservation, sustainable development and research.”

3. IMPORTANCE OF A VISION AND A STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE CHRISTCHURCH BOTANIC GARDENS

I appreciate that the Council is currently preparing a strategic plan for the Botanic Gardens.

However it is concerning in terms of corporate efficiency that to date no strategic plan for the Christchurch Botanic Gardens has been finalised. In April 2002 the Friends of the Christchurch Botanic Gardens in their submission to the Christchurch City Council on the future use of the Robert McDougall Art Gallery building raised the lack of a mission and strategic plan for the Botanic Gardens. It has been repeated raised by this submitter each year in submissions on the City's draft Annual Plans. Now after four years it still remains uncompleted. It is vital this is given urgent attention and the necessary resources, before any long-term capital commitments are made.

You need a mental image of a possible and desired future, a realistic, credible attractive future, a condition that is better in some important ways than what now exists. You need to recognise the mission for the Botanic Gardens must cover both strategy and culture. It will need both commercial and moral rationale and in business terms, it needs to understand what business it is in and what strategic position it is seeking. The development of a mission is intellectual; converting individuals to it, is emotional.

Further notes on this are to be found in Appendix 3. page 13.

4. GENERAL COMMENTS

I am pleased to see the recognition by the City Council in the allocation of additional resources to reverse the lack of development in the Botanic Gardens over the last decade.

It is not easy to analyse this long term Draft Plan and its financial implications unless it is done under the umbrella of a long-term strategic plan.

My comments in this submission are offered in a constructive and hopefully helpful manner as we understand the additional commitment Council is making to the Botanic Gardens. As you realise, the year 2013 is the sesquicentennial of the Christchurch Botanic Gardens. Botanic gardens have by their very nature a long investment horizon and 2013 gives us only seven years.

5. OPERATIONAL ISSUES

In their submission to the Christchurch Community Plan 2004-14 the Friends of the Christchurch Botanic Gardens raised their concern over operational expenditure in the Botanic Gardens. I support their comments.

On page 59 I note an additional \$450,000 is allocated as additional operational expenditure for the Christchurch Botanic Gardens from 2011. This leaves current operational expenditure frozen at current levels over the next four years?

I still believe the Botanic Gardens are under staffed. In Volume 1 of the Community Plan 2004-2014, page 29 it stated: *Public comments have identified a perceived decline in the standard of the Botanic Gardens.* The plan then goes on to say this view is also reinforced by the observations of the new Curator and Operations Manager. Is "perceived" the correct word to use? What real investigation has there been in FTE needs to meet forecast expectations? It must be added that generally my contact with staff only confirms a thoroughly professional group of people. It does seem to me, that with the growing skills shortage and the forthcoming 150 year anniversary there is a real need to increase the apprentice intake.

6. REVENUE

The 2004 plan stated *"analysis has revealed revenue has been consistently overstated in the budget in recent years and it is clear revenue targets are not being met in some areas and are unrealistic. In particular this relates to the Botanic Gardens, where revenue targets for lectures, tours and product sales have been overly optimistic."*

Revenue targets were correspondingly reduced.

Whilst I agree budgets must have reality based on the business plan, I wonder if these are nothing more than a figure "which we hope will happen." No action, no performance!

On a general analysis of botanic gardens around the world, the average income earned from external sources compared with total income including government/local body income is around 30%. Ours is about 7%. To me this seems a very negative statement reflecting a misunderstanding of commercial reality.

You need to ask:

Who are our customers?
What are our competencies?
How do we "create" our "customers?"

What you are allowing is a lowering of revenue standards each year. You should be making these standards harder, not easier. As Peter Drucker, the doyen of management consultants said "the predominant role of any organisation is to innovate and create its customers."

Over half the visitors to our Botanic Gardens are from outside Christchurch and current estimates on overseas visitors to Christchurch forecast an increase of 58% between now and 2008. A recent visit from the Chief Executive Officer of British Heritage stated their most profitable activity was their shops which enjoyed very high margins.

