

**Christchurch City Council**  
**P O Box 237**  
**Christchurch**

**Long Term Council Community Plan 2006**

**Submission**

**From:** Michael Gorman  
City Missioner  
Christchurch City Mission  
P O Box 1032  
Christchurch

**Personal Representation:**

I am willing to attend and personally speak to this submission before the Christchurch City Council

**Christchurch City Mission**

I am the Christchurch City Missioner. I have had over twenty five years experience in the area of Social Services both in the voluntary and the Government sector.

The City Mission is a Christian Social Service Agency seeking to express love as demonstrated by Christ and seeking in the spirit of the Gospel and in the spirit of the Treaty of Waitangi to work towards justice and equal opportunity for all in our society

Within this more specifically the City Mission seeks to support care and advocate for those who are marginalized through social and economic factors and are at risk through unemployment, inadequate housing, family breakdown, addiction, financial difficulties or mismanagement, abuse or other difficulty.

The Mission works in both crisis and preventive ways with the objective of improving the quality of peoples lives and enabling them to be more self sufficient in the community

**The Mission provides:**

**Social Services.**

Crisis and advocacy services include Community Mental Health, Budget Support, Men's Night Shelter, Social Work services, a women and children's drop in centre, Food bank, a Medical Clinic and Health education

**Alcohol and Drug Services.**

Services include a Residential Detoxification Service, A Home Detoxification Service, Youth and Adult Counselling and an outpatient drug and alcohol service for women.

**Our Submission:**

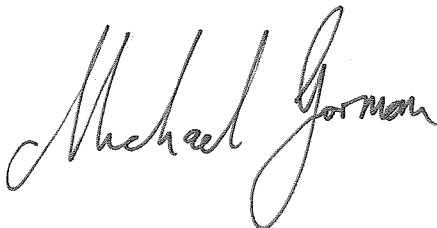
- It is my view that Christchurch City Council has developed its own unique style in the area of social services. It has presented a holistic approach to creating a healthy environment for the people of Christchurch. This approach has meant that policies have been enacted that have taken into account not just the economic realities of life but also the social and welfare needs of its citizens. I note that the long term Council Plan states as a goal the achieving of strong and inclusive communities. Not to do so would create inequalities and risk social unrest.
- The support of the Council by way of grants to non government agencies such as the City Mission has been a positive demonstration of the Council's social concern. Our Night Shelter has benefited greatly thanks to the support of the Council. Furthermore the Mayors Welfare Fund, Council Housing and community development work carried out by the Council have been positive and very useful. Council staff have presented a very positive and socially aware face to the community. It is hoped that this aspect of your work is valued and rewarded and will continue to be so. Many community groups depend for their very existence on grants from the City Council. These groups in their different ways enrich the life of the city and support the vulnerable. It is vital that the Council continue to support community groups who act in partnership with the Council to enrich the lives of many disadvantaged citizens.

- Housing is a basic human right. The citizens of Christchurch should have access to safe, affordable and secure housing. Council housing should be viewed as one of the jewels in the Council crown. That this asset is financially self sufficient is a great advantage. I hope that the Council, while being aware of the need to generate income for this area of work, resists pressure to act in the manner of a private landlord. To avoid this trap the Council will need to keep and extend positive assistance to its tenants and ensure that the housing stock is maintained and extended. It is important that those who can afford Council housing pay for this while those less financially well off are provided with affordable accommodation. This may be difficult to achieve but that is not an excuse not to try. Once people have accommodation, assistance needs to be given to support them in this. It may be that the support required is more that Council staff can give. Council has a role in assisting other agencies to provide ongoing support for this venerable group of people by giving grants to make this possible.
- Every city has its vagrant population. They are not helped by being moved from one area of the city to the other and by being driven underground and made invisible. I would encourage the Council to take a proactive approach to this problem and work with agencies to provide safe and suitable accommodation for this group of people. Some people may choose to be homeless but most who do so make this choice from a very limited range of possibilities. Work needs to be done in this area to present and support other more healthy and positive possibilities to them.
- Christchurch is very well resourced with drug and alcohol services and also is in close proximity to several prisons. As a result many people are attracted to the city in search of treatment or to support their families. This places extra economic and social pressures on the city including housing difficulties, criminal offending and educational stresses. The Council is to be encouraged to support this reality and also to lobby for assistance from national government for what is a unique situation.
- Poverty is a reality in this city. While the number of people who are unemployed has decreased many people do not have full time or well paid jobs. New government initiatives have given some assistance to

those in employment but have not helped those on a benefit. The lack of financial equality has created a sector of society who lacks good access to housing health education and leisure activities. Future council planning must include providing for these people. Not to do so increases marginalization and risks social disruption. Public facilities, for example swimming pools, the museum, sports grounds, parks and libraries must be maintained and made accessible.

- The difficult question of where money will come from to provide the services and amenities that the people of Christchurch want and deserve will need to be dealt with. Many people can not afford a rise in rates while maybe others can. What ever system is employed needs to be transparent and just. While national legislation may prescribe how Councils raise money, discussions are needed not just on the amount of rates but also on the method of raising them.

Improving the quality of life for the people of this city is vital and is as legitimate a use of rate payer money as roading, street lights and other traditional council business. While the Council may put pressure of national government to assist and join in partnerships with them it must not avoid its own obligations in this area.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Gorman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Michael Gorman  
City Missioner

4 May 2006