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**sec#2379**

**Our Community Plan  
Christchurch City Council  
P O Box 237,  
Christchurch 8003.**

We make this submission on behalf of our 4300 members and this submission covers the information given in the summary version.

We would like to speak to the submission but are doubtful of the efficacy of this as past experience indicates that we would be at the end of the submissions where there are minimal councillors present and some have in the past just up and left without apology to the chair or the submitter.

However we believe that interaction is necessary and request to speak to our submission

Firstly we must comment that there is no mention of the elderly nor is there any mention of the implementation of the Ageing in Place philosophy that Council is required to put in hand by government request.

We find that as the elderly are the fastest growing section of the community and most because they are home owners are ratepayers that this omission is hard to understand except if one accepts the fact that in essence the Council is just not interested in the welfare of the elderly.

With the ever increasing capital value of properties and the high rises in the rate percentage proposed by the Council over the next three years many of the elderly are going to find great difficulty in meeting the increases without some level of hardship.

The local government Act requires Councils when setting rates to take due notice of the ratepayer's ability to meet the rate demands and this appears to have been totally ignored.

Those on fixed incomes have little or no discretionary spending so despite the figure of an average of \$2.01 per week to cater for rate increases being quoted, this has to come at the expense of other spending.

A high proportion of the elderly are asset rich but cash poor and solutions like downgrade and shift are just not acceptable as many have lived in their homes many years, have many friends in the neighbourhood and to suggest that those affected should shift takes scant regard of the social implications of moving away from an area with which one is familiar, to a lower cost residence absolutely goes against any concept of a caring society.

The claim that since 2000 Christchurch ratepayers have experienced lower rate increases than elsewhere can only signify that the necessary upkeep of the infrastructure has not been made to now necessitate such large increases.

\$500 per annum from low fixed income such as New Zealand Superannuation is substantial and must be considered as such bearing in mind the low level of superannuation.

We accept that base priorities must be fulfilled but we can't accept the wish to develop the Central City Mall when most elderly would not venture there either during the day or night .  
The businesses in that area now, apart from two major shops , are mainly in the entertainment industry and have little appeal to the elderly .

We would also question the necessity of a new bus exchange – there is no indication of where this would be or whether it is a refurbishment of the existing as all that is stated is the cost of \$59.5 million- what is wrong with the present arrangement which at the time of construction was considered adequate and forward looking.

As for rates , these are currently based on the property which can house 1 to over 12 people all of whom use council services but only the owner is the ratepayer – a more equitable arrangement would be to vary the rates in bands according to household numbers .

Why are City Care & Red Bus no longer strategic assets as we consider that they are fundamental to the city especially in view of the current cost of petrol – what exactly their being no longer strategic means we are not sure but suspect that they are soon to be put up for sale to private enterprise . Bus fares already favour the working population to the detriment of the elderly who can no longer obtain a concessionary four hour return fare to city and back despite the fact that the fastest increasing section of the population using the buses is the elderly.

There is no mention of the elderly at all in the plan and this is the fastest growing sector of the community and the least serviced.

There is no comment at all on the council's implementation of the Ageing in Place philosophy – in fact it is ignored.

We are unconvinced that the closing of community libraries and the withdrawal of the mobile is in the interests of the citizens especially the young and the elderly – the number of young mothers that frequent the libraries of all sizes to take out books for their children is very large – one of our members fills in as a police helper at the police office in Fendalton library and is constantly amazed by the large number of young mothers who take out heaps of books for the school children.

It is considered viable to spend money on the Central City Mall yet what would support that approach is thwarted by an increase for those using the city for shopping is the increased parking charges – people will just not pay parking fees when they can do their shopping at Malls where parking is available and free .

There are no proposals to reduce refuse collection and disposal not even a minimal extension of the product that can go in the green bin as recyclable items which has changed little since inception – the only change that can be recalled is the now acceptance of items marked 2 in a triangle.

To cater for the accommodation needs of the elderly there needs to be more two bedroom units available but we are very mindful of the Council's housing policy which provides suitable accommodation . However the rent seems to rise very time there is an adjustment to new Zealand superannuation and the rise exceeds the percentage increase of NZS and is not covered by the accommodation supplement – as an example we draw your attention to rental costs of Beachville Rd units

To cater for the travel needs of the elderly especially in these times of escalating petrol prices there needs to be a review of the charges for the elderly which sometime ago were increased for them and reduced for the workers using the buses – we would ask that this be taken up with Ecan.

There is a large proliferation of signs and billboards on the foot paths which present a hazard for the elderly especially those with a walking impairment and these should be more strictly monitored.

Your publication is well done with great photos and comments from the elderly but the elderly are not just mentioned which leads us to believe that it is a plan for the bureaucracy not the ratepayers and the people who only required to supply the monies .

Yours sincerely

J B Walker  
President