

Christchurch City Council

Long Term Council Community Plan 2006



**SUBMISSION FROM**

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**PERSONAL REPRESENTATION:**

I/we am willing to personally represent this submission to the Christchurch City Council

**ABOUT US**

**Methodist Mission Christchurch**

**Michael Greer** is the Superintendent and chief executive officer of Methodist Mission Christchurch, the social services agency of the Methodist Church of New Zealand in South Canterbury, North Canterbury, Nelson Marlborough and West Coast.

The Methodist Mission provides services and community development responses for those with social disadvantage and marginalised groups of society. We ensure that they have access to our services at low to no cost and that they can participate fully. Our services are designed to ensure greater community inclusiveness, safety and overall, improved social, economic and health outcomes particularly for this socio-economic grouping.

**Donna Ellen** is the Community Services Manager of Methodist Mission Christchurch. Those services include - **ChildWise** child and family services, **Aratupu** (early childhood education and family support), and **Te Kete Oranga** (food bank, advocacy, support to work and life skill education services).

Donna is also the chairperson of the Canterbury branch of the **Social Services Providers Aotearoa (SSPA)**. This network is made up of 35 agencies that everyday work at the coal face with families in crisis and distress. Those agencies also stand in support of this submission. SSPA is a substantial representative group from within the Social Service provider sector in Christchurch.

### **Community Services**

The Methodist Mission's **ChildWise** service aims to strengthen and enhance the well being of families by offering a range of innovative services encompassing both prevention and cure. The service works with children aged from birth to 13 years, advocating for their rights and teaching them skills for life. Aratupu is an early childhood education centre specifically focussing on the needs of children from low income families and providing a holistic model of care.

**Te Kete Oranga** is about social justice and strengthening families, empowering them to take more personal control of their lives. A wide range of services are provided including an immediate response foodbank for families in crisis along with an Advocacy programme to assist people in the management of debt. The Support to work programme provides a work brokerage role assisting people to access training and work placements. Alongside this the service provides a like skills education programme.

### **WesleyCare**

**WesleyCare** is the Methodist Mission's services for older persons. Those services include affordable and secure social housing, supported independent living, rest home and gerontological short term, long term, respite and end-of-life hospital care.

### **We submit that:**

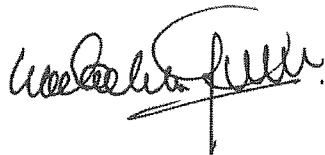
- The Christchurch City Council has consistently held an unique point of difference compared to local government in other regions of New Zealand. It has effectively maintained a social conscience and responsibility for its most disadvantaged and vulnerable members of society. We applaud, endorse and support the LTCCP principle to achieve strong and inclusive communities.
- This commitment has been clearly illustrated in its concerns for children and youth advocacy. The Mayor's Welfare funding, social housing and community development team and funding role are also outstanding examples a Council that has a values base at its heart. Many of the city's social services, including those of the Christchurch Methodist Mission, have been supported

and assisted by way of Council funding and the Council's specific support and advocacy.

- The role of the City Council's housing and community development teams in networking with community groups, providing support and assistance and understanding the social problems within the City cannot be underestimated. The City Council's community development staff are valued by our agency and are held in the highest regard. Council staff hold a pivotal role in managing relationships between the Council, the city's people and the social services and community groups who deliver essential services. It is essential that the Council in its LTCCP maintains a firm commitment to adequately resource and retain Council employees for this critically important role and function.
- It is essential for the well-being of this city that Council does not retrench its commitment to care and concern for those who are the least advantaged. Its commitment to commerce must not be at the expense of its commitment to community. It is therefore not appropriate for Council funds currently designated to social and community care to be under constant threat. Together with central government, Council has an unavoidable and necessary role and responsibility to foster and support those who provide for the community's most vulnerable members. The costs of such essential services cannot be maintained by the community and voluntary sector alone. The costs of a city's social care and concern must be met collectively and therefore becomes an essential and legitimate call upon the Council's various sources of income.
- Homelessness is already a serious presenting reality for this city. It includes not only 'vagrancy', but extends outwards to include safe, secure and affordable housing for all. Over the next two decades as the population ages, with higher proportions over the age of 70, concerns associated with the adequate provision of safe, secure and affordable housing will grow exponentially. Together with the commitment of various agencies (including the Methodist Mission) the Council's social housing stock is an essential component of this city's social infra-structure and Council must not abandon that commitment. It too, is an essential and legitimate call upon the Council's various sources of income.
- Council will only achieve its goal of strong and inclusive communities by a continuing commitment to adequately fund, resource and further develop its community services. Taking into account inflationary affects, Council's indicative net costs for community support (\$19.6 million in 2006-07, \$19.3 million in 2007-08 and \$19.7 million in 2008-09) is a depreciating commitment and compares unfavourably with other draft allocations in the LTCCP.

**Conclusion:**

- We commend the Council for its long standing commitment to sound social values. We appreciate the constraints that exist when allocating limited financial resources. However, the community and voluntary sector does not have the capacity from within its own resources to make good the shortfalls which will inevitably ensue from LTCCP decisions which under fund the essential services this submission has outlined. The outcome of under funding impacts upon the wellbeing of the whole city – commerce and community – and therefore together, all of us – commerce and community – must bare the real costs of our care and concern for each other.



Michael W Greer  
Superintendent

Methodist Mission Christchurch

4 May 2006