

14. ARBOR DAY PROGRAMMES

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Corporate Plan Output: Environmental Promotion/ Parks Education	

The purpose of this report is to gain the support of the Board for the proposed Arbor Day programmes for 2000 and to report back on the 1999 programme.

HISTORY OF ARBOR DAY

“Arbor” means tree in Latin. Arbor Day is the day officially set aside for planting trees and was first celebrated in New Zealand in 1890.

In New Zealand Arbor Day is always celebrated on 5 June (which is also World Environment Day). Arbor Day or similar tree planting programmes are held worldwide and are designed to foster care for trees and our natural environment and to focus media attention on the value of trees.

ARBOR DAY SCHOOLS PROGRAMME

During 1998/99 a review of the Arbor Day activities within the various Community Board areas was undertaken by staff in an effort to introduce a consistent programme across the city.

As a result Riccarton/Wigram, Shirley/Papanui and Burwood/Pegasus Community Boards each set aside \$2000 for the introduction of an Arbor Day Schools Programme that was to be undertaken within each boards area of responsibility. The schools programme was held in conjunction with the various community planting days that are funded through the Parks Unit’s Arbor Day Fund.

The Spreydon/Heathcote Community Board opted to continue to operate its own Arbor Day programme directed at schools, whereby schools are offered shade trees through the Area Parks Officer for grounds enhancement, shelter and shade. Spreydon/Heathcote schools that took up this offer were not under any obligation to involve pupils or to incorporate the planting programme into classroom learning activities. For this reason they had a good response attracting a total of 18 schools.

The Fendalton/Waimairi Community Board provided funds for exotic trees for schools grounds within its area. The Burnside Residents Support Group undertook co-ordination of this programme, which had the forthcoming millennium as its focus. Plaques to commemorate the activity were erected on the grounds of the participating schools, being Burnside High, Burnside Primary School, Christ the King, Kendal Primary, Roydvale Primary and Wairakei Primary. Two local preschools also featured in the groups programme.

The Hagley/Ferrymead Community Board declined to take part in 1999 suggesting that it would be interested in considering future proposals.

Participating Schools for 1999:

Schools	Ward	Ranger Visit Requested
Queenspark	Burwood	Visited
Windsor	Burwood	
Phillipstown	Burwood	Visited
Banks Avenue	Burwood	
Avondale	Pegasus	Visited
Chisnallwood	Pegasus	Visited
St James Aranui	Pegasus	Visited
South New Brighton	Pegasus	Visited
Our Lady of Victories	Riccarton	
St Thomas of Canterbury	Riccarton	
Halswell	Wigram	Visited
Hornby	Wigram	
Gilberthorpe	Wigram	Visited
Glenmoor	Shirley	
Shirley	Shirley	
Mairehau	Shirley	Visited
Windermere Christian College	Papanui	
Northcote	Papanui	

When evaluating the success of this programme it would be wrong to look at the small participation numbers and assume that the programme has not been well received by schools. Letters of support from some of the schools involved show that the programme is filling a need as well as meeting our own objectives. Because of the time commitment involved we would not expect all of the schools to participate every year. However, by offering the programme on an annual basis schools can take up the offer when they feel they have the time to give serious consideration to the educational aspect. The principal objective of the programme should be to support those schools that are prepared to introduce a strong educational component and not just to beautify schools grounds. With the introduction of the *Environmental Education Guidelines* produced by the Ministry of Education for teachers we can expect more emphasis given to these types of activities by schools in the future. All of the schools that participated in 1999 went out of their way to involve the children and to draw up and submit planting plans and maintenance programmes.

Through this programme, achievement of the following objectives was fostered.

- Pupils developed an awareness and appreciation of trees in the local environment.
- Pupils actively participated in the preparation, planting and aftercare of trees in their school environment.
- Pupils were encouraged to further investigate ways in which they can actively help with community projects – promoting community action.

COMMUNITY PLANTING DAYS

Historically, an Arbor Day budget of \$11,400 has been held by the Parks Unit for a variety of community Arbor Day activities that should continue to be supported through this source. Good relationships have been established over time with the schools that have participated in the community planting days. However the number of schools and pupils involved is restricted due to the number of plants and the size of the sites involved. For the sake of continuity the same schools (different pupils) are involved each year. It is also important however that all schools are encouraged to carry out Arbor Day plantings in some form. Hence, the introduction of the Arbor Day Schools Programme.