This compares with our budget for shop sales, which in last year's budget were reduced by 24% from the previous year's budget, but even more importantly the trading margin on these sales was reduced from 45% to 26%? Can this be explained? Has this been reconsidered?

I understand increased activity in school education is taking place on a no charge basis. Is this correct? I would have thought education related to unit standards and provided at a fee as is widely done overseas, providing additional revenue to the botanic garden as well as providing value to a school would be part of your strategy. It would force a professional education approach to be taken providing real value rather than a *play way* garden visit.

7. CAPITAL EXPENDITURE

Two significant items are included within this budget period. They are the major tree replacement programme and the proposed visitor facility and staff facilities replacement. These two total \$28.3 million.

The tree replacement need has been known for over 10 years and it is pleasing to see it being recognised operationally. The capital expenditure on tree replacement is city wide, not just the Botanic Gardens and I note only 1.5% of trees will be replaced each year. Dieter Steinegg's report of 20 March 2003 shows a life expectancy graph of trees in the Christchurch Botanic Gardens demonstrating the majority will have past

their expected life within the next 30 years. Your target replacement programme of 1.5% per annum would mean a 67 year replacement programme. Is this good planning for the "Garden City?"

The Friends of the Christchurch Botanic Gardens have in previous years raised the issue of a lack of a strategic plan.

In my opinion this should precede any planning work on the proposed visitor and staff facilities centre. You need to know what you are going to use the facility for before planning it. For instance this Community Plan refers to a "staff and visitors" facility, but does not mention education, conservation, research or commercial opportunities? The present Information Centre reflects the lack of a strategic vision at the time it was built. One area not mentioned is its location and the need to provide information at the Rolleston Avenue entrance where 45% of visitors enter. This entrance is the linkage with the "heritage precinct" of Christchurch. It was "interesting" to read in the Community Plan 2004-2014 on page 29 of volume 1, "*Interestingly, less than 8% of all visitors find the Gardens' Information Centre,* something the Friends of the Christchurch Botanic Gardens have been saying for some years and one of the major points raised in their previous submission on the use of the Robert McDougall Art Gallery building. I understand recent improvements in signage has improved this position. About three years ago a major study was commissioned on signage and labelling for the Christchurch Botanic Gardens, but little action has flowed out of that report. On page 29 of the 2004-2014 plan it stated that over half of all visitors to the Botanic Gardens are from outside Christchurch. Current forecasts for overseas visitors to Christchurch between now and 2008 are for a 58% increase. Any plan for additional buildings must contain commercial facilities to help finance the Botanic Gardens. The Council should reconsider its position on an information centre for Rolleston Avenue entrance visitors comprising a very significant proportion of Christchurch visitors to the gardens.

In this plan on page 83 it shows the initial expenditure of \$100,000 on the proposed new building as taking place during 2006/07, and yet no strategic plan has been finalised. What are its proposed functions?

8. GOVERNANCE

I am concerned about the "governance" of the Botanic Gardens and I wish to reiterate comments made by myself and the Friends of the Botanic Gardens in previous years.. To me this very important City asset is too far removed from effective governance. How does it develop a vision and "business" plan without an effective *Board* structure to which the "*Director*" of the Botanic gardens can relate? Under its present structure it is just too far down the organisation chain to have effective governance. The Botanic Gardens report to operational personnel, whose major operational role is maintaining the asset at lowest cost and balancing the budget. There are very real

opportunities in external funding and this requires a wide blend of skills at the governance level over a consistent period.

Currently there is an emphasis on the Botanic Gardens, but over the last decade this has not been so. The procrastination of the decision on ageing trees is a very good example of the lack of governance in recent times.

Ian Blackburne Chair Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust (Sydney)

“From the outside, a botanic garden looks a beautiful place- lush with wonderful plants, tranquil and serene, beautiful birds, ... streams, sculpture, a safe and secure place. Botanic gardens fill many needs... scientific, botanic and horticultural as well as historical, cultural, leisure and entertainment. The realities of all botanic gardens today is that they are businesses ... facing issues such as occupational health and safety for the visiting public, employees and contractors, financial pressure to deliver innovative and relevant programs and sustain themselves in spite of reduction in public funding; and always provide plantings and collections as well as other programmes to meet public expectations.”

