

### 3. IN THE PARK 2000 – THE CHRISTCHURCH MILLENNIUM CELEBRATION

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Special Report: In the Park 2000 – The Christchurch Millennium Celebration	

The purpose of this report is to provide a post-event brief of “*In the Park 2000*” – the Christchurch Millennium Celebration, which was co-ordinated by the Leisure Unit’s Events Team.

#### OVERVIEW

*In the Park 2000* was logistically the largest event ever held in the South Island and included the biggest fireworks display ever seen this side of the Cook Strait. The six-hour show was designed for a wide generational audience and featured over 130 performers, of which 90% were from the Canterbury region.

Every precaution was taken and contingencies put in place to cover potential Y2K-related problems. These included full generator backup, secondary communications equipment and emergency lighting operations that covered the venue and surrounding streets through to the designated car parking area. No Y2K-related problems occurred.

Owing to high demand on resources and supplies nationally, many Christchurch companies were provided the opportunity to design and manufacture equipment to specially cater for the event. For example: as a result of America’s Cup and planned Millennium Celebrations in the North Island, no superscreens were available in Christchurch. As an alternative, local companies Shipley’s Audio Visual and McKenzie Design worked together to create a 60 foot-long, light-proof tunnel to house rear projection units for night screens.

Additionally, McKenzie Design, in conjunction with the Events Team, designed and built the outstanding stage set for *In the Park 2000*. The set incorporated all the natural highlights of the region of Canterbury and featured two giant illuminated five-metre long, hand-carved, silver ferns. The Millennium Office in Wellington commended the stage design and set of *In the Park 2000* as being the “most outstanding of all Millennium Celebrations in New Zealand”. Locally designed and built, the set was created at a fraction of the cost of other sets in place around the country.

Owing to the sheer nature of *In the Park 2000*, it is impossible to give accurate figures on attendance numbers as groups of people came and went during the evening. However, it is feasible that approximately 130,000 witnessed one or more aspects of the show. At the peak of the evening (from 10.30pm to 12.30am) the Police estimated the crowd size at 90,000.

The provision of a free public bus service for this event was hugely dependent on the financial support received from the Council’s City Streets Unit and the Canterbury Regional Council. A total of 20 buses travelled to and from nine major malls and areas throughout the city and the service was well utilised. Traffic management plans were extremely effective and the reduction in expected amount of traffic and car park use contributed to the systematic arrival and departure of the public.

Crowd behaviour on the night was orderly, and the atmosphere, amicable. In the greater Hagley area no major incidents were reported and no arrests made. The Leisure Unit worked closely with the Police and security to design security plans that would be effective and manageable. After much consideration, it was decided that the entertainment area of Hagley Park would be divided into two areas, one where the consumption of alcohol was permitted and one where it was not. The alcohol ban extended to the golf course, Botanic Gardens and the car park. As a result of crowd demand during the event the alcohol-permitted area was increased in line with contingency plans.

Canterbury Youth Workers' Collective were contracted to provide youth workers for the event, who then followed the younger audience into the Central City after the show to assist with the management of youth there also. No major incidents or problems were reported, likewise with emergency services and first aid.

*In the Park 2000* featured on the BBC Millennium Broadcast no fewer than five times on the night and contributed greatly to the overall highlights package that was syndicated to over 51 countries world-wide. National media coverage was extremely high, with both TVNZ and TV3 having on-site cameras and reporters for the entire length of the show.

Public feedback has been extremely positive with accolades coming in from as far away as Holland, the United Kingdom and New York, where the Midnight Fireworks and Dave Dobbyn on the *In the Park 2000* stage featured a number of times on the giant screen in Times Square.

*In the Park 2000* provided a wonderful platform for the showcasing of local talent (in particular, emerging local talent) and local suppliers were utilised wherever possible, with over 70% of the event's budget going back into the local community.

*In the Park 2000* was produced with a total budget of \$638,644.49. This included \$520,000 funding from Christchurch City Council, \$100,000 from the Lottery Grants Board and an additional \$18,644.49 in miscellaneous income. An additional \$22,055 was obtained in sponsorship of product and services.

#### **ENTERTAINMENT SUMMARY**

At 7.00pm *In the Park 2000* commenced with the Maori welcome 'Manakitanga' to an audience of approximately 10,000. Local Iwi joined forces to present a dramatic mix of contemporary and traditional song and dance, designed especially for the event. The audience numbers steadily grew with the segments that followed:

The lively pirate-themed Children's Show featured Jason Gunn and Christchurch soloists, young entertainers and the Canterbury Opera Children's Chorus.

Pop Op 2000 featured local opera stars Maria Batchelor and Eleanor Sim, accompanied by Dave McMeeking, Derin Greenslade and Suzanne Lynch.

At 8.15pm the Musical Theatre Showcase burst onto the stage, highlighting the incredible talent of youth from the Christchurch Operatic Society. The stunning costumes and vibrant colour, along with the high energy of the dance routines in this segment, resulted in it being one of the highlights of the event.

The Retro Show covered an hour of back-to-back hits from the sixties and featured Christchurch born Ray Columbus along with Suzanne Lynch, Max Merritt and Shane Hales. At the end of this show there was a cry from the audience for an encore however, this was not possible due to the tight performing schedule.

ZED, one of the country's hottest new bands was next onto the stage. A talented group of young Christchurch based performers, ZED have a following reminiscent of days past that brought a heavy surge of audience into the main area front of stage. At that point, audience numbers swelled to approximately 90,000.

The family fireworks show followed, providing an outstandingly choreographed illustration of 'The Sorcerer's Apprentice' made famous by the Walt Disney movie 'Fantasia'. However, it provided just a taste of the fireworks to come!

Dave Dobbyn, one of New Zealand's favourite 'musical sons' and a major star in the National music and recording industry, was a popular choice as the headline act. Dave and his band entertained the crowd right up until midnight when a twenty-minute long fireworks spectacular kicked off.

More than 10,000 individual fireworks effects were ignited, including the biggest star shell ever fired in Hagley Park. After the fireworks Dave Dobbyn continued to entertain until the close of the show at 1.00am.

**Chairman's**

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