The Parks Unit's Arbor Day budget (\$11,400) was split between the seven community planting days undertaken, spread across the city, involving various community groups, as listed below:

Yaldhurst Bush

Participants - Yaldhurst School (cancelled due to poor weather conditions)
Organised by Area Parks Officer, Rod Whearty.

Halswell Quarry

Participants - Halswell School, Halswell Scouts and Halswell Lions Club
Organised by Park Ranger, John Moore

Styx Basin Reserve

Participants - Breens Intermediate School
Organised by Park Ranger John Parry

Taylor's Mistake

Participants - Taylor's Mistake Coast Care Group
Organised by Coast Care.

Travis Wetland

Participants – Windsor School, Shirley Intermediate School, Christchurch Native Habitats
Organised by the Travis Wetland Trust and Coast Care.

South New Brighton

Participants - South New Brighton School
Organised by Coast Care

North Beach

Participants – Local School
Organised by Coast Care

Central City River Bank area

Participants - Victoria Street residents
Organised through the Area Parks Officer, Garry Harrow

Port Hills

Participants – St Joseph's Primary School, Rudolf Steiner School, Mount Pleasant School, St Bedes College, St Peters Primary School, Heathcote School
Organised by Port Hills 2000 and the Port Hills Rangers.

PROPOSAL FOR 2000

This years programme will be based upon offering all schools the opportunity of plants for school planting programmes within the school grounds as a part of their Arbor Day or Conservation Week activities on the proviso that:

- they provide a planting plan
- they place mulch over the planted area (schools will be advised of Envy's offer of mulch at a reduced price)
- they involve the children in the planting and maintenance of the plants provided
- and that messages learnt during the planting are followed up and reinforced within the classroom (activity sheets will be made available through EPP and Parks)

On site assistance will be available to all participating schools and will be the responsibility of the Park Ranger Service. Rangers will ensure that the correct ground preparation is carried out and that plants are appropriately planted. On request they will also provide an education component on the day – covering the importance of caring for our natural environment including local parks and green spaces.

Once again the Communications section of the Community Relations Unit will be called upon to assist with media coverage. As with this year, administration will be managed by the Parks Education Co-ordinator and the Environmental Promotion Officer. All participating schools will receive certificates for their contribution to Arbor Day. Community Board members will be advised of the schools planting programmes within their ward areas so that if they wish they can be involved in the presentation to schools.

FUNDING DETAILS

Where Community Boards agree to set aside \$2000 for this programme the \$2000 will be divided by the number of primary and intermediate schools within each boards boundary. Each school will then be notified of the amount available to them on application. Depending on the number of schools within the area the total available to schools can vary from \$100 to \$150. Any leftover funding will remain in the discretionary budget of the relevant Community Board

- Recommendations:**
1. That each Community Board support the above programme
 2. That an annual commitment of \$2000 be set aside by each Board to provide for trees for Arbor Day planting's in schools grounds (within its area of responsibility). Starting in the financial year 2000/1.

THE COMMUNITY ADVOCATE COMMENTS:

“Members will recall that the Burnside Residents Support Group co-ordinated a “community initiative” recently involving tree planting in local schools. The efforts on the part of this volunteer community group have already received the cordial thanks of the Board, in recognition of the role of “the community” assisting the community at large.

In some ways a project such as that now proposed could have merit in further involving such community groups. The reality probably is that while there would be boundless enthusiasm evident there could be difficulty in achieving the level of support resource required. Quite clearly the Council as an organisation is better geared to provide this support for this type of project.

Opportunities for future “community” involvement should be kept under constant review though, and for that reason any Board commitment should be limited to one year, with later consideration being given to alternative means of delivering ongoing planting campaigns”.

Chairman’s

- Recommendations:**
1. That a sum of \$2,000 be made available from the Board’s 2000/01 discretionary fund, with expenditure committed to the level of response from the Schools.
 2. That the opportunity be taken to share the initiative with the North West Cluster Principals at the meeting on Thursday 30 March.