“To be relevant today, BGs need to provide leadership in issues of plant conservation, biodiversity and environmental standards and procedures, to utilise modern communication techniques and media; and look at who they are, what they do and ensure they meet consumer needs. “

Our Botanic Gardens are just too important to be **managed** rather than **governed**. This is an important consideration that needs to be debated, not swept under the mat.

9. CONCLUSION

I am pleased to see the increased commitment by the Council to rejuvenate the Botanic Gardens. However the lack of a completed strategic plan does raise warnings about how wisely future expenditure will be made.

There is widespread recognition of the value and importance of these very special facilities to our residents and tourists alike. Many residents of the “Garden City” all consider themselves “experts” in this area. However I am concerned that the Christchurch Botanic Gardens are viewed by many as a “civic gardens” without the understanding the available strategic options and the resultant future revenue sources that could be developed both for operational and capital purposes. When entering a period of financial pressure upon rating level, alternative funding arrangements must be considered.

I hope my comments have been helpful and I look forward to working in partnership with you to enhance our Botanic Gardens.

IMPORTANCE OF THE BOTANIC GARDENS TO CHRISTCHURCH

Christchurch is a noted garden city and was voted the "Garden City of the World." The corner stone of this reputation is the Botanic Gardens, Hagley Park and the Avon River. Christchurch has become a heritage tourist centre and the western area of the city adjacent to Rolleston Avenue is a recognised heritage quarter within easy walking distance from the city's centre.

It comprises:

Arts' Centre
 Museum
 Christ's College
 City Art Gallery
 Botanic Gardens

The Botanic Gardens are an obvious and focal point for both local residents and tourist. A major survey (1995/96) confirms our Botanic Gardens attract over 1.2 million visitors per annum. This survey did not count tour groups on guided tours who average about 5000 per annum. The profile from this survey is as follows:

		%
Christchurch residents	762,000	63.5
Other N. Z. residents	185,000	15.4
International visitors	253,000	21.1
Total visitors	1,200,000	100.0

Currently a new visitor survey is under way and figures to date show an increase over the 1995/96 survey.

It is interesting to compare these visitor numbers from 2000/01 with other well known icons:

The Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne	1,900,000
The Christchurch Botanic Gardens	1,200,000
The Royal Botanic Gardens Edinburgh	700,000
Auckland Regional Botanic Gardens	700,000
Canterbury Museum	550,000
Robert McDougall Art Gallery	250,000

A Destination Benchmarking Study completed for Christchurch & Canterbury Marketing during 2000/01 surveying 1,100 visitors and covering 6,105 visits demonstrated the popularity of the Botanic Gardens. Rankings by attractions visited were:

	%
Cathedral Square	80
Shopping	71
Botanic Gardens	67
Arts Centre	66
Christchurch Cathedral	47
Canterbury Museum	39
Christchurch Tram	30
Antarctic Centre	28
Christchurch Gondola	24
Robert McDougall Art Gallery	18

Current estimates of international tourist growth forecast a 58% increase from now until 2008.

It is only now we are recognising the importance of heritage tourism and the central role Christchurch occupies in New Zealand in this growing sector of international tourism. The Botanic Gardens play an important role in this.

ROLE OF BOTANIC GARDENS IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Each botanic garden has a different location, purpose, and organisational structure, therefore the emphasis of its work may vary. This different emphasis is what gives each botanic garden its distinctive character. However there are a number of roles common to the description “botanic garden”

In his book *Guide to the Botanic Gardens of Britain*, published by Collins in 1987, Michael Young lists the roles of botanic gardens as:

- Public access
- Labelling
- Instruction
- Research
- Plants gathered together to form a scientific collection

At its meeting in Canberra in April 2001 the Gardens 2001 Congress defined four major roles for botanic gardens as:

- Education
- Conservation
- Research
- Horticulture

Similarly, the International Agenda for Botanic Gardens Conservation in May 2002 stated:

“Botanic Gardens are institutions holding documented collections of living plants for the purpose of:

- Display
- Conservation
- Education
- Scientific research.”

