

## 5. FUNDING OF MULTI-CULTURAL FESTIVAL AND FESTIVAL OF JAPAN

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The purpose of this report is to present the recommendations of the Events Working Party on the future funding for multi-cultural festivals and the Festival of Japan.

### BACKGROUND

It will be recalled that at its budget meeting on 10 February last the Committee considered a staff report seeking approval to reallocate the funding provided in 1999/2000 for the Festival of Japan to the multi-cultural festival.

The Committee appointed a working party comprising Councillor Gail Sheriff (Chairman), Councillors Carole Anderton, Paddy Austin and Erin Baker to investigate the possibility of holding a multi-cultural festival, incorporating the primary schools multi-cultural festival.

### WORKING PARTY MEETINGS

Since its appointment the working party has met on two occasions. At its first meeting on 4 April 2000 the working party, after considering background information on the Festival of Japan and multi-cultural festivals, requested staff to hold discussions with the Festival of Japan organisers regarding their future intentions for this festival and to report back.

With regard to the multi-cultural festival the working party felt that rather than establishing a new festival a better approach might be to build on the activities already taking place in local communities and to strengthen the primary schools cultural festival. The working party was advised that lack of skills in the event co-ordinating and marketing areas were hampering the growth of most local festivals and this was the area into which Council assistance would best be directed. Staff were requested to identify and quantify the needs of local cultural festival organisers, and report back to the working party; the report to include a list of existing cultural festivals.

The Leisure Manager reported as follows to the second meeting of the Committee on 11 May 2000:

### BUDGETARY POSITION

In the 1999/2000 financial year \$30,000 was budgeted for the Festival of Japan. Of this sum \$7,500 has currently been expended as the final payment for the 1999 Festival of Japan. There is \$22,500 currently unexpended and not required for the Festival of Japan in this financial year.

It should be noted that the Leisure Unit is currently projected to have a budget deficit of around \$670,000 by the end of the 1999/2000 financial year.

In the 2000/01 Draft Annual Plan there is \$30,000 budgeted for a Multi-Cultural Festival. There is no provision in the 2000/01 Draft Annual Plan for the Festival of Japan.

In the 2000/01 Draft Annual Plan there is also a line item within the core funded events area for \$30,000 for Garden City Marketing. At this stage this budget is not committed to a specific festival or event. However, the intent was that it would be utilised in a manner that complemented and added value to the city's image as the garden city.

#### **FESTIVAL OF JAPAN**

Further investigations have been made by officers concerning the Festival of Japan and its future plans. A meeting took place with Don Crabb, Chairman of the Festival of Japan Organising Committee with the following results:

- **Future Plans.** The organising committee is planning to run the next Festival of Japan in 2002. The perception being that Christchurch does not have the population base to successfully stage the festival every year. Consequently there is no need to make provision in the 2000/01 Annual Plan for the Festival of Japan. The timing of the festival during the year is heavily dependent on getting low air fares and is unlikely to change significantly.
- **Aims.** The Vision of the Festival of Japan is *'to foster and promote an international understanding of the Japanese culture for the people of Christchurch and surrounding districts. Culture will be defined in the widest sense – for example: history, language, arts, sports, crafts, leisure activities, lifestyle and beliefs'*. The Festival of Japan is very much about trying to make Christchurch citizens familiar with the Japanese culture. There are no significant business linkages as part of the festival except for overseas visitors coming to Christchurch to participate in the festival.
- **Visitors.** The Japanese that travel to Christchurch for the festival are almost exclusively the performers and their entourage. In the 1999 Festival this totalled around 300 people.
- **Council Funding.** The continuation of the Council's funding was seen as very desirable and enables the festival organisers to offer events free or relatively cheaply so that they are accessible to as many people as possible.
- **Involvement of the Local Japanese Community.** There is a representative of the Japanese Society of Canterbury and the New Zealand Japan Society of Canterbury on the Festival of Japan organising committee. There was perceived to be some involvement of the local Japanese community in aspects of the festival but not to as large an extent as the organising committee would like. The organisers were unclear of the reasons for the limited involvement of the local Japanese community.
- **Possible Incorporation into a Multi-Cultural Festival.** Reservations were expressed about the level of exposure the Japanese culture would get under a multi-cultural format. The potential for difficulties with the Japanese backers of the Festival were also alluded to. The ability to bring Japanese performers to Christchurch is closely related to the availability of low air fares which occur at a particular time of year. Consequently the ability to shift the Festival of Japan within the year to incorporate the needs of other ethnic groups is limited.

A representative of the Japanese Society of Canterbury was also contacted. The Japanese Society of Canterbury has a representative on the Festival of Japan organising committee. However, the level of involvement was quite limited. A number of people in the society were involved through schools, providing billeting etc. The society was receptive of the idea of developing some form of multi-cultural festival.

#### **MEANS TO DEVELOP A MULTI-CULTURAL FESTIVAL**

The working party considered a report by the Arts Adviser – Maori and Cultural that examined in detail three existing cultural festivals in Christchurch along with the benefits of the Council supporting multi-cultural festivals.

Both the Primary Schools Cultural Festival and the Waitaha Cultural Festival have strong volunteer bases but both suffer from a lack of professional involvement and someone who has time dedicated to their organisation. It is believed that there is potential for both of these to develop significantly with the knowledge and experience of a suitable event organiser. Over a period of three years such support could be used to upskill volunteers and put the processes in place to enable the festivals to be organised largely by volunteers again in the future but at a different level of development.

