

18. WATERWAYS AND WETLANDS BUS TOURS

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The purpose of this report is to provide further information to the Burwood/Pegasus Community Board on the Waterways and Wetlands Bus tours of the Avon, Heathcote and Styx Rivers. These tours are focused towards the general public and will form part of the Waterways and Wetlands Education Strategy.

Last year bus tours of the city's major rivers were piloted with each tour tracing one of the major rivers from the source to the sea. The prime objective of these trips was for participants to gain a greater awareness, appreciation and understanding of the different characteristics and values associated with each of these rivers.

Styx bus tours were held as part of the consultation process associated with asset management planning for this river, for general interest by the Burnside Probus Group, for Wharenui School as a class prize in Water Expo '99 and for elderly Council flat residents. Bus tours of the Avon and Heathcote Rivers were held as part of the Heritage Week celebrations. Feedback on each bus trip has been excellent and there are currently waiting lists for people wanting to go on future bus trips for each of the rivers.

The Shirley/Papanui Community Board sponsored the bus trip for the elderly Council flat residents. Those people who were part of the Burnside Probus Group or went on the Avon and Heathcote Heritage trips paid.

At the end of last year bus tours were evaluated. It was decided to continue with bus tours due to their popularity and success. A limited number of bus tours will be undertaken on a planned basis with each trip being kept small and special. One tour a month will be held over the six months of warmer weather, that is October to March inclusive. This would allow for two regular tours per year along each of Christchurch's major rivers. Additional to this, a maximum of one further tour each month would be held if specifically requested by an interested party (eg Probus, schools). This would allow for a total of 12 trips in any one year. Bus tours will be re-evaluated in 12 months' time.

On each bus tour, the direct cost per person is \$28. The Water Services Unit charges \$20 per person with the remaining amount being subsidised by the Unit and covering the costs associated with expert advice. The pamphlets that are given out to people on each bus tour are taken from the Water Services stocks and need not be seen as a direct charge as they are available to the public through libraries, Community Centres etc and the bus trips is simply another outlet for this information.

Recommendation: That the Burwood/Pegasus Community Board give consideration to working in partnership with the Water Services Unit in providing bus tours of the city's major rivers for community groups within its area.

Chairperson's

- Recommendations:**
1. That the Board support the bus tours.
 2. That the Board provide \$500 from its 2000/01 discretionary funding for a subsidised tour of the Avon River for residents from the Council housing units.