The Botanic Garden Conservation Strategy Conference in 1989 gave a very comprehensive list of activities defining a botanic garden but pointed out that each individual botanic garden did not necessarily carry out all of these functions.

From these and other internationally recognised sources, the major function defining a botanic garden can be classified under the two over riding headings of **pleasure and value**.

These two headings can be amplified as:

Civic Park	Pleasure gardens
Education	Interpretation (signage) Importance of plants in our life Conservation Plant life Plant collections Gardening information and advice
Conservation	Preserving species Genetic diversity Rare and endangered plants both in situ and ex situ.
Research	Conservation Environment Seed exchange Plant collections Rare and endangered plants Herbarium Ethnobiology Taxonomy (plant names)

How do our Botanic Gardens compare with these benchmarks? Without doubt our Gardens have a very high grading as a civic park or community garden. In the other categories of education, conservation and research the rating would be poor. Yet exciting and valuable opportunities exist in those areas.

IMPORTANCE OF A VISION AND A PLAN FOR THE BOTANIC GARDENS

I am convinced the Botanic Gardens need a vision and a sense of direction to fulfill its potential, both to its citizens and visitors. Whilst I am pleased our Council is currently preparing a strategic plan for the Botanic Gardens, it is vital urgent attention and the necessary resources are allocated to ensure its completion. Once the draft plan has been finished it will need professional critiquing before adoption. Council must ensure this process proceeds without delay to ensure timely implementation. (N.B.150th celebration in 2013).

You need a mental image of a possible and desired future, a view of a realistic, credible attractive future, a condition that is better in some important ways than what now exists.

This mission is much more than intentions and fine ideals. It must represent

- (a) the framework for the entire business,
- (b) the values which drive the Botanic Gardens,
- (c) the belief the City and the Botanic Gardens has in itself and
- (d) the confidence we can achieve the goal to be a leading botanic garden.

Currently Greenspace have set up a review committee to explore the need for a new Staff and Visitors' building. Whilst I applaud the sentiment of this effort, I believe it is the "cart before the horse." This committee has no set objectives. It is essential you should be defining the MISSION STATEMENT for the Botanic Gardens and starting to walk, in business terms, the trail of:

Mission
Product areas
Products
Processes and resources

It will need to keep these thoughts in the back of its mind:

To succeed, how will we look to our stakeholders?	Financial
To achieve our vision, how will we look to our visitors?	Visitors
To satisfy our visitors, what processes must we excel at?	Internal
To achieve our vision, how must we learn and improve?	Innovate

You need to recognise our mission covers both strategy and culture. You need both a commercial and a moral rationale and in business terms, you need to understand what

business you are in and what strategic position you seek. You should be defining your future, not defending your past. The development of a mission statement is intellectual; converting individuals to it, is emotional.

Dr Hugh Mackay, Psychologist writer and social researcher from Sydney

Wrote.

One of the “factors likely to increase public interest in, support for and use of public gardens Is that demographic trends towards smaller households will force us to seek creative ways of satisfying our herd instincts. We are.. social creatures... we will be wanting to make more use of public space connecting with the herd.”

(Maybe we need to encourage a return to promenading in our Botanic Gardens as the early settlers did, instead of joining the crowds in the malls.)

“People will be looking for ways to compensate themselves for the pressure of contemporary life. They will be looking for *symbols of simplicity*. The garden is one such symbol.” *In our case so very accessible.* “(The public gardens have the great advantage that ‘I don’t even have to do the weeding’) A public garden is far more than a botanical museum; in the future, it will be an oasis in which we find some of the tranquillity, sanity and simplicity for which we yearn”.

From report of the ‘Conference on Botanic Gardens in the 21st Century,’ held in Canberra April 2001. This International Congress was attended by 240 delegates.

Roger Beale, Secretary, Environment Australia

“Botanic Gardens have undergone radical evolution since their inception. Early botanic gardens displayed biological souvenirs and curios from ‘the other world’. Modern botanic gardens.... Now serve a more complex function. Botanic gardens are part of the cultural fabric of society, feeding our significant need for spaces and creating dialogues between us and the natural world. They have developed important roles in science and education, and the embracing of technologies has opened a new era of co-operation and information sharing.

