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The purpose of this report is to update Councillors on the proposed 1999/2000 Christmas decorations for the Christchurch City Centre and to inform Councillors of the system for stocktaking, storing and maintaining Christmas decorations.

BACKGROUND

In 1995 a new strategy for Christmas decorations was developed. This strategy moved away from ‘traditional’ winter theme decorations, purchased from the UK, to a more New Zealand summer theme. The traditional decorations did not stand up well to the summer conditions in Canterbury of high winds and strong UV light. The new decorations developed under the 1995 strategy were required to look good in the daytime, which retailers and the public considered to be more important issues at the time, as opposed to lit decorations that only looked good after about 10pm.

The 1995 Christmas decorations were made in Christchurch by a local firm and additional stock was added in 1997.

A schedule listing the present stock of Christmas decorations is attached. All Christmas decorations are stored within the Council store at Shuttle Drive. Larger items are stored outside due to size and the cost associated with storage. They were built to withstand the elements and have a very low annual maintenance requirement. All the smaller decorations are disassembled and stored indoors in trunks. All decorations are maintained annually, in the lead up to assembly for the new Christmas period.

All the Christmas decorations are in use yearly except:

- the large candle display - we have been unable to find a site where it is safe from vandals
- the Cathedral spire lights - the windy conditions and the restrictions on attachment rigging cause damage to the bud lights making it impractical to use the spire lights. Other options for the lighting systems have been considered.

Two years ago a decision was taken to auction the traditional decorations purchased from the United Kingdom. The return was minimal.

ADDITIONAL DECORATIONS PLANNED FOR THIS YEAR

Over Christmas 1995 and 1996 the new decorations gained media exposure. In 1997 and 1998 the public enjoyed the lighting provided in Hornby and Riccarton and expressed enthusiasm to see lighting in the City Centre again.

Within the 1999/2000 Annual Plan the Council has committed a budget of \$120,000 to add to the present stock of decorations. During the budget round, Strategy and Resources Committee members requested that consideration be given to decorations that could also be used at other festive times of the year.

Taking into account the strategy for Christmas decorations, the wishes of the public and the recommendations from the Strategy and Resources Committee, the Christmas working party (made up of staff from Community Relations, EPPU, Parks and Streets) is looking into the following ideas for Christmas this year.

1. **Existing Decorations**

The existing decorations will be used again this year. The Working Party is looking into ways of incorporating lighting into these displays to enhance them and their profile within the City Centre.

2. **Christmas Walk**

A Christmas walk down the Avon River between the Bridge of Remembrance and the Parkroyal will be identified by special tree lighting. At present the Christmas working party is looking into several different possibilities for this area and awaiting electrical advice to best utilise existing systems.

Other areas of the City Centre that are being considered for new decorations are Colombo Street, New Regent Street and Cathedral Square.

3. **Santa, His Grotto, Elves, Photos, Fun and Games**

Once again this very popular event will be in various locations around the City Mall from 10 December until Christmas, 10am to 2pm. At the grotto there will be:

- A photographer, who will take photos with Santa.
- Santa, who will be running competitions for the children with sponsored prizes
- Santa's elves
- Lollies, which will be given out
- Helium filled Balloons
- Christmas music

4. **Christmas Retail Opening Hours**

City Centre Marketing has been working with retailers to gain consistent opening hours for City Centre leading up to Christmas. City Centre retailers have agreed the following hours:

Friday 10 December	9am - 9pm
Saturday 11 & Sunday 12 December	10am - 5pm
Monday 13 to Thursday 16 December	9am - 7pm
Friday 17 December	9am - 9pm
Saturday 18 & Sunday 19 December	10am - 5pm
Monday 20 & Tuesday 21 December	9am - 7pm
Wednesday 22 & Thursday 23 December	9am - 9pm
Friday 24 December	9am - 7pm

These hours will be promoted within the City Centre Marketing Christmas budget.

5. Community Organisations

Each year some community organisations provide for the city additional Christmas Decorations and Christmas activity. This year it is expected these will include

- Christmas tree in Cathedral Square organised by the City Mission
- YMCA Carols by Candlelight
- New Zealand CCS Christmas Tree Festival
- Christmas at the Arts Centre
- Christchurch City Choir “A Family Christmas”

Chairman’s

Recommendation: That the information be received.