

Christchurch Netball Centre Inc.

Submission to

Christchurch City Council

Community Plan 2006 to 2016

2 May 2006

The Centre wishes to talk to the main points in this written submission at the Plan hearings.



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1. Executive Summary

The Christchurch Netball Centre (the Centre) has been considering how to meet the pressing need for an indoor facility and relocation away from the congested Hagley Park courts to another site to enable growth and development of the sport in the City. The Centre greatly appreciates the financial support and staff input provided by Christchurch City Council for Stage One of the feasibility process. Stage One has identified the need, the preferred solution and the preferred location of the new multi-use complex. The Christchurch Netball Centre is seeking Council support for the concept and for council to become the major capital funder of the development.

This submission provides Council with a summary of findings from stage one as well as an indicative capital cost for the new indoor facility and outdoor courts. The concept design and detailed costing process will be undertaken in stage two. The indicative costs of the proposed development include:

- \$2.0 million for the development of the 40 new outdoor courts
- \$9 million for the indoor facility (5 netball or 5 basketball courts or 12 volleyball courts).
- \$3.5 million for the development of a mid-size spectator facility with seating capacity for 2,500 (please refer to the reference to Cowles Stadium on pages 75 and 78 of the full LTCCP).

The capacity to fund the project from non-Council sources is limited. Christchurch Netball Centre is committed to part funding the project through a capital contribution comprising the sale of the Netball Pavilion on Hagley Park, a loan serviced by the Centre and applications to funding bodies. Other users such as the regional franchises and the indoor sports codes have very limited ability to fund capital and will contribute through user fees. Christchurch City Council as with other major community facilities in the City will need to supply the majority of the capital for the development to proceed. Accordingly, the Centre seeks:

- Council to accept the stage 1 feasibility study results and support the proposal by the Christchurch Netball Centre to relocate to Addington Raceway
- Council to include \$2 million in year 1 of the current LTCCP for the relocation of the outdoor netball courts from Hagley Park (as listed on page 78 of the full LTCCP).
- Council to include \$11 million in year 4 of the 10 year capital works plan for the 2006/16 LTCCP for the construction of a combined mid-size arena and multi-use indoor sports facility at Addington Raceway.

Netball is the largest participation sport for female residents in Christchurch City with over 7,000 participants and the sport contributes significantly to keeping city residents active and healthy (1 in 50 residents directly involved). The ability for netball to grow has been suppressed because of the lack of facilities of comparable standard to those found in other major cities in New Zealand. Netball in New Zealand is going indoors and Christchurch is lagging behind. Netball NZ-endorsed national events, such as the National Provincial Championships (NPC) and age group events, have not been hosted in Christchurch for ten years because of the lack of a suitable, accessible and affordable indoor venue. The indoor court layout can be converted to provide 4 fully compliant netball courts to host national netball tournament events. This scale of indoor facility maximises the efficiency for both community sport and national sporting events for netball, basketball and volleyball. It will offer a mid-week evening option enabling more residents to play when it fits best with their other commitments.

Hagley Park is not an option for locating an indoor facility because the Hagley Park Management Plan and Council policy precludes development of a large building on the Park. The large expanse of tar sealed courts is not in keeping with the Parks identity as the 'green heart of the City'. Netball also generates a major parking problem at Hagley Park. A relocation of netball would benefit other users of Hagley Park by reducing parking pressure as the existing courts area is unlikely to have anything like the number of people using the space as was the case with netball (particularly if it was returned to grass turf).

