

13. MULTI CULTURAL FESTIVAL

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Corporate Plan Output: Festivals and Events	

The purpose of this report is to seek approval to use existing funds for the creation of a festival which showcases cultural diversity within Christchurch.

INTRODUCTION

Over the last several years the Council has funded the Festival of Japan as well as various other cultural projects. The 1999/2000 festival and events budget presently contains a line item of \$30,000 for the Festival of Japan.

The previous Council requested officers to consider ways of using the funding allocated towards the Festival of Japan in a multi-cultural way. The funding for the festival allocated in 1997/98 was transferred to the 1998/99 year, to fund a festival in August 1999.

Whilst momentum has been lost due to the 'rolling over' of the Festival of Japan, there is a very strong interest from all major ethnic groups to become involved. The Council has over the years commissioned two feasibility studies, which although several years old, advocate the need for such a festival. Whilst the concept has not yet come to fruition, it would be safe to conclude there is a need to cultivate participation and promote diversity to provide a platform for education and understanding through this event.

THE PROJECT

The primary use of Council funding would be to engage the services of a festival organiser to co-ordinate and facilitate the involvement of cultural groups.

The festival would be held during August 2000, celebrating local community artists with minimal international visual art components due to the overall budget. Initially, the festival would be small. However, it could incorporate the Primary Schools Multicultural project, which would add a supporting demographic segment.

At the present time the \$30,000 in the 1999/2000 budget would go towards establishing the festival and conduct the necessary research studies to ensure community involvement. An additional \$20,000 is being sought for this festival in the 2000/01 budget round. The funding allocated for this line item, will determine the size and diversity we can offer the community.

STRUCTURE

Two options have been considered for the implementation structure. The first is to hold an annual event, which would start as a 4/5-day festival and grow the programme and festival numbers from there. Alternatively, cultural elements could be injected into an array of existing festivals, which occur throughout the year.

Currently the features and benefits of each structure are being explored, to establish the best long-term direction. The final funding contribution from the Council will also need to be taken into consideration.

It is envisaged that this festival will remain the intellectual property of the Council, and will be directed by council officers together with a board of cultural advisers to focus on optimising the Council's strategic goals.

BENEFITS

The 'Multi-Cultural Festival' will be an observance of the city's unique cultural spirit and the cultural diversity. There are significant Pakeha/European (258,381), Maori (21,462), Pacific Island (5,979), and Asian (12, 597) populations in Christchurch¹. Each of these populations is distinct and varied within the broad "ethnic categories" they are defined as and should be celebrated. This celebration would offer a great deal to our substance and 'feel' as a city.

The project will enable the different cultural groups opportunities to partake in and/or observe the arts and cultural activities that are at the source of their cultural identities.

It will fulfill goals that are contained in the Arts and Culture Policy:

- An active, creative performing and visual arts sector contributing to the city as a centre of excellence and innovation.
- A city possessing artistic and cultural activities attractive to residents, visitors and business.
- An artistic and cultural identity celebrating the city's heritage.

It will also contribute to several elements of the Council's community cohesion and social well-being strategic objectives of:

- Celebrating, protecting and increasing understanding of cultural diversity by supporting a range of arts, festivals and events and facilitating the cultural expression of ethnic and cultural groups.
- Maximising opportunities for residents to participate in learning and leisure activities by supporting and provided visual and performing arts.
- Strengthening communities by facilitating collaboration between public, private and community agencies

¹ From 1996 Census of Population and Dwellings Ethnic Group – Resident Population in Christchurch City

The project will facilitate the development of greater cultural understanding and appreciation in real terms and provide a catalyst for increased social cohesion whilst promoting recognition in Christchurch that 'difference' can be great and adds value to the quality of our lives.

Recommendation: That the Parks and Recreation Committee recommend to the Strategy and Resources Committee that approval be given for the Festival of Japan line item to be utilised as Multi Cultural Festival and all parties duly notified.

Deputy Chairman's

Recommendation: That the above recommendation be adopted.