

8. **NEW ZEALAND'S "ULTIMATE BURNOUT" SHOW –  
MANUKAU VELODROME SUNDAY 10 DECEMBER 2000**

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Corporate Plan Output: Information and Advice to the Council	

The purpose of this report is to provide information to the City Services Committee of the Christchurch City Council on the "Ultimate Burnout" show held at the Manukau Velodrome on Sunday 10 December 2000 by On Track Promotions Ltd Takapuna Auckland (see precis of interviews attached). The report endeavours to provide the Committee with background information on the "burn out" programme currently operating in Auckland with the view to ascertaining if the same concept could be or should be trialed in Christchurch.

On Track Promotions Ltd have developed a motor sport show in Auckland which provides young (and not so young) fringe motor sport enthusiasts an opportunity to demonstrate their skills to the public in a safe, legal environment.

### **BACKGROUND**

The provision of such a facility for the young people in Auckland aims to mitigate some of the concerns of local authorities and communities of Auckland caused by many of the same young people who in the past demonstrated their "burn-out" skills on the roadway. As in Christchurch they were doing this illegally and in a manner that had potential to cause injury to themselves and innocent motorists and pedestrians as well as causing hundreds of thousands of dollars of damage to the road surface.

Over the years several initiatives for dealing with these same issues in Christchurch had been tried, including increased Police enforcement and the banning by the Council of parking in areas where the young drivers and their followers were meeting. These measures only seemed to have a temporary effect on the illegal behaviour and the burnouts resumed. It has also been suggested that the Council could enact a bylaw actually preventing any driver other than residents entering targeted suburbs in the City where the illegal burnouts are happening. What is likely to happen is that the illegal activity will simply shift from one area to another to circumvent the bylaw.

On 10 June 1998 a report written for the Parks and Recreation Committee suggested that a purpose built burnout facility might reduce the number of illegal burnouts and so reduce the potential risk to public road users and also the escalating costs of road repair. It was also hoped that by providing a safe, legal venue for the burnouts, under the supervision of mainstream motor racing enthusiasts it might also provide a more long-term solution to the illegal burnouts by encouraging the young people into a range of legal motor sport activities readily available.

This report also outlined that in accordance with the City Plan the only area that a purpose built burnout pad could be established was at the Ruapuna Motor Sport complex. Ruapuna Park is owned by the Council and held under the Reserves Act 1977. Various motor sport clubs lease land at Ruapuna and one of these clubs, the Canterbury Car Club was interested in having the burnout pad established on their leased area. The club would form a trust in conjunction with other interested parties, to oversee the management of the burnout facility.

On 24 June 1998, following a report written for the Parks and Recreation Committee the Council adopted a recommendation that the "*Council delegate to the City Manager the power to grant its consent as landlord to the Canterbury Car Club building and operating a burnout pad and public toilet facilities on an area of approximately 4,000 square metres in the Canterbury Car Club's leased area at Ruapuna Park*" the motion was carried, subject to a number of conditions.

A trust was duly formed comprising of a City Councillor, four members of the car club and a youth representative. It was envisaged that the Trust, known as the Youth, Education and Safety in Motor Sport or the YES Trust would have overall responsibility for the management of the purpose built burnout facility at Ruapuna Park. However, since 1998 members of the Trust had expressed some concerns specifically the legal liability issues and the cost of obtaining public liability insurance, and the initiative has not proceeded.

The report to the Parks and Recreation Committee in June 1998 and the subsequent work of the YES Trust has established enough information to provide a framework to help establish a burnout pad in Christchurch.

What the report couldn't address however was whether or not a purpose built facility would reduce the number of illegal burnouts to the extent that the facility, at an estimated cost of \$170,000, was justified.

It has been suggested that the promoters of the Auckland Ultimate burnouts could provide that information by staging a series of burnouts at Ruapuna over a three - six month period during which a feasibility study could be undertaken to determine the impact, positive or negative on the illegal burnouts. It would appear to be advantageous for Christchurch to have promoters experienced in this type of promotion and who are prepared to undertake the financial and legal responsibilities to do this.

It was therefore necessary to experience at least one of the Ultimate burnouts promoted by On Track Promotions Auckland to determine the suitability of this company to conduct a series of burnouts in Christchurch.

Councillor Ingrid Stonhill as Chairperson of the Burn Out Committee made the visit to the Velodrome along with Council officer Lee Kelly. The following observations of the "Ultimate Burnout" day at the Manukau Velodrome will be supported by a 5-10-minute video illustrating the activities on the day and the facilities required to ensure the safety of competitors and spectators.