A clear preference of netball management, officials, players (and supporters) is playing at a single central venue. This is a critical competitive advantage over other sports and leisure activities. Five sites of sufficient size to accommodate a relocated outdoor courts complex, an indoor facility and associated parking were considered including Addington Raceway, Annex Road to the east of Curletts Road, Canterbury Park, Marshlands Road and land on the corner of Johns and Sawyers Arms Road. Addington Raceway is the preferred site of the Christchurch Netball Centre and has a willing partner in the NZ Metropolitan Trotting Club who will provide the land for the complex. Relocation of netball to the Addington Raceway has some key benefits:

- The site can provide sufficient land estimated at 4.2 to 4.5 hectares (excluding parking) for a combined indoor/ outdoor complex
- The site has extensive parking already in place (1,600 in total)
- It is a prominent site within the City
- The site is well positioned within the City being closest to the central City and in relation to projected growth to the west and southwest.
- The site is well located in relation to public transport, motorway and arterial road networks

The proposed indoor court facility will fill the gap in community sport provision and with the proposed seating capacity of approximately 2,500 will meet the needs of the Flames Netball and Rams Basketball regional sport franchises competing in national leagues as well as for some international fixtures. Its co-location with Westpac Stadium and operating in tandem could provide a competitive advantage for the Stadium and the City in hosting events requiring a large flat floor area as well as attracting new events with the associated social and economic benefits. The relatively close proximity of Addington to Pioneer Stadium means that the City could host large participation type events such as age group sports tournaments currently being attracted to other cities with superior indoor facility capacity.

The proposed development will deliver a multi-use indoor facility and outdoor court complex that is comparable with any other in the country. The complex will be heavily used by City residents as active participants and significantly contribute to achieving the community outcomes of the City, the strategic directions of Council and grow netball and partner sports in Christchurch and the Canterbury region.

2. Summary of Stage One Feasibility Findings

2.1. Current Facilities and Playing Environment

Christchurch Netball currently lease land on Hagley Park (39,000m² of court area and 450m² for the Pavilion). There are 40 outdoor courts. The outdoor courts are due for renewal to remove a health and safety risk from unevenness and surface wear that has increased the frequency of slipping by players especially in damp conditions. Council provides some public toilets beside the Pavilion for court users.

The Pavilion is a substantial three level building providing meeting and function spaces with kitchen facilities, food and beverage, first aid as well as toilets and change facilities as well as offices for Christchurch Netball staff. A small car park provides the off-road parking at the site.

Christchurch has a temperate climate but weather affects use of the outdoor courts and the level of enjoyment of players and their supporters.

Netball is the most popular sport for female New Zealanders and has the largest number of registered female participants of any sport in Christchurch City and Canterbury. Nationally netball has been steadily increasing the number of members registered with affiliated clubs over the past 18 years.

Christchurch Netball has just under 700 teams participating in weekly competition leagues which equates to at least 7,000 active participants or just under one in fifty residents actually playing the sport on a regular basis. School level netball is played on four days of the week in the winter with 213 secondary school and 228 primary and intermediate school teams participating in 2005.

2.2. Summary of Key Issues

Several key issues have been identified as part of the Stage One feasibility study research and these are summarised below.

1. There are **health and safety** issues regarding the surface of the courts and the small separation distances between the courts. Programmed renewal of court surfacing and flood lighting has been postponed awaiting the outcome of the potential relocation away from Hagley Park. Several courts are now in need of urgent remedial work. Current separation distances are less than a third of those being used in a new outdoor court complex in Auckland and to those prescribed for Netball NZ endorsed events.
2. There is a preference for an **integrated single venue** with indoor centre and outdoor courts co-located. The experience is seen by players as socially stimulating with most staying for longer than just for their own game – “it is a happening place” was a common theme. This was attributed to the large number of players and supporters on the single site. Players enthuse about the range of grades on one site and the ability of players to watch high level netball where they play themselves. Most players and parents were against splitting netball between two sites and want to have the indoor facility adjoining the outdoor courts.
3. **The large expanse of tar sealed courts is not in keeping with the identity of Hagley Park as the ‘green heart of the City’.** A relocation of netball away from Hagley Park would provide an opportunity to return most of the tar seal area to grass turf.