Providing support for a number of cultural festivals in the city is not the same thing as organising a multi-cultural festival or event. This sort of approach can be summarised as the Council promoting multi-culturalism by supporting a number of cultural festivals rather than through supporting a multi-cultural festival per se. With the existence of a number of existing cultural festivals it is considered that this sort of approach is more likely to achieve the Council's outcomes than by trying to develop a multi-cultural event.

It is acknowledged that there are a number of festivals taking place in Christchurch currently without any involvement from the Council. Further work is required to identify these other festivals, their potential development and any potential role for the Council in assisting them. This research is not considered to be achievable for the Arts Adviser – Maori and Cultural due to other time commitments and would need to be separately funded. There are existing budgets within the Events Marketing and Research area that could fund some of this research in the 2000/01 year.

A few imperatives concerning any support from the Council for cultural or multi-cultural festivals can be identified:

- If the Council is to become involved with supporting cultural or multi-cultural festivals it needs to do so on a long-term basis. There is no point becoming involved on a short-term basis. Once involved it will be difficult to withdraw the assistance without causing significant damage to the relationship with the community or communities involved. However, contractual agreements must be observed.
- The Council should look to build on the cultural or multi-cultural events that already take place in the city rather than try to create something completely new and risk duplication/competition.

## **OPTIONS**

The Council could choose to make short-term decisions only about the funding for 1999/2000 and 2000/01 in the knowledge that funding is not required for the Festival of Japan until 2001/02 at the earliest. This would leave the decision about whether funding should continue to be directed to the cultural/multi-cultural festivals or revert to the Festival of Japan until a later Annual Plan process, either 2001/02 or 2002/03.

However, in keeping with the belief that the Council should not provide short-term support for cultural/multi-cultural festivals it is recommended that the decisions on future funding for the Festival of Japan be taken now. Taking and signalling the decision as early as possible also allows the Festival of Japan Organising Committee to consider its position with plenty of time before the next festival.

### **Option 1**

1999/2000 Fund the Primary Schools Cultural Festival \$11,000.  
Fund the Waitaha Cultural Festival \$11,000 towards the cost of an event coordinator.

2000/01 Fund the Primary Schools Cultural Festival \$15,000 towards the cost of an event coordinator as year 1 of a three year commitment.  
Fund the Waitaha Cultural Festival \$15,000 towards the cost of an event coordinator as year 1 of a three year commitment.

Discontinue future funding for the Festival of Japan and communicate this intention to the Festival of Japan Organising Committee.

Research other cultural festivals being organised in the city.

### **Option 2**

1999/2000 Fund the Primary Schools Cultural Festival \$10,000.  
Fund the Waitaha Cultural Festival \$10,000 towards the cost of an event coordinator.

2000/01 Fund the Primary Schools Cultural Festival \$10,000 towards the cost of an event coordinator as year 1 of a three year commitment.  
Fund the Waitaha Cultural Festival \$10,000 towards the cost of an event coordinator as year 1 of a three year commitment.  
Retain a fund of \$10,000 to fund other city-wide cultural/multi-cultural events which could be applied for by relevant cultural groups.

Discontinue future funding for the Festival of Japan and communicate this intention to the Festival of Japan Organising Committee.

Research other cultural festivals being organised in the city.

### **Option 3**

- 1999/2000 Retain unspent \$22,500 to help offset Leisure budget deficit.
- 2000/01 Fund the Primary Schools Cultural Festival \$15,000 towards the cost of an event coordinator as year 1 of a three year commitment.  
Fund the Waitaha Cultural Festival \$15,000 towards the cost of an event coordinator as year 1 of a three year commitment.
- Discontinue future funding for the Festival of Japan and communicate this intention to the Festival of Japan Organising Committee.
- Research other cultural festivals being organised in the city.

### **Option 4**

- 1999/2000 Retain unspent \$22,500 to help offset Leisure budget deficit.
- 2000/01 Fund the Primary Schools Cultural Festival \$10,000 towards the cost of an event coordinator as year 1 of a three year commitment.  
Fund the Waitaha Cultural Festival \$10,000 towards the cost of an event coordinator as year 1 of a three year commitment.  
Retain a fund of \$10,000 to fund other city-wide cultural/multi-cultural events which could be applied for by relevant cultural groups.
- Discontinue future funding for the Festival of Japan and communicate this intention to the Festival of Japan Organising Committee.
- Research other cultural festivals being organised in the city.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

Clearly, the Festival of Japan provides benefits to the city in terms of an understanding of Japanese culture and in terms of the number of performers etc it brings to the city.

There are perceived to be significant potential benefits to the city for the further development of cultural and multi-cultural events. These benefits are likely to be primarily in terms of developing the local community, generating greater understanding of the cultures in the city etc. There are potentially economic benefits from the development of these types of festivals too. However, these are difficult to quantify.

The working party fully supports the approach proposed by staff and makes the following recommendation.

- Recommendation:**
1. That the Council indicate to the Festival of Japan Organising Committee its intention to discontinue funding for the Festival of Japan.
  2. That funding Option 2 above be adopted.

### **Chairman's**

**Recommendation:** For discussion.