#### **THE ULTIMATE BURNOUT DAY AT THE MANUKAU VELODROME**

The Directors of On Track Promotions Ltd are Keith Sharp and Mike Eady. Both men have been involved in legitimate motor sport activities and promotions for a number of years. They are qualified Land Transport Safety Authority driving instructors and they also undertake high performance vehicle driver training in Christchurch and in Auckland. They are contracted by the Ford Advance Driving School to provide driving instruction for corporate employees.

On Track Promotions Ltd obtained support from the Manukau City Council to set up a burnout facility at the Manukau Velodrome. The car-park attendants at the event were Manukau City Council employees as were the set up crew and clean up crew. In addition the Leisure Unit of Manukau Council also assisted the event organisers to obtain resource consent, firstly to install a concrete pad, at a cost of \$38,000, in the centre of the Velodrome and secondly to hold the promotions. The promoters undertook the financial outlay of the promotion and also the public liability insurance along with obtaining sponsorship to cover the cost of the trophies and prize money for the successful competitors.

At the Ultimate Burnout on the 10 December 2000, spectators numbered approximately 2,000 and were a mixture of families, many with very young children, including babies, couples and groups of young people and over 50s. There was good crowd participation for the staged events and the crowd was very vocal and very enthusiastic. The crowd was well behaved at all times and this was pleasing considering the number of different interest groups that were there.

The Police presence was low-key consisting of eight officers and while bag checks were not made at the gates by the staff employed resulting in alcohol being brought to the event by some spectators, it did not result in any problems and the Police did not become involved.

The burnouts were conducted on a concrete slab laid in the middle of the Velodrome. Barriers had been erected around the pad with every second barrier filled with water. These water barriers were capable of stopping a vehicle at 80km/h. Combined with the spectators being kept at least another 30 meters away behind a concrete fence or in the Velodrome grandstand itself, it provided maximum safety.

Scrutineers from Rally NZ and/or NZ Motor Sport check the vehicles before and after the "burnout" and vehicles and participants entry to the competition is governed by the rules of NZ Motor Sport. Vehicles access the burnout pad one at a time in a well-controlled and organised manner. Forty vehicles had entered for the event and were competing for trophies and cash prizes in four different categories depending on the size of the engine.

The aim of the exercise was for the vehicle driver to spin the rear of the vehicle while keeping the front of the vehicle stationary. This was achieved by "clipping" the brake lines to the rear wheels so disengaging the rear brakes. Competitors would then keep maximum pressure on both the foot brake and accelerator. The result is an incredible amount of engine noise coupled with so much smoke from the tyres that it was difficult to see a metre in front of you, the smell of burning rubber is overpowering and this continues until the rear tyres explode. The crowd erupts with applause and cheering and the rubber from the exploding tyres is quickly swept away by the clean up crew, ready for the next competitor. On completion of the burn-out each competitor is allocated points out of a possible 35 points, judges at the event consisted of two motor sport representatives and two volunteers from the crowd. Two scantily clad young women bearing, amongst other things, large scoreboards then convey the score to the crowd.

The St John's Ambulance Brigade attends the events, along with tow trucks and operators. While the tow trucks are not a safety precaution they did come in handy on at least one occasion when during one of the burnouts, not only the tyres exploded but also the engine and the vehicle had to be towed away. Many of the vehicles are expensive and they can sustain rear bumper and fender damage. The seasoned burn out performer knows to line the rear wheel guards and rear bumper with a thick heat proof/fire resistant fabric that prevents any major damage to these areas when the tyres explode. The vehicle drivers are not required to wear protective clothing and one passenger is permitted in the vehicle during the burnout. While there is a lot of noise, smoke and smell attached to the event, which gives the impression of high speeds, it was pointed out that some brakes were partly operational as part of the activity.

#### **SUMMARY**

In the short term it has been suggested that On Track Promotions Ltd could be invited to stage similar events here in Christchurch. They would undertake to handle the entire promotion, from finding a venue to the legal liability issues, as they have done in Auckland, but with the help of the local car enthusiasts. If they were to conduct regular burnouts over a 3-6 month period this would then enable the Council to undertake a feasibility study of the promotion to identify amongst other issues:

1. If it meets the needs of the young people and therefore kept the majority of them off the streets, and
2. If the enforcement issues and safety concerns of the Police and the community were being addressed, and
3. If it significantly reduced the incidences of illegal burnouts

The results of the study could then be used to decide if the Council should continue to support a purpose build facility in Christchurch and also if it was then appropriate for the Council to support such a facility financially, at least initially.

**Recommendation:** That On Track Promotions, with the help and support of the local car enthusiasts, be invited to undertake a series of burn outs similar to those held in Auckland.

#### **Chairman's**

**Recommendation:** That the matter be referred to the Street Racing Subcommittee for favourable consideration.