4. **Netball causes the major parking problem at Hagley Park.** A relocation of netball would benefit other users of Hagley Park by reducing parking pressure as the courts area is unlikely to have anything like the number of people using the space as was the case with netball (particularly if it was returned to grass turf).
5. **Development of an indoor facility at Hagley Park is not allowed under the Hagley Park Management Plan.** The intention of the Management Plan is to reduce the number and size of buildings on the Park.
6. There are several potential sites within Christchurch City large enough to accommodate a future-proofed development on a single site for a significant indoor/outdoor combined netball venue. **A significantly superior site has been identified at Addington Raceway.**¹
7. **Co-location with the Westpac Stadium** provides opportunities to enhance the competitiveness of the City to attract major events requiring a venue with a large flat floor area.
8. The increasing traffic congestion and the costs of transport (time and vehicle costs) are threatening the viability of centralised facilities in the City. Sites that are well located in relation to the transportation network (motorways, major arterial roads, cycleways and public transport) and with good access are essential but are also in high demand for a variety of commercial, civic and community uses. **The relative centrality of the Addington Raceway for a city-wide facility makes it a clearly superior site** both currently and in terms of the projected future shape of the City.
9. Christchurch Netball Centre has had to **manage demand** because of inadequate capacity at the Hagley Park courts. Christchurch Netball Centre has not been able to actively promote the sport to increase participation because of the capacity issue. It has also instituted byes in competition leagues and has placed limits on team registrations. These management practices have **suppressed demand**. This has contributed to a slight decline in team numbers since 1999 and is compromising the netball experience and level of service for players, coaches and supporters.
10. Peak demand for courts is over the winter months but increasingly netball is operating as a **year round sport** around the country. Players in Christchurch have been slower to adopt a year round approach to netball with attempts at twilight leagues having mixed success.
11. Elsewhere in New Zealand traditional **netball is increasingly being played indoors** when the opportunity has arisen, particularly in southern netball centres. The Dunedin Centre plays all of its netball in the Edgar Centre (21 courts) and the Invercargill Centre will follow suit in the near future with completion of the new velodrome arena (4 additional courts) supplementing Southland Stadium (7 courts). At these centres lower grade and junior netball is usually played on composite surface courts overlaid on concrete or asphalt. Premier netball is played on sprung wooden floor courts in most major centres in the country to minimise the risk of injury. Key benefits are uninterrupted competitions and increased levels of comfort because the weather factor is removed.
12. The market dominance of traditional netball has been eroded due to the emergence of an indoor variant of the game played in commercial centres. SPARC research indicates that of the adults in New Zealand, who played netball in any setting, 57% had played indoors and 47% had played outdoors during the 2000/01 year.² The option of being able to play in an indoor facility is likely to attract some of the indoor participation back to Christchurch Netball Centre competitions and **increase market share as well as grow participation in netball**. Since the development of the Edgar Centre in Dunedin the midweek leagues have grown to 78 teams with Saturday play maintaining numbers.
13. A priority for Christchurch Netball Centre is to secure **uninterrupted access** to an indoor facility for its regular weekly competitions and practice requirements. Many sports, including netball, using indoor event facilities have experienced difficulties in gaining uninterrupted access due to the conflicting need of venues to host block booking events. Consequently the proposed facility is intended primarily for use for netball and other club level indoor sport and regional franchise games.

¹ The other sites and the attributes of Addington are described in the Stage One report.

² Extracted from a report called **SPARC Facts** drawn from the *Sport and Physical Activity Survey* undertaken in 2000/01. The facts and figures show the profile of **767 adults** (18+ year olds) and **219 young people** (5-17 year olds) across New Zealand who have actively taken part in netball in any setting in the 12 months prior to the survey

