

9. COMMUNITY GARDENING UPDATE

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Corporate Plan Output: Solid Waste	

The purpose of this report is to provide the Board with an update on progress since the concept of community gardening was reported in November 1999 and to seek the Board's suggestions for the type of support it can provide to a local community garden in its area.

BACKGROUND

The initial report 'Growing Communities – Organic Resources for Social Needs' (see attached) was presented in November 1999. All Community Boards have expressed general support for the project. A sum of \$60,000 has been earmarked for this new initiative in the 2000/01 financial year.

PROGRESS TO DATE

The following progress has been made since November 1999:

1. Establishment of pilot trials at four existing community gardens:
 - Linwood Community Garden (run by Linwood Resource Centre)
 - Pages Road Community Garden (run by Mature Employment Service, SuperGrans, Project Employment and Environmental Enhancement Program)
 - Strickland Street Community Garden (run by Manuka Cottage)
 - Surrey Street Community Gardens (run by Te Whare Roimata)
2. Formation of an informal group of existing community garden co-ordinators.
3. Appointment of a temporary Community Gardens Facilitator in April 2000 to co-ordinate discussions with key stakeholders.
4. The Burwood-Pegasus Community Board has established a Community Garden Subcommittee to co-ordinate and support local community gardening initiatives, including a raised bed pilot trial with elderly residents.
5. Initiation of discussion with key interest groups eg Community Employment Group of Work and Income New Zealand, Canterbury Development Corporation, Wai-Ora Trust, Anglican Care, Parks Unit, and the Community Services Unit of the Christchurch City Council.

EXPECTED BENEFITS

Although it is still too early for the final results of the community garden trials, they appear to have been successful. For example, an average of 4.5 kg per household per week has been collected by wheelbarrow from 15 households in Linwood. This waste is composted in the garden's existing composting operations and the weekly process, including collection, only takes an extra hour for a community garden worker. The community gardens participating in the pilot trial will be reporting back on the results of their trials in May/June 2000.

Another successful initiative in Christchurch is the Packe Street Community Garden. A group of local people wanting to save two trees in their neighbourhood worked closely with the Shirley-Papanui Community Board to create a new park and community garden that is a "safe haven for children to play and a focus for the local community". The local co-ordinator, Peggy Kelly, believes that "the process of community building is as important as the provision of the park". In addition, the Council's annual maintenance costs are less than for other local parks of the same size.

Benefits of community composting initiatives in Britain include the following, as outlined in the attachment.

- **Environmental** – Locally composting waste on a small scale minimises pollution, maximises compost quality whilst replacing peat and promoting home composting.
- **Social** – Physical outdoor work, therapeutic for all, and a focus for community development.
- **Economic** – The creation of jobs and training opportunities.

WHERE TO FROM HERE

The temporary Community Gardens Facilitator is currently working with key stakeholders to develop a detailed project outline to promote and enhance community gardens in Christchurch in the year commencing 1 July 2000.

A key component of this work is likely to be the close involvement of the Community Board in supporting local initiatives. It is suggested therefore that the Community Board consider whether it wishes to:

1. Appoint a Board member to "champion" community gardens in the Board area and act as a contact for information both locally and networking with other community gardening initiatives across the city.
2. Provide support for a key local garden/group which is able and willing to act as a demonstration garden for other groups wishing to establish a similar initiative (see attachment).
3. Where appropriate, provide support for selected new groups to establish local community gardening initiatives.
4. Integrate the above support with other Strengthening Community Action Plan initiatives.

A further report will be prepared for the Community Board once a detailed project outline for expanding community gardening in Christchurch has been developed.

SUMMARY

Considerable progress has been made in co-ordinating information on existing community gardening initiatives in Christchurch. Discussion has been held with key stakeholders to develop the best method to expand community gardening to meet environmental (waste minimisation) and social goals publicly stated by the Christchurch City Council. A detailed project outline for expanding community gardening in Christchurch will be reported to Community Boards when it has been developed.

Recommendation: That the information be received, and the four questions above be considered.