

### 3. THE BIG SK8 OUT

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The purpose of this report is to inform members of a recent series of innovative skateboarding workshops delivered by the Recreation and Arts Team over summer.

#### **Introduction**

‘The BIG SK8 Out’ was a series of skating workshops held over a period of 7 days in January. The aim of these workshops was to provide introductory level skaters, ages 10 – 14 years, with the skills and expertise to confidently skate Christchurch skate parks safely. Specific workshops were also held for female skaters. The workshops were very successful and created a lot of interest and energy amongst Christchurch skaters.

#### **Programme Content**

‘The BIG SK8 Out’ was based on a successful pilot workshop held in St Albans during September 1999. The ‘The BIG SK8 Out’ consisted of a series of skating workshops. Each workshop met at a local skate park and spent the day touring various skate parks. The participants learnt how to skate each park, and also covered issues such as etiquette, “slam prevention” and maintenance of skateboards. A crew of experienced skaters and skate tutors instructed the workshops.

The original programme was made up of 3 components:

- ‘Sally Can Skate’ 2 one-day workshops for women skaters
- ‘Stale Fish’ 5 one-day introductory workshops
- ‘Bladerunners’, 2 one-day introductory workshops for In Line skaters (‘Bladerunners’ was later cancelled due to low registrations)

Complimenting this, the Waimakariri District Council was running a 5-day workshop for female skaters called ‘Rolling with the Sisters’ which was most successful. All programmes were promoted together giving a co-ordinated approach to skate workshops in the Christchurch/Canterbury area.

#### **Benefits**

The BIG SK8 Out gave participants many new skills. There are a myriad of moves, jumps and combinations that make up the abstract fabric of skating. Not only were the participants able to learn how to execute these moves, they were also able to see them executed by the experienced tutors. The tour of various skate parks gave the young skaters an appreciation of the different skate parks and the styles to skate these.

Not to be underestimated is the unwritten etiquette that exists at local skate parks. Young skaters who take up this sport are often naïve to this. The BIG SK8 Out created an appropriate forum to educate the participants on what is and is not appropriate behaviour at a skate park. Safety issues were also covered - ‘Slam Prevention’ showed skaters how to prevent themselves from falling off their boards, and if they do fall off, how to land safely.

A major benefit was the networking that has resulted from these workshops, in particular amongst female skaters. This is important in such an individual sport and in a sport which is dominated by male participants. A real safety issue for female skaters is having someone to skate with. There is now an informal group of skaters meeting fortnightly at Cheapskates to share tricks, skills, ideas and provide moral support to each other.

Council officers were also able to make some key contacts within the Christchurch skating fraternity. This networking is proving to be invaluable in the development of skating facilities and the development of skating as a sport in the city.

### **Funding/Sponsorship**

Many of Christchurch's leading skate businesses supported The Big SK8 Out, generously, providing numerous prizes for participants, including many skate platforms and safety gear. The funding for this programme was a combination of Board funding and Christchurch City Council Leisure operational funding.

The Spreydon-Heathcote Community Board contributed \$950 from its Youth Recreation fund towards the costs of this programme. One of the 5 "stale fish" workshops was based from Waltham Bowl.

### **Statistics and Feedback**

Enrollments were taken from around the city from keen skaters and catered for over 100 participants. Evaluations received have been phenomenal, congratulating Council on The BIG SK8 Out initiative. Feedback has been ecstatic, with the main criticism they were only over one week! Responses received from female skaters strongly indicate a need to cater for a higher age grouping, and the need for multi-day workshops! Numerous comments from participants such as "This was such a wicked day, please please please do more", and "I found it fun exciting and educational and would definitely do it again..." indicate the enormous support amongst the skate fraternity. Feedback from parents such as "Excellent idea! The sport needs intelligent and safety conscious role models. The tutors were great! Thank you", demonstrate the huge success of these workshops.

### **Future Direction**

#### *Short Term*

'The BIG SK8 Out' workshops were a huge success. There is a need to cater for new skaters, and impart them with the necessary skills to skate safely and confidently at local skate parks. This also assists with keeping skaters off roads and footpaths and in locations designed for their sport. Planning is in place to continue a similar series of workshops during the April school holidays.

### *Medium Term*

There was a great amount of energy generated amongst skaters in general as a result of these workshops. The key is to 'ride the crest of the wave' and work with these skaters and tutors to establish a skating club in Christchurch. Council officers are presently working with Christchurch skaters on this project.

### *Long Term*

Once a stable skate club is established in Christchurch it is envisaged that such a club would take over the role of running skate workshops such as the ones presently being run by the Council. In the meantime it is important the Council works with key skaters to keep the momentum going, and encourage networking, by resourcing skate workshops and assisting with development of skate competitions.

**Recommendation:** That the information be received.