14. **Christchurch is missing out on economic benefits of hosting netball events.** Currently the City misses out on most national and regional tournaments and participation festival events because of the absence of a suitable and affordable indoor venue that complies with Netball NZ requirements. Christchurch has not hosted a national provincial championship for over a decade. The development of an indoor facility with a sufficient number of indoor courts will enable the Christchurch Netball Centre and other partner sports to compete successfully to host the tournaments with large numbers of participants and to develop new events that will draw visitors to the City. These events usually occur outside the peak visitor season therefore using spare capacity in the visitor services sector of the City economy.
15. Christchurch Netball Centre is looking to partner with other organisations to both optimise use of the facilities and to help fund the development. **Partners** identified include Christchurch City Council, Canterbury Netball, the Flames franchise, Canterbury Basketball, the Canterbury Rams franchise, Canterbury Gymnastics and various other parties at Addington Raceway. Complementary use options are limited because most indoor sports want to use the facility at the same times as netball. The differences in timing of peak season between netball and volleyball provide some potential for sharing of an indoor facility.³
16. This study has been developed within the context of an **overarching strategic plan** for sport and leisure facilities (and their funding) by Christchurch City Council. Population projections indicate that growth of the City to the north and west is likely to continue and netball infrastructure development needs to provide for this in the long term.

2.3. Purpose and Objectives of the Indoor and Outdoor Courts Facility

The primary purpose is to provide sufficient indoor and outdoor courts that will increase participation in a regular sports activity (primarily netball) by Christchurch City residents. An enlarged facility could also meet the needs of regional indoor sport franchises such as the Flames and the Rams.

The objectives of the new facility are to:

- Provide for regular and consistent access for community sports participation as the priority use of indoor and outdoor courts
- Complement the event venue purpose of the Westpac Stadium
- Provide an indoor environment that meets the foreseeable performance requirements and is attractive, safe and comfortable for participants and their supporters
- Provide affordable access to the facility for users over the life of the facility by minimising operational costs through quality design and construction
- Manage the facility in a sustainable manner to ensure sufficient income is generated to meet the costs of operation and maintenance
- Provide spectator facilities to meet the needs of inter-club sport and regional franchise and representative games

2.4. Hierarchy of Indoor Facilities in the City

The hierarchy approach to facility provision will enable the City to offer suitable venues for each level of sport activity. The proposed indoor facility will fill the gap in community sport provision and the needs of regional franchises competing in national leagues. Detailed information on the functional specification is included in the Stage one report. The capital cost estimates provided for planning purposes are indicative only.

³ These options are outlined in the Stage One report.

2.4.1. Community Sport Venue

Feedback from focus groups and observation of other venues indicates that a community sport venue needs a sufficient number of courts to create an 'energised atmosphere' that is attractive from both a playing and social perspective. The mass of people involved in netball at the Hagley Park courts on a Saturday and practising under lights midweek in the evenings provides this environment. The size of the indoor floor area proposed will provide sufficient critical mass to achieve a similar atmosphere.

Outdoor Courts

A **32,700 m²** land area is needed to accommodate 40 courts with 6m separations and 9m every second court (as used in the new Auckland complex). Flood lighting initially for 10 courts for practices and twilight leagues.

An indicative capital cost has been estimated at \$2.0 million (\$50,000 per court).⁴

Community Indoor Sport Facility

A **3,800 m²** floor area (39.1 m wide by 98.0 m long) has been proposed as this floor size will enable the optimum utilisation and maximum flexibility including club level, regional and national volleyball, netball and basketball tournament events. This will accommodate:

- NETBALL: 5 club courts or 4 Netball NZ fully compliant courts
- BASKETBALL: 5 courts of national standard
- VOLLEYBALL: 12 club courts or 8 courts of national standard

The land area required to accommodate the indoor facility is estimated at between 8,000 and 10,000m² excluding parking. Provision has been made to accommodate 500 spectators in banks of moveable retractable seating units. The 5 community court layout has the advantage that it can be converted to provide 4 fully compliant netball courts for national events. This maximises the efficiency for both community sport and national netball events. A floor area of this size also ensures additional flexibility as it is able to accommodate volleyball in an efficient manner for both community level and national level events.

