

10. THIRD AGE PROGRAMME - UPDATE

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Corporate Plan Output: Economic and Employment Advice/Workforce Preparation and Renewal	

The purpose of this report is to update the Committee on the Third Age programme.

The Third Age Programme seeks to establish a platform for informed debate about the implications of an ageing population for society. Through a series of discussions between representatives from a cross-sector of organisations in the Canterbury region, the project aims to achieve the following:

- identify the 'facts' about the Third Age
- to identify the needs and options for change
- to set out the policy implications for society as a whole, including local and central government, employers, voluntary organisations, providers of education and health care, the media and those in and approaching the third age.

This debate generated a report as a basis of an informed debate and decision-making at the "Meeting of the Generation Forum" held in Christchurch in September 2000.

Action plans from the forum are being formulated by focus groups which are addressing the intergenerational issues of work and lifestyle, health and social care, income and employment, education, leisure, family and culture, and values and attitudes about ageing and more importantly, the fiscal costs and realities of the changing demographics.

The Minister for Senior Citizens appointed the co-ordinator of the Third Age programme to the reference group developing the New Zealand Positive Ageing Strategy with the Ministry of Social Policy. The Minister stated:

"To make this national strategy work, we need regional Positive Ageing Strategies. Through the Third Age Programme, Christchurch has already taken a leading role."

The co-ordinator is being regularly invited to speak on third age issues to a diverse group of organisations, such as the Timaru District Council, Christchurch School of Medicine and government departments, churches, service clubs and neighbourhood watch groups. He has also been a guest speaker at three conferences in Wellington organised by Victoria University.

The Department of Work and Income has recognised that a disproportionately high number of long term unemployed are older people. DWI and CDC are working together to set up a pilot project to address this in Christchurch using the Third Age network.

The Third Age phenomenon is being studied throughout the OECD. We have been approached by the Department of Education and Employment (DfEE) in the UK for information to assist them in research they are carrying out. The co-ordinator will be visiting the DfEE when he visits the UK in September.

A report on findings of the "Meeting of the Generations" forum held in Christchurch last September has been separately circulated to Councillors.

Chairman's

Recommendation: That the information be received.