Botanic gardens have a central role in promoting local and global cooperation in biodiversity conservation, sustainable development and research.

Botanic gardens will remain relevant and valuable to society while they retain their responsiveness to change. New challenges* are arising..... Co-operative partnerships with the community such as through volunteers and ... commercial organisations will become increasingly important, as will sponsorship and commercial partnerships, as non traditional sources of funding.”

Ian Blackburne Chair Royal Botanic gardens and Domain Trust (SYD)

“From the outside, a botanic garden looks a beautiful place- lush with wonderful plants, tranquil and serene, beautiful birds,... streams, sculpture, a safe and secure place. Botanic gardens fill many needs... scientific, botanic and horticultural as well as historical, cultural, leisure and entertainment. The realities of all botanic gardens today is that they are businesses ... facing issues such as occupational health and safety for the visiting public, employees and contractors, financial pressure to deliver innovative and relevant programs and sustain themselves in spite of reduction in public funding; and always provide plantings and collections as well as other programmes to meet public expectations.”

“To be relevant today, BGs need to provide leadership in issues of plant conservation, biodiversity and environmental standards and procedures, to utilise modern communication techniques and media; and look at who they are, what they do and ensure they meet consumer needs. “

Dr Hugh Mackay, Psychologist writer and social researcher from Sydney

Wrote.

One of the “actors likely to increase public interest in, support for and use of public gardens Is that demographic trends towards smaller households will force us to seek creative ways of satisfying our herd instincts. We are.. social creatures... we will be wanting to make more use of public space connecting with the herd.”

(Maybe we need to encourage a return to promenading in our Botanic Gardens as the early settlers did, instead of joining the crowds in the malls.)

“People will be looking for ways to compensate themselves for the pressure of contemporary life. They will be looking for *symbols of simplicity*. The garden is one such symbol.” *In our case so very accessible.* “(The public gardens have the great advantage that ‘I don’t even have to do the weeding’)
A public garden is far more than a botanical museum; in the future, it will be an oasis in which we find some of the tranquillity, sanity and simplicity for which we yearn”.

From report of the ‘Conference on Botanic Gardens in the 21st Century,’ held in Canberra April 2001. This International Congress was attended by 240 delegates.

Roger Beale, Secretary, Environment Australia

“Botanic Gardens have undergone radical evolution since their inception. Early botanic gardens displayed biological souvenirs and curios from ‘the other world’. Modern botanic gardens.... Now serve a more complex function. Botanic gardens are part of the cultural fabric of society, feeding our significant need for spaces and creating dialogues between us and the natural world. They have developed important roles in science and education, and the embracing of technologies has opened a new era of co-operation and information sharing.

Botanic gardens have a central role in promoting local and global cooperation in biodiversity conservation, sustainable development and research.

Botanic gardens will remain relevant and valuable to society while they retain their responsiveness to change. New challenges* are arising..... Co-operative partnerships with the community such as through volunteers and ... commercial organisations will become increasingly important, as will sponsorship and commercial partnerships, as non traditional sources of funding.”

Ian Blackburne Chair Royal Botanic gardens and Domain Trust (SYD)

“From the outside, a botanic garden looks a beautiful place- lush with wonderful plants, tranquil and serene, beautiful birds,... streams, sculpture, a safe and secure place. Botanic gardens fill many needs... scientific, botanic and horticultural as well as historical, cultural, leisure and entertainment. The realities of all botanic gardens today is that they are businesses ... facing issues such as occupational health and safety for the visiting public, employees and contractors, financial pressure to deliver innovative and relevant programs and sustain themselves in spite of reduction in public funding; and always provide plantings and collections as well as other programmes to meet public expectations.”

“To be relevant today, BGs need to provide leadership in issues of plant conservation, biodiversity and environmental standards and procedures, to utilise modern communication techniques and media; and look at who they are, what they do and ensure they meet consumer needs. “