The indicative capital cost of the facility is \$9 million.⁵

⁴ The proposed 40 court complex is estimated at \$2.0 million based on the following assumptions:

- Minimal cut and fill, preparation and drainage will be required
- Asphalt (25mm thickness) is used for all courts
- Includes costs of poles and line markings
- The layout of courts is relatively efficient in terms of fencing the area with a 3m high chain link fence.
- Cost per court is estimated at \$50,000
- The pavilion functions would be provided within the proposed new indoor facility and are not part of the costs of providing the outdoor courts.

⁵ A ball park cost of the indoor facility is available from data on the planned Saxton Stadium in Nelson. The Stadium has the similar size area of sports floor (sprung floor of 4,000m²) as proposed in the Christchurch indoor facility specification. The cost data supplied by Arrow International (the project manager) is based on concept drawings developed recently and work by a quantity surveyor to assess cost. There will be some differences in the scale of ancillary facilities but it does provide a useful guide to the cost of such a facility.

The indicative capital cost of the Nelson facility is \$8.1 million but does not include:

- The retractable seating units for 500 seats (additional \$300,000)
- Acoustic treatment for roof (additional \$600,000)

2.4.2. Regional and National Venue

Netball NZ endorsed national events, such as the National Provincial Championships (NPC) and age group events, have not been hosted in Christchurch for ten years because of the lack of a suitable and affordable venue. Netball NZ specifies facilities used for the NPC (and for other age group national tournaments) that require 3 compliant courts with a warm up area of the same surface as the courts. The size of floor area proposed will accommodate 4 fully compliant national netball courts through use of temporary tape markings for these events.

The need for a suitable home arena for the franchises of Canterbury Netball (the Flames) and Canterbury Basketball (the Rams) in the City was identified (please refer to page 75 of the full LTCCP). A mid-size arena between the Westpac Stadium and smaller venues in the City is needed that has a seating capacity for approximately 2,500 spectators around a feature court that complies with national standards. The Westpac Stadium is seen as too big for the franchise games with the crowd filling a small minority of seats. The Stadium is seen as expensive and uneconomic to use for franchise games. Availability of the Stadium is problematic because of the lateness in the setting of game dates by the respective sports in comparison to other bookings.

The mid-size spectator arena function has been incorporated into the indoor netball facility but is beyond the immediate needs of the Christchurch Netball Centre. However, the Centre recognises the need for netball to promote the sport through the Flames franchise and having an appropriate arena to host these games is important for the growth of the sport. There are significant benefits in co-locating the new facility alongside the Westpac Stadium as discussed in the Stage One report. This would also apply to a mid-size spectator venue.

A larger building would be required if a mid-sized spectator venue were to be developed at one end of the new facility at an additional capital cost of \$3.5 million (indicative). An additional 2,000 retractable seats to bring capacity up to 2,500 would be needed and would be rolled out around a centre court.⁶

The facility would need the addition or enlargement of the following:

- The clear span would likely need to increase in dimensions to accommodate additional seating stacks for the extra 2,000 seats
- Enlarged foyer,
- Additional food and beverage and toilet facilities to serve the much larger number of people in the venue at any one time
- Facilities for television, radio and print media that would be needed for these major games and events.
- Parking capacity

A larger building would be required if a mid-sized spectator venue were to be developed at one end of the new facility at an estimated additional capital cost of \$3.5 million (indicative only).⁷

2.4.3. International Venue

The Westpac Stadium is able to host international netball fixtures because of the 7,200 seating capacity available in the arena around the feature court.

⁶ The Trusts Stadium in Waitakere City uses a mobile stack of retractable seating that is moved across 3 courts to provide the seating around a feature court. This system could be used to achieve the required seating around the feature court. It is likely that three community courts would be occupied by the feature court and rolled out seating when in feature court configuration.

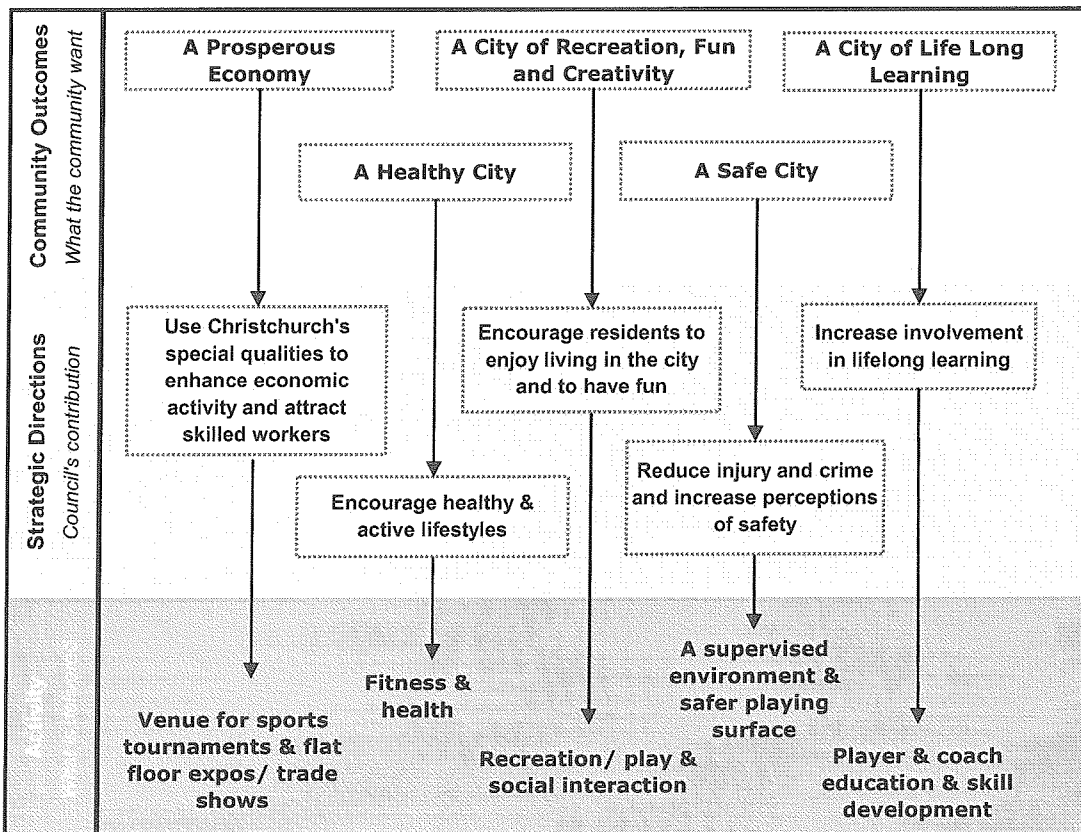
⁷ Based on some preliminary cost estimates for a mid-size arena at an expanded Cowles Stadium.

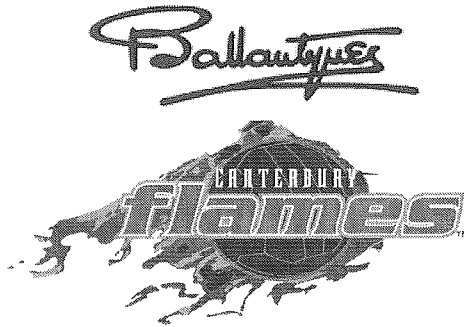
2.5. Contribution to Community Outcomes

The proposed facility will contribute directly to the well-being of over 7,000 residents (1 in 50 residents) and their families who currently play netball as well as attract more to play. As such, the facility will contribute significantly to the community outcomes that have been developed from extensive community consultation led by Christchurch City Council (refer to chart below). The facility also will deliver major benefits in relation to the role Council has determined that it will play in contributing towards these outcomes (specified as Strategic Directions). Benefits include:

- The creation of a new large flat floor venue would provide significant economic benefits to the City, particularly if the new facility is co-located with the Westpac Stadium. There is demand for a larger floor area that is currently supplied for four events per annum using large marquees to create 4,000m² of covered area at high cost. The new indoor facility will improve the competitiveness of Westpac Stadium as a venue.
- Increased participation in a regular and enjoyable physical activity is anticipated. A sustained increase in participation has occurred in Dunedin as a result of taking netball indoors. The new facility will provide a more attractive and enjoyable environment for players and supporters. An indoor facility will attract former players to return because of the greater choices of when they can play (week nights) that an indoor facility will offer. The indoor floor is easier on the body and will retain more players participating for longer in the sport.
- Significant health and safety gains from an indoor facility as well as from new outdoor courts providing a safer playing surface with greater separations between courts (the current courts are closely packed and have uneven surfaces and are due for renewal)
- The indoor facility will provide a much improved environment for players and coaches to receive instruction and undertake training.

The chart below shows the linkages and benefits derived from the new indoor facility and the replacement of the outdoor courts in relation to the Community Outcomes of the City and Strategic Directions of Council.





27 April, 2006

To whom it may concern

Team Canterbury Netball Limited the owner of the Canterbury Flames netball franchise strongly support the Christchurch Netball Centre in its endeavours to progress the development of a facility of the nature that is currently proposed in the Christchurch Netball Centre Inc Feasibility Study.

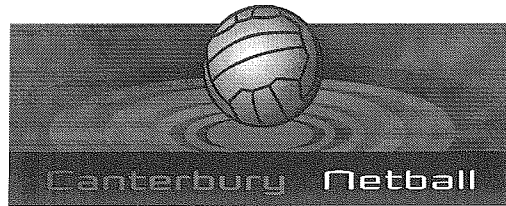
Currently, the Canterbury Flames play in the Westpac Centre. However, the availability of this venue is decreasing over time and in 2006, the Flames found it extremely difficult to schedule its three games. With the Westpac Centre usage increasing and by implication availability decreasing, it is likely that in 2007 and beyond that the Flames will have to play some or all of its games in other venues. Because Christchurch does not have another venue with the capacity to host Flames games, this will mean taking the Flames to venues in other cities such as Blenheim and Nelson. This likelihood will have many negative implications for the franchise, the netball community and city of Christchurch in general and whilst the franchise has a commitment to playing in Christchurch the lack of suitable venues will force the team to play its games away from the city in the future.

The Board of Team Canterbury Netball Limited would support the development of a facility that could provide a mid-sized venue, as this would enable it to continue to play in Christchurch in the longer term and retain this city as its base.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Watkins".

Jason Watkins
General Manager
Canterbury Netball/Canterbury Flames



27 April, 2006

To whom it may concern

Canterbury Netball as a Regional Entity within the New Zealand Netball structure, strongly support the Christchurch Netball Centre in its endeavours to progress the development of a facility of the nature that is currently proposed in the Christchurch Netball Centre Inc Feasibility Study.

Currently, the region of Canterbury and the city of Christchurch are un-able to host all but the smallest of National netball events due to the low number of courts that exist at indoor facilities in Christchurch. Consequently, Christchurch is not in a position to host a National event for the Senior Representative Teams (Scottwood Trust National Championships) or the National Underage Championships indoors. Not only does this have negative implications on the development and participation of netball in Christchurch/Canterbury, but Christchurch City is also not able to reap the economic benefits that are generated when large national events are hosted.

Many centres around New Zealand (some considerable smaller than Christchurch) have built indoor facilities similar to those proposed by the Christchurch Netball Centre and it is feared by Canterbury Netball that unless an appropriate facility is built in the near future, that Christchurch will be resigned to a second tier hosting city, where only minor netball events can be held. For a city and region that has a rich and successful netball and sporting tradition and history this is a position that is regretful and should be avoided for the betterment of netball and the city.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jason Watkins".

Jason Watkins
General Manager
Canterbury Netball/Canterbury Flames